

Who is this King of Glory?

A Critical Study of the Christos-Messiah Tradition

“What profit hath not that fable of Christ brought us!”

Pope Leo X

Alvin Boyd Kuhn

TO THE MANY THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE EARNESTLY STRIVING TO RESTORE THE ANCIENT
ESOTERIC INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES OF THE WORLD THIS WORK IS SINCERELY
DEDICATED

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INTRODUCTION

The pick that struck the Rosetta Stone in the loamy soil of the Nile delta in 1796 also struck a mighty blow at historical Christianity. For it released the voice of a long-voiceless past to refute nearly every one of Christianity's historical claims with a withering negative. The cryptic literature of old Egypt, sealed in silence when Christianity took its rise, but haunting it like a taunting specter after the third century, now stalks forth like a living ghost out of the tomb to point its long finger of accusation at a faith that has too long thriven on falsity. For that literature now rises out of oblivion to proclaim the true source of every doctrine of Christianity as Egyptian, the product and heritage of a remote past. The translation of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the Pyramid Texts, and the Book of Thoth lays on the table the irrefutable data which show that, far from being the first gleam of true light in a world previously benighted in heathenism, Christianity was but a poor and crippled orphan, appearing—after the third century—without evidence of its true parentage and sadly belying in its outward form the semblance of its real ancestral lineage. The books of old Egypt now unroll the sagas of wisdom which announce the inexorable truth that not a single doctrine, rite, tenet or usage in Christianity was a new contribution to world religion, but that every article and practice of that faith was a disfigured copy of ancient Egyptian systematism. Christianity, it proclaims, not only did not register a single advance in any line of wisdom or truth, but deplorably vitiated and disfigured the beautiful structure of religion which it ignorantly adopted and so wretchedly purveyed as its own alleged new creation. The shadow that pursued the faith with the semblance of outward similarity for sixteen centuries, now resolves into the substance of veridical proof of original identity. The entire body of Christian doctrinism is now seen to be nothing but revamped and terribly mutilated Egyptianism. Through the chance stroke of a trench-digger's pick Christianity is brought to book to face its Nemesis. The heathen parentage that it strove so desperately to deny and the marks of which it so sedulously endeavored to obliterate in the early centuries now ix rises from the dead past to charge its ungenerous offspring with faithlessness and deceit. And Christianity, as Edward Carpenter so frankly asserts, must now acknowledge its parentage in a pagan past or, failing to do so, must perish. The entire Christian Bible, creation legend, descent into and exodus from "Egypt," ark and flood allegory, Israelite "history," Hebrew prophecy and poetry, Gospels, Epistles and Revelation imagery, all are now proven to have been the transmission of ancient Egypt's scrolls and papyri into the hands of later generations which knew neither their true origin nor their fathomless meaning. Long after Egypt's voice, expressed through the inscribed hieroglyphics, was hushed in silence, the perpetuated relics of Hamitic wisdom, with their cryptic message utterly lost, were brought forth and presented to the

world by parties of ignorant zealots as a new body of truth. The only new thing about it was the pitiable exegesis that inspired and accompanied the reissuance. But the sheer fact that even amid the murks of ignorance and superstition the mere ghost, shell, husk and shadow of Egypt's wisdom inspired religious piety to extremes

At an Egyptian Bethany, with two Egyptian Maries present, the non-historical prototype of the incident related (only) in John's Gospel. From the walls of the temple of Luxor, carved there at a date at least 1700 years B.C., there faces Christianity a group of four scenes that spell the non-historicity of four episodes purveyed as history in the Gospel's recital of the Christ nativity: the angel's pronouncement to the shepherds tending their flocks by night in the fields; the annunciation of the angel to the virgin; the adoration of the infant by three Magi; and the nativity scene itself. Egypt had used the symbol of a star rising in the east as the portent of coming deity for millennia anterior to the Christian era. Egypt had knelt at the shrine of the Madonna and child, Isis and Horus, for long centuries before a historical Mary lifted a historical Jesus in her arms. Egypt had from remote times adored a Christ who had raised the dead and healed the lame, halt, blind, paralytic, leprous and all afflicted, who had restored speech to the dumb, exorcized demons from the possessed, dispersed his enemies with a word or look, wrestled with his Satan adversary, overcome all temptation and performed the works of his heavenly Father to the victorious end. Egypt had long known a Jesus, Iusa, who had been born amid celestial portents of an immaculate parenthood, circumcised, baptized, tempted, glorified on the mount, persecuted, arrested, tried, condemned, crucified, buried, resurrected and elevated to heaven. Egypt had listened to the Sermon on the Mount and the Sayings of Iusa for ages. Egypt had known a Jesus who long antedated the Gospel Messiah and who presents to the student some one hundred and eighty items of identity, similarity and correspondence in word, deed and function with his later copy. But Egypt's Christ was not a living person. It would have been equally fatal to Christianity if he had been. But the fact of his non-historicity rises now out of the past that Christianity thought it had sealed in oblivion forever, to strike the death-knell of a false and spurious religion. The Gospels' "life" of Jesus turns out to be nothing but the garbled and fragmentary copy of an Egyptian prototype who never lived, but was a purely typical dramatic figure, portraying the divinity in man. With this one revelation of lost truth the structure of historical Christianity topples to the ground. It must be replaced by a purely spiritual Christianity. In the splendid light of ancient Egypt Occidental religion can now find its way from Medieval darkness to sunlit truth. The Dark Ages can be brought to their dismal end at last. The ineptitude of scholarly acumen in the face of the mountainous evidence supplied by the study of comparative religion, especially since the recovery of Chaldean and Egyptian antiquities, surpasses all belief and flouts all conscience. It has been

exhibited on so colossal a scale, with consequences of the direst nature, that the question whether ignorance or deliberate chicanery engineered the total suppression of truth that has glared its overwhelming obviousness in the face of studentship, inevitably rises to the foreground of thought. It must be assumed that both ignorance and disingenuousness combined to produce the catastrophic result. A thousand big and little items of comparative religion, many of them sufficient in their single weight to clinch decisive determinations fatal to Christian claims, conspire to erect a positively impregnable fortress of proof of Christian errancy. This mass of data has been blithely ignored, brazenly flouted, or damned with slighting notice, by the ecclesiastical regime which would lose its easy hold on the masses by honest recognition of the truth.

The lesson of European Renaissance history has not been assimilated in its full import. Christian Europe, groping in early Medieval darkness for centuries following the violent extinction of Platonic Academies and schools of esoteric philosophy and religion, regained a portion of the lost light in the fourteenth century when re-established contact with Greek literature brought to light the long-buried works of classic Hellenic wisdom. This recouping of cultural status went far to illuminate the night of Christian gloom. But it can be seen now that it did not go far or deep enough to effect a complete restoration of the full glory of ancient intellectual brilliance. Greece had much to offer to a Europe blinded by theological obscurantism. But its gift was a secondary and derived product, not the original and genuine treasure. That had been lost in the silence of Egypt's desert expanses. Now, in the fullness of time, the Occident is destined to enjoy its final Renaissance to the full heritage of ancient culture. Once again Christian Europe will experience a "Revival of Learning," as the lingering smudge of Medieval obfuscation is wafted away by the pure breath of a recovered Eastern civilization. This time it is Egypt, whose hidden wisdom is released by the finding of the Rosetta Stone, that will enlighten the last areas of Medieval nescience.

The primary truth of human culture which is presented by all sage religions of antiquity is the fact that there resides deeply embedded in the core of man's constitution a nucleus of what, for want of a better designation, must be called a divine spark or sun. The glow of Christliness—a thing at once both chemically radio-active and intellectual—in us is indeed the hope of our glory. Modern science, through the work of Dr. George W. Crile, late head of the Cleveland Medical laboratories, has rediscovered what the ancient sages were familiar with—the radiant SUN in man. "Every man," proclaimed the ancients and the Medieval "Fire Philosophers," "has a little SUN within his own breast." This sun is the Christ in man, a nucleus of fiery divine spirit-energy. All the Christs in antiquity were denominated "Sun Gods." The names of nearly all of them are the immediate words for the sun, or epithets appropriate to the solar orb. "All things are the products of one primordial

Fire,” assert the Chaldean Oracles. Life nucleates glowing centers of this fire throughout the universe in the radiant cells of its physical body, which are the suns. Every creature that has life shares a portion of this pervasive fire, which is the rock of its hope for evolution to its greater glory. St. Paul avers that Christ—in man—is the Rock. And so ancient drama represented the Christ figure himself as saying to Peter, whose name means “Rock” in Greek, “Thou art Peter and on this Rock will I build my church.” There is no other enduring Rock in man’s life on which the assembly of deified mortals—the church—could be founded. And obviously the community of Christified beings could not be established on any spiritual Rock external to man’s own immanent subjectivity.

The rock of human culture thus being established as a fiery power within man’s own breast, Christianity becomes chargeable with the most opprobrious of all possible accusations. It can be indicted for the crime of being the only religion that in large measure destroyed the force of man’s inspiration and incentive to cultivate this divine solar light within his own bosom. It did this by diverting the direction of its followers’ effort from the inner self-culture of a purely subjective consciousness to the worship of the Christ as embodied in one man in history. Granted that there is a powerful and effective psychology in the adoration of an ideal model of perfection, the main issue here involved can never be dodged. No matter how emotionally, how fanatically the worshipper pours out adoration to a person in objective life, the work of his own evolution is not accomplished until he effectuates the ultimate divinization of the nuclear potentiality of deific fire within his own self-controlled area of consciousness.

The balanced forces of human uplift would be thrown into immediate chaos if it were in the end possible for a man to achieve his apotheosization vicariously, or in any other way than through his own effort. By virtue of the fact that man was provided from the start with the presence of a unit of divine fire within the heart of his conscious being, he was adequately equipped to fight his own way to the goal of glory. The only treason of which religious devotion could become capable was the setting up of a fetish outside the life of consciousness, which would divert a single iota of resolute will from the xiii culture of the resident deity. Christianity is the only religion in the civilized world that has perpetuated this treason. The point is inexorably established by logical thought as well as demonstrated by the historical sequel. The matter is beyond debate. By so much as the exaltation of a personal Jesus has beguiled human devotion away from the inner direction in the individual’s task of perfecting his own innate divinity, by precisely that much has the outer presentation weakened the strength of mortal struggle to the light. It is psychological, but it is mathematically measurable. The amount measured is the item that ends all argument. If the

worship of a Judean carpenter has taken any time and absorbed any psychic effort that could have been expended in the culture of divine graciousness within the heart of humanity, it has by so much held back the evolution of the race.

Christianity has taught its adherents, so to say, to play around the fringes of the cultural problem instead of bearing with all their psychic force directly upon its heart. It has hypnotized their devotional mentality under the spell of a promise of vicariousness which is itself subtly conducive to the weakening of the native nobility of man's true selfhood. It has made of its millions—what Nietzsche so thoroughly detested—groveling beggars, reveling in the turpitude of sin-confession and praying for God to have mercy on their unworthiness. It has made them wretches pleading piteously to be saved. How it has ever been assumed that a God of good sense would enjoy seeing his creatures, whom he has himself divinely endowed with a portion of his own Mind, writhing in worm-of-the-dust sycophancy at his feet, is beyond rational understanding. It is naturally to be presumed that he would take far greater delight in seeing them standing up in the might of their incipient divinity and making a fight of it. The morbid cast of mentation generated in millions of Christians over sixteen centuries by the doctrinal falsification of the esoteric meaning of "sin" is perhaps the most lamentable spectacle presented to the world in all time. That a religion could so far lose touch with sober sanity as to expect that it could exalt and edify man's spirit by grinding it down into the dust is evidence at once of its complete divagation from basic sound truth.

It is a grave question whether the ecclesiastical system and movement known as Christianity has any right to its name. So far from being the cult that brought in a true Christ-worship for the first time in "heathen" darkness, it was indeed—after the third century—the one system that destroyed such a true worship. Ancient cults bent all effort upon the cultivation of the god within man. This is the nucleus of the only true Christianity. In its genuine sense there has been no Christianity in the Occident since that fatal third century. Historical Christianity has substituted a personal fetish for the real Christos, the inner Fire of Love. No matter how appealing the figure substituted, it never can do the work of actual soul culture. And history has sealed this verdict. It is almost certainly true that in no quarter of human life has history so obviously and glaringly demonstrated the want of mankind's reliance upon the god instinct in the heart of the nations as has been evidenced by the horrifying spectacle of inhumanity and animal savagery put on display by the so-called Christianized nations. Christianity has never led the fight for culture. On the contrary, it has hung like a drag-wheel on the car of real cultural and scientific advance for many centuries. It has struck at every pioneer in the progress of true culture. Its highest practical

aim has rather been to maintain an average level of decency in traditional forms of social life. Much incidental good of course has emerged from an effort to which millions of good people, in more or less ignorance of historic truth, have consecrated their life's devotion. But never has it been the single aim and objective of the Christian ecclesiastical system to ground the aspirational life of its devotees upon the one-pointed quickening of the Christ within all hearts.

A fairly considerable number of books have been written to defend the thesis of the non-historicity of Jesus, George Brandes' *Jesus a Myth* being a typical example. All of them have advanced data of weight and validity. But none of them has presented the real argument in the case. This springs from the material now available from ancient Egypt's fount of sage sapientcy. From a hoary civilization comes the literature that ends all debate by offering the incontrovertible evidence that the Gospels are not and never were histories. They are now proven to have been cryptic dramas of the spiritual evolution of humanity and of the history of the human soul in its earthly tabernacle of flesh. The thesis, universally held by Christian theologians, that these Gospel books were "written" after Jesus lived and from the eye-witness record of his objective "life," must yield place to the knowledge that they first appeared in the second century, having long been held in the secret background of esoteric religionism. The allegation that the publication of the Gospels can not be explained or accounted for unless a great Teacher had lived whose life inspired their writing, must give way before the understanding that their appearance was due to the breakdown of esotericism, or the violent popular incursion into the secrecy of esoteric polity, and the dragging forth of the arcane books and the dramas of the occult spiritual life from the Mystery holy of holies.

A noted present-day clergyman in New York City, the eminent Dr. John Haynes Holmes, has declared in a printed sermon—*Christianity's Debt to Judaism; Why Not Acknowledge It?*--that Christianity drew its Founder from the Jewish people, along with five-sixths of its Bible, the Hebrew Old Testament, as well as everything that the character Jesus has spoken in the New Testament. Practically every word uttered by the Christ figure in the Gospels is to be found in the Mishna, the Gemara, the Talmud and the Hagadoth of the Jews, he asserted. But what now must be the astonishment of the eminent minister to be confronted with the mountainous evidence that all the material of both Christian and Hebrew systems has emanated from ancient Egypt's crypts of secret wisdom! Truly the Rosetta Stone is to be the Nemesis of a falsity that has shrouded religion in gloom and obscurity and shot it through with insincerity and dishonesty for some twenty-four centuries.

It is a sign of the aberration in religious thinking now prevailing that the presentation of the case for the non-historic Christ will run afoul of many persons of general probity who, even when measurably convinced that the Jesus story is a fable, as Pope Leo X so glibly asserted, will still adhere to the persuasion that it is better to suppress the bald and revolutionary truth and prolong the “beautiful illusion” of the Christ’s personal existence. The original perpetration and now the perpetuation of blank falsehood concerning the fact of Jesus’ existence is argued to be morally justifiable, even highly good, on the ground that it has wrought a prodigious psychological and moral beneficence. But this is, at bottom, to argue that Christianity can be better promoted by a lie than by the truth. We are adjured by the holy scriptures of that same faith that our only freedom comes from knowing the truth. While the world is hoping and planning to establish the better course of its life upon four fundamental freedoms, it might be well to remind ourselves that in a democracy there is a fifth freedom upon which the salutary influences of the four and all other freedoms are dependent and contingent, and that is the freedom of all to be put in possession of the truth, to the farthest limit of its availability. In minor situations it often appears both judicious and beneficent to withhold the truth. But the justification is always secondary to larger objectives and temporary. Every situation must ultimately be resolved by a facing of the truth. Final issues ever demand that life be met on its own terms. The extensive concealment of historical truth at once argues something unlovely and sinister. A great world faith, soliciting the loyalty of millions, could offer no surer evidence of its integrity than an unbroken record of instant eagerness to examine and accept every sincere presentment of the truth. This work is given forth with no other motive than to present the available evidence beating upon an issue of transcendent importance. In the hurly-burly of human affairs truth is not always welcome or pleasant. That is understandable. But far more vital is the understanding that it must be faced. Our attitude toward truth-seeking is one of the supreme tests of our worthiness to take on the responsibilities and enjoy the liberties of a democracy.

Lest it be assumed that the author’s implied charges of dishonesty in Christian leadership spring from a personal animosity against Christianity, he takes the liberty to insert here a few sentences taken from a brief article in The New York Times of present date (Nov. 29, 1943) reported from a sermon of the Rev. Bernard Iddings Bell, eminent Episcopalian clergyman, preached in St. Paul’s

cks rather than of fundamental and immutable truth. And then our educators, having abdicated from their ancient and honorable post as keepers of the sanctities of truth, cry out in their pride their all-sufficient greatness.

“The churches, too . . . make of themselves pious clubs, daring not xvii to rebuke the brazen multitudes for fear of loss of membership and money; and having sunk to the low estate of men pleasers, insist they hold the future of mankind in their proud hands.”

The sun of man cannot be too long beclouded with the fogs of hypocrisy and bigotry. Its mighty power will dispel them in due season. A new day of its shining arises with the accidental stroke of a soldier's pick on a slab of stone.

Chapter I FAITH WEDS FOLLY

To the conscientious student who will give to the matter sufficient time and reflection it becomes a conviction that the most devastating cultural calamity that has befallen the human race in all its history was the degradation of the esoteric spiritual purport of ancient scripture into a debased literal and historical sense, entailing centuries of mental benightedness and spiritual thwarting, that took place at about the third century of the Christian era. And in this catastrophic conversion of cosmography, evolutionary pictography and racial history over into alleged factual occurrence, the single feature most signally fruitful of age-long fatuity was the transformation of the dramatic figure of the Christos, or divine essence of man's nature, over into a historical person. It is not too much to say that the withering wind of this distorted doctrine spread its blight upon all sane comprehension of the sublime message of ancient sacred literature over all the sixteen centuries since that fatal epoch. Indeed the truth of the situation warrants the statement that the injection of a living man into the spiritual drama in the place of the personified divine Ego in man has held the rational mind of the Western world in the grip of the most arrant superstition to be found in the history of civilized humanity. This work will amass the data to support the sharp asseveration that this was the central item in the entire debacle of theological systematism which then ensued and which must be rated as the most tragic catastrophe in world history. The causes that led to the fatal transference of character from the dramatic personification of an element in human consciousness into an alleged man of historical entification will be the central theme of this essay. To what inadequate degree the iniquitous consequences of the blunder can be seen and delineated, these will be dealt with in the unfoldment. But the task involves little less than the penetrating analysis of all ancient sacred writ, and the amassing of a vast array of factual data and basic argument in support of the momentous conclusions adduced in the sequel.

The power of tradition, and more especially religious tradition indoctrinated in the childhood of many generations, is so overwhelming that the effort of this work to clarify the status of the great doctrine of divine Messiahship in ancient scripture will almost certainly be received with the cry of blasphemy from the shocked partisans of orthodoxy. All the obloquy that has been concentrated in the word “Anti-Christ” will be flung upon the undertaking. For this reason it is desirable to state at the outset that, on the contrary, the task is motivated by the highest possible reverence for the Christ ideal as the core of all religious culture. So far from being an attempt to devastate the benignant efficacy of the role of the Christ in religious practice, it is expressly the aim of the study to establish that efficacy upon its true psychological bases. This purpose entails the revelation of the true in place of the false grounds of the claim of the Christ ideal upon our reverence. Instead of being a vicious attack upon the sanctified name and function of Christhood, it is directly an effort to redeem that name and function from centuries of impious desecration that should have been seen all along as the real grounds for horrified indignation. When rightly viewed in relation to all the facts in the case, it must be conceded that the justification for resentment at a real sacrilege against the Sonship of God weighs heavily on the side of the book, and is not on the side of the inevitable hue and cry of violent condemnation that will greet it. In the face of this anticipated raucous chorus of vilification of the book’s aim and intent there is hurled the forthright declaration that this is an utterly sincere and consecrated attempt to rescue the sacred name of the Christ from an ignominy already heaped upon it over long centuries. There is abundant warrant for asserting the righteous character of the motive on the ground of its aim to redeem the conception of Christhood from the incredible error and falsification that have befouled it for ages. As Socrates and Plato so thoroughly demonstrated by a masterly dialectic, the only source of evil in connection with anything is the failure to grasp its true status and function in a perfect balance between excess and deficiency. Nothing is good, say these two profound thinkers, unless its basic *raison d’être* is clearly apprehended and its use fulfilled in exactly balanced proportion. The record of historical frightfulness that has emerged into actuality over many centuries because of the unbelievable miscarriage of the first true conception of the character and office of the Messiah is overwhelming justification of a sincere effort to remold the mistaken view to its original truth and beauty. In final curt statement the high intent of this work is to end the sway of an entirely false and stultifying idea of the nature of the Christ and inaugurate the dominance of the only conception that truly honors it. The thesis, then, is to demonstrate that the Christ was a grade of distinctly divine consciousness that is coming gradually into rulership in humanity, and being this, it was nothing else. It was not a man. Just as the conception of the Biblical Adam as man, generic, is a true envisagement of the meaning of the term and yields intelligible significance in exegesis of ancient

scripts, but becomes both ridiculous and unintelligible when taken to mean “a man,” so with the Christos. The conception of the Christ as man in his divine genius, or the God in man, opens at once the whole of scripture to lucid and consistent intelligibility. It is indeed the “key” to any true grasp of the whole sense of that revered body of primeval literature. But the instant the concept is shifted from man divine to a divine man in an historical personage, dire confusion, entanglement in contradiction, ridiculous inconsistency and the eeriest “historical” nonsense are thrust into the structure. The concept of the Christos as the godly higher Self in man meets the tangled riddle of the exegesis of the Bibles with complete satisfaction of every intellectual demand, and no other concept does so. The concept of Christ as a man immediately afflicts the entire exegetical situation with hopeless sabotage. Used as the “key,” it jams the lock and opens nothing to the reasoning intelligence. But it does open something to the unreasoning psychic and emotional aptitudes of less intelligent folk: the hypnotic gullibility of religious piety and a pitiable slavery to religious superstition. And the quantity of the tragedy wrought in the world by the prevalence of these two psychological forces makes perhaps the most lugubrious chapter in human history. The concept of the Christ as “a man,” who ate, drank, slept, walked and spoke as any mortal, is beyond any possibility of refutation the most fatuous ideation that ever found a place in the effort to rationalize human religious experience.

No less has it been at the same time the most baneful influence in blocking the cultural enterprise of grasping the central power and fullest unction of that experience. Here again the truth of the situation runs in a direction exactly counter to that commonly believed. Pious orthodox opinion is wholly aligned to the idea that the historical Jesus is the most positive assurance of the individual Christian’s salvation and the active agent of its realization. This work ventures, doubtless for the first time in religious discussion, to fly directly in the face of that presumption with the claim that it is this very idea of the Christ as a historical person that has stood as the most concrete obstacle in the way of that salvation! The whole essay must be taken as the evidence advanced in support of that amazing reversal of all accepted belief. The basis of this strong contention will be the undeniable fact that the thesis of the historical Jesus has taken the mind and aspiration of all devotees outside themselves to an alleged man of Galilee, when the whole effort at spiritual growth and cultivation of our divinity must be focused within the depths of our own consciousness. It is no rank untruth to say that the cult of the historical Jesus has stood squarely between men and their immanent God and tended to keep them apart from each other. It has thwarted the culture of their own divinity. It would seem as if St. Paul wrote with this cogent realization in mind when he fairly shrieks at us: “Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is within you?” He is not a man outside yourselves; he is the God whom you keep buried so

deeply in your own hearts and minds that you do not know he is there. It is a notable thing that august ancient spiritual science rightly regarded it as a sinful aberrancy for one to worship a power outside one's self, or a deity lodged elsewhere than in the inner shrine of one's selfhood. Medieval and modern blindness has reversed this direction of aspiration, and with calamitous consequences. Some sixteen centuries of spiritual benightedness have produced for historical record the pitiful and demoralizing spectacle of millions of misguided votaries turning outside themselves for salvation and pleading with an alleged personal figure on the stage of remote history to enter their lives and transform them into loveliness, all the while neglecting the voice of the only real Christos that ever existed, their own instinct for goodness, truth and love. It was a turn that almost alone proved sufficient to effect the total abortion of the Western world's religious endeavor for a millennium and a half. It alone holds the legitimate answer to the insistent question, propounded in every epoch when gross barbarism rises to crush the nobility of spiritual culture:--why has religion failed to avert humanitarian catastrophes? Failure in religion's practical effort is certain to follow as long as a meaningless worship is paid out to the divinity alleged to be embodied in one single historical savior, while the principle of divine mind within the self is left totally uncultivated. Granting some psychological virtue to the adoration of a historical paragon, it is still admitted in all religious discussion that men can be saved in the end only by their own righteousness. No world savior was ever sent into the world to save men from the task of saving themselves. Ever memorable and oft quoted are the lines of Angelus Silesius, Medieval mystic:

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born, But not within thyself, thy
soul shall be forlorn; The cross on Golgotha thou lookest to in vain Unless within thyself it
be set up again.

If any actual vicarious atonement or salvation were possible, the whole purpose for which souls from the celestial empyrean migrate to earth to further their evolution would be thwarted. Each soul must become the dynamo and citadel of its own strength, or there would be inequity and chaos in the counsels of evolution. Life grants nothing to any unit of being that it has not earned. To do so would be to introduce favoritism and particularity into the universal economy. The importance of this argument merits a fuller consideration, and additional treatment of it will enter the study later on.

The enormous fatuity of the concept of humanity's Savior as a man must be examined in the light of a more candid scrutiny than any to which it has heretofore been subjected. Indeed one of the bases of quarrel with it is the very fact of its having been accepted without either

psychological or historical critique of a thoroughgoing kind. The closer and more keenly one brings reason and data to bear upon the matter the more clearly it is seen that the very vogue and sway of the idea has been made possible only through the almost total default of the rational faculty and its displacement by sheer unction of faith.

It is perhaps the most notable example and instance of the power of the psychological elements of mystical pietism to override and paralyze the rational elements in religion. For at any time in many centuries it needed only a half minute's cool and steady facing of the realities of the situation to bring to view in the sharpest of outlines the utter irrationality of the presupposition that the power able to redeem human weakness to godlike status could be embodied and expressed, wielded and effectuated to its grand purpose, in the person of a man. The sheer thought that the savior of mankind from evolutionary undevelopment to perfection could be a man, or a power, no matter how divine, lodged in the body of a man in history, is such an anomaly, so out of line with all known natural process, that merely to pose the idea to the mind and hold it steadfastly there in the light of all its ancillary implications, is to see it for what it is—an utterly baseless creation of distorted religious fantasy. Merely to face the thought that the whole evolutionary advance of mankind across the gulf of undeveloped capacities from animal through human to divine nature was alleged to be effectuated and instrumentalized by the forces embodied in a single man at a given date in history, is to see the notion in all the glaring baldness of its inherent absurdity. The human mind can readily enough envisage as a *modus consonant* with reality the elevation of humanity from brute to philosopher, from savagery to Christhood, through the injection from without or the regeneration from within of a light and power to change base selfishness to divine charity, and thus redeem the race. But it can contemplate this process as operative only through the sweep of an influence which pervades the mass of mankind, animating all hearts and enlightening all minds, after the natural analogy of a little leaven raising the whole lump. That is a methodology which the human mind can grasp and accredit as harmonious with veritude. But that this vast regeneration of the race should be implemented by and dependent upon the birth and existence of a single historic individual, even through the inspiration of his resplendent example, is a concept that grows more weird, crass and chimerical the longer it is held in the focus of thought. It has in fact held its grip upon millions of minds solely by virtue of the total dearth of intellectual candor and the mental paralysis induced by rabid elements of emotional religiosity. It can not for a moment bear the light of reason. It can live only in the dim twilight of intellectual stultification wherein the clear outlines of the rational problem can not be distinctly discerned.

There is indeed a natural revolt in the character of all normal men and women against the thought of their accepting salvation purchased for them by another, the more so if the price of the ransom is for the vicarious pain and suffering. What person of wholesome instincts wants to be saved by the sacrifice and oblation of another free being? Who that has the slightest iota of moral integrity would wish to live under the obligation of indebtedness for his evolutionary redemption to the sacrifice of another? Mankind cherishes a natural sense of the moral turpitude of taking what one has not won. It introduces whim into the normal order wherein man looks confidently for the reign of law. It is repugnant to man's inherent sense of right. Vicarious salvation was one of the items of theology that led Nietzsche to cry out his bitter denunciation of Christianity as "slave morality." Not merely the superman, but any man worthy of the name wants to face life and nature on their own terms and with his own resources, and will hold in contempt the man or faith that accepts the boon of salvation in the spirit of a craven. The purchase of man's redemption by the "shed blood of Christ," in the literal sense in which it stands as a doctrine of Christianity, is indeed one of the heaviest marks of Christianity's doctrinal degradation. (Happily it can be made rationally acceptable, as can all other doctrines, through a restoration of the true esoteric significance.) The learned Celsus in the third century tells us that Christianity appealed to and welcomed only the slaves of Roman tyranny, men and women of the most abject position. It was held in the lowest contempt by Pliny, Seneca, Tacitus, Suetonius and the more intelligent groups generally. It was rejected by all who were genuine enough to despise the self-confessed ignominy of letting a historical scapegoat bear the burden of achieving their karmic immunity. The gross teaching of an ersatz salvation of man, the race's restoration to its lost Paradise by way of the nailing of a quivering body of human flesh on a wooden cross on a given day, has been an insuperable obstacle to the swallowing of the Christian epos by thinking people down the ages. Vicariousness on any grounds is an unnatural and bizarre methodology; but the vicarious salvation of the human race through the sacrifice of a person in history transcends in fatuity the crassest fetishism of any wild children of forest and sea isle. Nature nowhere authenticates such a procedure to rational comprehension. It has stood as the weirdest anomaly in rational effort, defying all plausible explanation or fitness, thwarting all sincere search for true light, and taxing even the blindest of pious faiths to accept it as an inscrutable mystery.

All this irrational thesis was held for centuries in spite of the total dearth of any logical answer to the difficulties involved in the practical problem as to how the divinity historically embodied in one person could become and remain effectual for the evolutionary divinization of all the other children of humanity. Jesus might be in himself a mighty reservoir of divine essence, a veritable dynamo of godly unction. But how it was to be made available for all other men, how

transferred from him to a distribution amongst all others, by what transmission wires or channels it was to pass from him into the lives of those “believing on him,” on what conditions it was to be received by some and denied to others, or what pleas, prayers, sacrifices or cajolery were necessary to draw it forth from him,--all these elements of the practical or factual operation of Jesus’ saving grace to deify all men have never had an answer. And they can never have a rational answer. The groundplan and framework of Christian theology has ever had an artificiality that has rendered it a weird and fantastic thing in all conscientious effort at rationale. The spectacle of an omnipotent creator of all the worlds setting a trap to catch his own creatures by tempting them to sin, then condemning them to eternal misery in consequence of their inevitable “fall,” and afterwards negotiating with them to appease his wrath on condition that his own Son, only begotten, consent to die in their stead, has stood for sixteen centuries as the rock foundation of that religion which shouts down all others with its vociferous claims to all-highest excellence among the faiths of earth. Through the force of the wholly unaccountable magnanimity of the man Christ in sacrificing himself to save a reprobate humanity, the minds of the countless millions of Christian devotees over the centuries since his “death” may have been, as the hymn sings, Lost in wonder, love and praise.

But it is even more certain that they have been hopelessly lost in total incomprehension. Forced to swallow it by the overwhelming combination of ecclesiastical authority and unreasoning faith, they have yet been nearly choked by its unpalatability.

It is probably the opinion of millions of votaries of the atoning blood of Christ the man, that his saving grace has been made accessible to them, distributed to them, by his still-living active presence and his personal attention to their lives individually. Granting the continued existence of his individual personality after these two thousand years on some “spiritual” plane of being assumedly in touch with earthly affairs, there must be faced the infinitely complex problem of explaining how the consciousness of one man is able to give attention to the multitudinous details in the lives of millions of mortals at every moment of every day without cessation; how he is able to read the conscious content of innumerable minds and hearts with particularity and accuracy and adopt appropriate measures of spiritual strategy to answer the spoken and unbroken prayers of all these; how, in short, he is able to be a very present help in trouble in millions of complex situations all the time, and act in relation to all of them with impeccable accuracy and unfailing justice. Blind zealotry blots out this problem from the uncritical minds of the masses and priestcraft is warily content to let the dangerous dog lie asleep. It is not made the subject of debate. But if occasionally a hint of the dilemma is ventured, such a minor obstacle to piety is swept lightly aside with the

ever-handly reminder to such intellectual temerity that with God all things are possible, and with the only-begotten Son of God no less. Surely the almighty hand of Supreme Deity could manage a trifling difficulty of the sort, and at any rate God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.

To minds submerged in the aura of miracle and overborne by pious authority and sacerdotal glamor, all things in a mysterious theology were made palatable.

Jesus' pronouncement that "thy faith hath made thee whole" and his assurance that by faith we can move mountains into the sea had paved the way for the triumphant march of religious gullibility and the obscuration of reason. It is granted that we must have faith where we do not yet have knowledge. What else can a dependent mortal creature do but have faith in the beneficence of the universe? But a universal Power that is itself an all-embracing intelligence would not ask its creatures, who are destined to embody all degrees of that same intelligence, to hold to any specific formulations of faith the substance of which contravenes our reason and the regular courses of natural law. Our faith must rest upon and be supported by the inviolability of law and not take its stand upon any fantastic scheme that flouts what we do know and sets at odds all our reasoning faculties. With either flaming zealotry or stolid indifference holding the critical faculty of the masses in abeyance, and occasional outbreak of rational inquiry smitten down with vengeful violence, the problem of how the man Jesus, dead ages ago, could still be the divine guest in billions of human hearts all at once and all the time, was held in leash.

Again, it is undoubtedly the thought of hosts of minds adjusted to miraculous possibilities of many sorts that Jesus' still-potent spirit was detached from the limitations of his personality or even his earthly mind and, continuing to float about in some form of a ubiquitous presence like a permeating atmosphere, functions with a sort of automatism like air rushing in, wherever there is a spiritual vacuum or spiritual pressure. It is conceived that somehow that mind which St. Paul adjures us to let "be in" us as it was also in Christ Jesus pervades the world like a stratosphere and is there for us to register and lay hold of after the fashion of tuning in spiritually with the proper wave-length. But how the efficacy of such a vibrational force could be linked with and still dependent upon the personal Jesus of history, is in no way apparent or explainable. There is no necessary or factual connection. Divine consciousness or grades or rates of it may indeed conceivably be about us, bathing us in the universal aura of their supernal vibrations. But that any of them should have derived their origin and their present presence and operation from a man in history is again a matter that asks for our acceptance of a wholly irrational theological dictum.

This general notion receives some support from Jesus' own assurance that when he left earth he would send the Paraclete, the Comforter, who would guide us into all truth and be the ever-solicitous monitor at our elbow. But all that this does is simply to rename the ubiquitous influence. It transfers the generative power from the personal Jesus to an impersonal principle. The new divine comforter must distribute his consciousness over as much ground as the personal mind of the risen Jesus would have to cover. Strangely enough one of the very phrases which the Greek theologians of the ancient philosophical religion used to picture the pervasive scope and functioning of a divine element in humanity was that "the gods distribute divinity." But this was in reference to the distribution of a seed fragment of God's infinite and universal mind to every creature according to its rank in evolution. The presence of potential divinity distributively in all levels of life is not a crotchety but a quite reasonable and natural procedure.

It is indeed one of the great features in the early philosophies that gave form to basic Christianity. It is readily conceivable that a type or degree of supernal mind or consciousness does pervade the universe, an ethereal essence, so to say, of which evolving entities such as man can partake through the development of a receptive capacity in their own brain and nerve mechanism. To make God's infinite largesse available to man some such method of impartation on the one hand and appropriation on the other must be conceived as provided by the Oversoul of the world. But this is not the problem that is crucial to the tenability of the idea of a historical Jesus carrying out the part assigned to him in theology. He is there alleged to fulfill the function of saving millions of souls through his individual agency both during his life and for thousands of years after his death. If to substantiate the still operative power of Jesus Christ when he is no longer living, recourse must be had to the hypostatization of his personal mind as a universally pervasive cosmic atmosphere, the entire force of the method of explanation goes to weaken still further the claim for his historic personal existence and to strengthen that for his purely spiritual nature. It is not conceivable that the mind of one personal human being could reach and save billions of mortals. Therefore, to postulate a conceivable method by which such a mind could administer salvation to myriads in all ages, that mind must be released from any attachment to personality and characterized anew as a cosmic mental emanation or diffusion of mental substance. This deduction from the premises at once erases the personal Jesus from the picture of theology, if not in his life, then certainly from the moment of his death. If to render his mind operable for salvation its connection with his personality must be severed, then its connection with any personality is seen to be a clearly unnecessary, indeed impossible requirement. And this brings us face to face with the final outcome of this argument, which is that that mind which was in Christ Jesus would have existed, has existed and does exist, entirely independently of the fact or the question of any man's

historical presence on earth. For no more did Jesus originate that mind than does the radio mechanism originate the sonata that it renders in your room. Any man can catch it, as does the radio, from an omnipresent universal vibration, register it and give it expression on this plane of being. The vibration-wave of the sonata is in your room whether there is a radio present to reproduce it on the plane of your senses or not. The Christ consciousness was present as a cosmic outflow of divine thought energization, whether or not any man of requisite organic sensitivity lived to become its tubes and amplifier. The best that can be done for Jesus' uniqueness in this purview is to assume that perhaps he was the first man in history (if he lived) who was equal to making that register and that expression. But such a claim is bizarre from the first instant. It would have to rest on pure conjecture and assumption. And against it would be arrayed a host of vital considerations, such as that research now discloses that all the highest and truest sermons he allegedly preached to found a saving religion had been uttered by sage men centuries before him. If his message was the first release of the wisdom of supernal divine mind to humanity, it should have towered in grandeur and beauty to immeasurable height above anything taught antecedently. Organized ecclesiasticism has been bold enough for centuries to flaunt this legend before its following. But the discovery of the Rosetta Stone and the Behistun Rock has put an entirely new complexion on the study of comparative religion, opening up whole vast areas of ancient literature from which it is seen that Christianity itself drew the body of its material. The disconcerting result of all this for the Christian position is that it definitely refutes the claims as to Jesus' founding the first true religion and, far to the contrary, thrusts upon the apologists for these claims the difficult task of defending this sole emissary of deity to earth against the charge of wholesale literary plagiarism! If when he came to uplift humanity with a shining spirituality never before dreamed of, the best he could do was to repeat the sagas of early Greek, Chaldean, Persian, Hindu, Chinese and especially Egyptian wisdom, on what does the claim for his supreme uniqueness and matchless exaltation rest? Then, of course, there is that other predicament arising from the egregious claims of the Christian party, which, had it ever been frankly faced by ecclesiasticism, would have left the Occidental world in better situation. It is the matter of God's leaving the world prior to the year thirty-three or thereabouts without any chance to be saved by appropriating the mind of Christ.

That the mere opportunity for the operation in humanity's evolution of the saving principle of God's grace should have been held off until the birth of a babe in Bethlehem at a given year in history, and not have been freely accessible to righteous men antecedently, needs nothing more than its clear statement to advertise its preposterousness. It would be to say that the normal course of human evolution was held in abeyance, estopped, until the man Jesus arrived. One of our Christmas hymns sings:

Late in time behold him come,

Offspring of the Virgin's womb.

It is of course an absurd idea that the road to human elevation was not opened until the man-Christ, Jesus, landed on the planet at a late epoch in the race's career. This is one of many twists and quirks which Christian dogma has asked its votaries to accept, to the dislocation of their rational mentality.

Chapter II MYTH TRUER THAN HISTORY

It would seem to remove the discussion from the province of rational dialectic and throw it into the field of abnormal and precarious psychic phenomenalism to introduce an argument that has been frequently advanced by a number of people that is by no means inconsiderable. It must, however, be given a place in the debate if only for the reason that it arises from a special type of experience that appears to be actual among a surprising number of people who are at any rate sincere in their report and interpretation of it. It falls in a domain of psychology that has for the most part been shunned by academic investigation, its phenomena being commonly rated as abnormal, eccentric and unauthentic, categorized in fact as mostly self-delusion or hallucination. It has lately received some open countenance from scholastic authority and has been admitted to the field of legitimate study under the name of parapsychology. It may be better recognized under the designation of psychic phenomena. At any rate the phenomenon in question has been presented by many persons in modern religious groups of spiritistic character as a real experience of themselves or others testifying to them, and such is the veridical and empirical nature of the occurrence that for them it settles the entire debate categorically and summarily. The arguments based on it sway the attitude of thousands on the theme of this work and it therefore merits presentation and critique. The point is advanced by mediums, psychics, clairvoyants and sensitives, to the effect that they can testify directly to the fact of Jesus' historical existence because, forsooth, they have seen him and talked with him, in inner vision! His personality is not a matter of doubt or speculation, because he has appeared to them in his shining form! They have seen him as St. Paul saw him on the road to Damascus. Their need of faith is lost in the certitude of sight. To these persons the debate is closed with their declaration that others may argue—they have seen.

This phenomenal experience, commoner than is generally supposed, must, however, be subjected to a critical scrutiny that it apparently has not hitherto received. This is the more desirable because these reports of the appearance of a radiant personage to the inner sight of many people are both too voluminous and seem too sincerely founded to be thrust aside with the cry of hallucination. As evidently veridical psychic phenomena they prove an interesting theme in themselves. It seems to be necessary to concede that visions of the sort are actually seen. The shining apparition seems to these seers to be present in reality. Whatever it may truly be and however to be explained, it is evidently actually seen. The point at issue for our discussion is not the veritude of the experience or the veracity of the psychics; but what the thing proves. The critique is not directed at the fact, but at its interpretation. The position taken is that such

apparitions present no necessary or valid evidence for the existence of the Gospel Jesus in Judea nineteen hundred years ago. The identity of the personage of light in the radiant vision can not be other than a matter of presumption. Upon asking any of those who have “seen Jesus” in their subjective world how they have identified their spiritual visitant with the man of Galilee long dead, the answer is invariably: “Why, of course it was Jesus; I know it was he.” On top of this one will be informed that he looked just like the pictures of him, or that the visionary recognized him by his whole appearance, as being just what he or she expected. Or the startling assertion will be made that he talked and declared his identity as Jesus, or even displayed to view the nail marks in his hands and feet. These rejoinders may seem at first glance to be pretty formidable testimony, but they are evidence not so much for the existence of the Galilean long ago as they are of the total failure of the clairvoyants to think out the implications of their assumption. They offer glaring evidence also as to the extraordinary capacity of persons endowed with these unusual gifts for psychic impressionability and intellectual credulity, if not gullibility.

Looking first at the latter, the “varieties of religious experience” include a wide range of phenomenalistic susceptibility. Old men have dreamed dreams and young men have seen visions. Saints have had rapturous exaltations, seers have beheld apocalypses and mystics have been wafted aloft in ecstasies. These experiences have abounded in great multiplicity, variety and profusion—unless the record is one long train of fiction and falsity, delirium and delusion. There is Joan d’Arc, there is Swedenborg, there is Madame Guyon and a legion of others. Modern students of this side of psychology assert that a thought is in reality a shaped figure in the mental ether; and assert that if thousands of people hold the same picture of such a person as the Christ in mind with great intensity and devotion for a continued period, the thought-form will become reified, hypostatized or substantialized to the extent that it will drift into the mental purview of psychic sensitives and be seen and mistaken for a veridical appearance. Modern psychology might catalogue it as an entification of the unconscious or subconscious object of much devotion. There are strange and uncanny possibilities in nature’s bag of tricks. There are denizens in more worlds than the solid physical. It seems evident that many people have seen a personage of luminous tenuousness in their subjective world. But all proof is wanting that their testimony as to the identity of the apparition has any validity. There is no field in which people generally are more gullible than in that of religion. Nowhere else are the bars of the critical judgment so quickly and completely let down for the entry of superstition, the supernatural, miracle, magic and marvel. Indeed no Christly claimant would be accredited unless he could do “mighty works” to awe the multitudes. If he can not heal the sick and raise the dead he is no Christ. But the impotence to which these tendencies reduce the reasoning faculty in devotees is perhaps nowhere better seen

than in the situation here portrayed. These psychics testify unhesitatingly and with total conviction that the figure of light they have seen is the still-living Jesus of Nazareth, without a moment's pause to reflect that no one can identify a figure seen now with another person never seen at all! Identification can function only on the basis of previous knowledge or acquaintance. No one can identify the figure seen in a vision with the historical Jesus. The assumption that they can do so is ridiculous. Logic rules it out. Their claim that the figure is that of Jesus is based on pious assumption and can be nothing but sheer guess. The eyes can not identify the appearance of a person unless the eyes have seen him before, or his photograph or likeness. The figure seen matches the popularly conceived appearance of Jesus, and Jesus is the only historical person they can think to call it.

The claim that the apparition resembles the pictures of Jesus in books and prints is the weakest item in the "identification." In fact it reduces the entire claim to blank folly. In spite of gratuitous assertions of the existence of portraits of the Galilean, assuredly there has never been an authentic picture of the man, even if he lived. How can the apparitional Jesus look like his portraits when there were no portraits? If even in hallucination the visionary Jesus does resemble the conventional portrayals, we may have before us here an interesting psychological phenomenon. For the fact would seem to lend some support to the "occult" theory that the general communal thought-picture of Jesus, based on the customary portraits seen for centuries, has actually entified a spiritual thought-formation of the man in the image of his published likenesses. The allegation of pictorial resemblance is final proof of the purely subjective character of the visions and their inadmissibility as testimony in the case. What they give evidence of is some extraordinary capacities of the human psyche, not remote past history. The proof of connection between present subjective event in these cases and past objective event is totally wanting. The phenomena manifest in this realm are far too uncertain, undependable, even dangerous, for the practical uses of life. As a final observation on the point, one is permitted to express a robust doubt whether, if the living spiritual counterpart of some other ancient personage, unknown and unpictured through the centuries, should present itself before the inner gaze of these psychics, they would have any ability or means of identifying the specter. Could they identify, say, Apollonius of Tyana?

There is, however, another consideration that falls within the realm of psychology which has far more direct pertinence to the great question. The inquiry faces the task of evaluating the psychological influence and spiritual or cultural serviceableness of the idea of the personal Jesus as against the conception that makes "him" to be a high type of universal consciousness or principle. The defense of the historical point of view invariably lays vast store upon the claim that any vital

religion, at any rate Christianity, could never have generated effective psychological dynamism among millions of followers if based only upon the characterization of the Christos as sheer principle. It required the living Jesus to generate in the Christian movement the driving power that it has become. Jesus must have lived, is the argument, if only because such a life in actuality was necessary to give the religion based on it just that vital psychological reinforcement that it has manifested. He must have lived because it can be shown that it was most eminently desirable, from a psychological point of view, that he should have lived. The conception of Christ as principle could never have developed enough dynamic force or fervor to have enabled Christianity, so to say, to effectuate itself.

It must be stated that the outcome of this phase of the argument can have no direct evidential bearing upon the question of the historicity of the Christ. To prove that his existence was highly desirable does not prove that it was a fact. But the point is given a quite extraordinary importance in the debate, and this not without reason. It strikes close to the central nerve of the whole Christian system. That system bases its unique efficacy upon the claim that it alone of religions offers to believers a living God. The only time God ever came to earth in person, he outlined for humanity its true religion, the Christian. By many people this point of the psychological power of the historical Christ is maneuvered into the place of central importance in the whole discussion. They urge the claim that the Christ was sent into personal embodiment for the express purpose of providing mankind with one historical example of divine perfection, and assert that the whole argument stands or falls with the question of the psychological value of his example. Such an example was necessary to effectuate the religious salvation of the world. Jesus must have lived because such an ensampler was a psychological necessity. God had to send his Son in answer to this inherent need. It would be unthinkable that such a need would not have been providentially met. Therefore Jesus did live. The broad prevalence and strength of this position calls for an exhaustive critique. It can be conceded at the outset that in the effort of a divine hierarchy of overlords to humanize and eventually divinize an animal-born race, the advantage of the employment of a living example would be evident. God or his hierarchical agents, archangels, demi-gods, heroes, divine men, could not but be fully aware of the powerful force and virtue of a concrete example of perfection set before the eyes of mankind. It would both quicken and stabilize the general human inclination to strive after the ideal. It would give solid and constructive form to that aspiration by focusing its drive upon a specific set of ideal characteristics embodied and manifested in the exemplar. It would thus prevent the waste of infinite quantities of devotional force spent in direction toward ill-defined goals. The great divine man would stand before the world and lure all men unto him by the attractive power of his shining beauty. No other

impartation of inspiration from God to man could make its salutary influence so effectively fruitful of constant good stimulus. A divine model of perfection would uplift the world through the magnetically moving force of his example. The gods must know that humanity is psychologically set and disposed to ape a paragon. The dynamic moral power of an embodied ideal is ever great. This psychological disposition well prepared the stage for the presentation to the world of its ideal hero, the Christos.

The gods did know that man would ape the divine paragon, and they did present the hero, the great sunlit figure of Christos, in every religion of antiquity. With the keenest incisiveness it must be contended, as perhaps the prime spiritual motive of this study, that the argument based on the psychological beneficence of a divine ensampler for the human race falls out in favor of the non-historicity, and not, as almost unanimously believed, of the historicity. This astounding assertion must be vindicated against the general mass of contrary opinion.

If all other things were equal, naturally the impressive force of an ideal of perfection embodied in a living man would be conceded to be more effective for character in the lives of devotees than would the same paragon depicted only in the figure of a drama. A life lived on the same terms as our own would emotionally impress all mortals more powerfully than would any fictional representation. But all other things are not equal in the case of the Christ. There are elements in the theological situation environing the figure of the Gospel Jesus that make the difference between the two quite abysmal. The first great divergence is in the fact that theology has made of the historical divine man the only possible such figure in the human record. Jesus is in the religion that exploited him the only-begotten Son of God. He is the only embodiment of the Father's glory and cosmic presence ever manifested in human form. He is totally unique and lonely. No man can match his perfection. This fact of his solitary uniqueness at once destroys whatever psychological value his incarnation in a man of flesh might otherwise have. It defeats the very purpose for which an ensampler is designed—the effective working of the lure of his perfection under the force of the assurance that by striving the aspirant may achieve identity or equality with the ideal one. If it is published beforehand that the worshipped Personage is the unattainable and forever unapproachable Ideal, the springs of devotion and zeal are dried up at their very source. Why strive, why aspire, why copy, if it is to be all in vain? The glistening paragon becomes only a romantic ideal, the more radiant and bright-hued because of its eternal remoteness and inaccessibility. It is placed there only for mortals to gaze and gape at in awe and marvel. But it is rendered useless for the very thing claimed as the strength of the argument from psychology, the inspirational power of the life lived to be a moving example for us. The manipulators of the

psychological factors in the ecclesiastical enterprise, in straining to assure the Christly figure of perennial reverence and worship of the romantic sort by placing him on an inimitable level of perfection and uniqueness, unwittingly sacrificed the very element in the psychological situation that it was most ardently hoped to gain by the procedure. To keep him secure in his lofty place of adoration they weakened the force of his ability to stimulate emulation. He is the stainless One, incapable of sin; men are doomed sinners, who must in craven fashion plead with him for salvation from innate degeneracy. Thus the luminous picture of the mighty paragon has not worked out, and can not work out, as a triumphant force designed to elevate character by the cogency of its living reality. It has in fact operated directly to defeat that effect. It has left men facing a hopeless effort and turning from resolute zeal for attainment to sunken morbidity expressed in the conventional theological ideas of sin and its dog, remorse. Before the Ideal the eyes of sinning man have been lowered to the ground with sense of unworthiness and self-depreciation; they have not been lifted up to face the revealed divinity as the possibility of man's own accomplishment. Before the figure of the man-Christ man has made himself abject, groveling in unmanly beggarliness before the unbearable glory of the One who stands clothed in unattainable majesty.

The psychological influence of this only-begotten manifestation is further decisively emasculated by the accompanying theological doctrine that this one epiphany of God's nature was not a man of our own earthly evolution, but came directly from the hand of supreme Deity, a product of divine fiat from another world. Though frequently emphasis is laid upon his community of nature with us, still he is exotic, a transplantation from the empyrean. He did not need to go through the long evolutionary gateway of our humanity, but was already a citizen of the cosmos, a dweller with God before the worlds were, existent before Abraham was. Though so high, he yet condescended, abased himself, to become for a generation one among us, sharing our immature nature without yielding to its seductions. He had not come up the long road of development from unicell or moneron to man, but came down from the skies full-panoplied in cosmic resplendence, to lay for the time being his glory mildly by, as the Christmas hymn has it. His coming was not an act of common brotherhood of a creature kindred with us, but a condescension and a gratuity, arbitrary in cosmic counsels and unrelated to natural contingency. He was a pure gift from the Gods. The Father's whim and his own munificent spirit of self-sacrifice brought him here. The merit was his; ours the unmerited benefit. So again the alleged great psychological efficacy of his exemplary life is annulled by the strangeness and vast remoteness of his nature from our own. He is no brother but a distant ambassador who deigns to visit us for a season and labor with us, but can not abide with us forever. He must in a moment return to the celestial palace, sending a substitute to remind us of his one charming sojourn with us.

But the crux of the debate on the psychological efficacy of a paragon is not reached until the matter is approached from the side of the great question of the relative potency of two forces, one operative from without the subject, the other from within. This crucial point of discussion must be given thorough treatment. Though it is not critical or decisive for the question of Christ historicity, it looms as perhaps the most portentous phase of the entire survey.

It is not too sweeping an assertion to aver that the whole psychological beneficence of religion stands or falls with the outcome of the discussion of the historicity of the Messiah. It stands if the world savior be proven an element, a divine leaven, within the soul and conscience of all humanity. It falls if he be reduced to the futile stature of a man in history. For it is the contention of this study that the moral effect upon general humanity of being taught to look for salvation to a savior in the person of a historical man is inherently and inevitably degrading to the immanent divinity of man. Beyond doubt this strong asseveration will be violently disputed. It will be contended that it runs counter to every obvious envisagement in the situation. Nevertheless it is urged here that these alleged obvious implications seem obvious only in consequence of many centuries of inculcation of a false view which has overridden and subjugated open minds, and that they would lose their obviousness if they could be considered in the light of pure reason and apart from ingrained habitudes of pious assumption. Had the opposite view been sanctified by such age-long approbation it, rather than the first, would carry the weight of obvious rectitude with it. For, of the two possibilities, surely the method of human salvation that would instinctively at first sight commend itself as the obviously more natural one would be that which places the agency of universal salvation from evolutionary dereliction in a power lodged within all men, as against an extraneous and uncertain influence somehow, but in no understandable way, shed upon us under certain peculiar conditions by one person in history. Obviousness is obviously with the method of a general distribution of a divine spirit among all men to act as a leaven of righteousness and self-transformation, and it is certainly less clearly with a method that makes all men dependent upon the unaccountable self-immolation of one only-begotten Son of God. The one is in consonance with man's every normal instinct of natural procedure; the other strains at blind faith to swallow its artificially bizarre and fantastic features. The latter view, be it averred, has only won its place in the acceptance of millions of purblind devotees through the stultification of their reason by the ceaseless exploitation of the forces of religious faith. The irrational flaunting of the Biblical text "for with God all things are possible" has further tended to keep the door open to the influx into less critical minds of every conceivable absurdity in the theological field. The introduction of boundless irrationality in doctrinism was initially made when in the third and fourth centuries the esoteric interpretation of scripture yielded to the frightful debasement of exoteric literalism. The

whale's swallowing of Jonah was no more difficult for piety than the ecclesiastical swallowing of the Jonah allegory and all its brother myths in their literal form. The tragedy of its successful accomplish-22 ment—as far as it has been successful—has lain in the necessary preliminary derationalization and paralysis of millions of simple minds before the natural gagging and choking could be overcome. Blind faith and the peculiar weakness of the human mind in face of the alleged supernatural were the instruments of the tragic intellectual dupery. The noble scriptures were intended to gain and hold the perennial reverence of all intelligent minds; they were never designed to enslave minds with the fatal fascination of a fetish. Once the historical status was assigned to the Christ principle the words, “look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,” have exercised a damaging sway over countless minds. To those who knew that Jesus, esoterically comprehended, was the dramatic type-figure of the divinity within us, the words carried not fatality but uplift and inspiration. The difference in the two cases clearly limns the difference in the psychological character of the two influences. This work advances the proposition that it is psychologically hazardous at any time for people to place their divinity in a person or locale outside themselves. To do so involves the inevitable repercussion on average minds that their salvation is to be vicariously won. The disastrous consequence of this reaction must in the end be the enervation and atrophy of spiritual effort and initiative on the part of the individual to win his own redemption. The effect of the doctrine of salvation through the intercession of the Son of God—a salvation which the doctrine implies we had in no wise ourselves earned—could not be, as claimed, an intensification of the personal effort at righteousness. The very words of scripture were to the effect that man's righteousness in the sight of God is as filthy rags. Every presupposition of the doctrine as presented emphasized the uselessness of effort and the casting of our burden upon Jesus' shoulders. “What a friend we have in Jesus!” has been sung in full-throated unctuousness. His own invitation to the weary and heavy-laden to come unto him and find rest has had an all-too-ready response in the literal sense. Taken wrongly these words have gone far to impair the natural sturdiness of spiritual character in millions. By a psychology that was hardly subtle, but simple and direct, they militated to turn the conscientious resolution of the individual away from the actual cultus of his own immanent deity in thought, word and deed, while he pursued the chimera of vicarious salvation through pleading with his personal Redeemer. He 23 was told that the more abjectly he confessed his own folly and failure, the more effective would be his plea in the ears of the compassionate Savior of men. In looking to Jesus in a man of flesh the devotee neglected the indwelling Jesus, and would inevitably do so in the exact ratio of his ignorance and his gullibility.

This is a simple proposition and is quite self-evident. It is the law of nature that an organism or a function not used atrophies. Man has in a lifetime only a given quantity of psychic energy. If he expends it in one direction, the possibility of expending it in another is diminished by so much. The only Christos that is available for him is that hidden divine love within him. If he wastes his soul-force in straining to induce an exterior personage to intervene in his evolutionary effort on his behalf, he loses by so much the fleeting opportunity to cultivate his indwelling guest. It is necessary to put this with categorical cogency, because it will be brushed aside as inconsequential. It is close to being the crux of the entire problem under discussion. A man can not at one and the same time serve two masters, the one within and the other without. Neither can he reap the fruit of an ardent cultivation of his potential divinity while pouring out all his psychic ardor upon the person of a Galilean peasant.

Not only will it be said that this can be done, but it will be claimed in addition that the adoration of the Judaeen carpenter is itself the prime stimulus and incentive to the end of one's inner spiritual culture. This brings us back to the question of the relative psychological power of a living or of a mythical and dramatic Christ. The great cry of the proponents of the historicity is that the psychological power of a living historical example must surely be greater and more beneficent than that of a purely dramatic figure. History, it is urged, is real, whereas a myth is fictional. This debate is of critical importance, because if the Christos of the Bible was not a person of flesh, he becomes, as would be said, nothing but a character of pure fiction. He is a myth. And many books have been written to prove that he is only a myth. How, it will be asked in vigorous spirit, can a mythical figure be presumed to exert as strong a psychological force upon the world as a Jesus in real life? As hinted briefly before, the unique strength of the position of Christianity is claimed to lie in this one item of the reality of Jesus' living demonstration or epiphany of God in humanity. It holds up to its following the assurance of ultimate victory based on the one divine fait accompli in history. Jesus was a living example, and not a mere theological promise unaccompanied by accomplishment. Jesus' life is the one solid rock of veritude upon which mortal man can build his hopes. What is a myth compared with this?

This is the argumentative situation as viewed from the point of naïve exoteric simplicity. It is not, however, the view revealed to deeper esoteric reflection. Esotericism understands something about the myth that is quite unknown to the uninitiated general mind. The ancient sages knew something concerning the myth that the modern mind has never grasped. It can now be said with certitude that the whole genius of religious and philosophical culture escaped the grasp of Occidental civilization as a result of the third-century loss of this certain understanding of

the nature and utility of the myth. It is time, after centuries of stupid nescience, that modern ignorance of a vital matter be enlightened. Enlightenment on this detail may yet save religion and humanitarian culture, menaced dangerously by our blind failure to concentrate upon the one cultus of a higher selfhood in man that alone can redeem the world from immersion in the lower levels of consciousness and motivation.

What was known of old, and must now be proclaimed anew with clarion blast, is that the myth, as employed by ancient illuminati in Biblical scripture, is not fiction, but the truest of all history! So far from being fiction in the sense of a story that never happened and is therefore false to fact, it is the only story that is completely and wholly true! The myth is the only true narrative of the reality of human experience. It is the only ultimately true history ever written. It is a picture and portrayal of the only veridical history ever lived. All other so-called history, the record of people's acts and movements, buildings and destructions, marchings and settlings, is less truly history than the myth! The latter is the realest of history, as it is the account of the actual experience of life in evolution. Real as history is, it is finally less true than the myth. The myth is always and forever true; actual history is never more than an imperfect approximation to the truth of life. Even as a perfectly faithful record of what actually happened, book history is far from being true. This is an admission so commonplace that every courtroom is on guard against the testimony of witnesses because of the incapacity of the human senses in making an impeccable record of event. No history book ever contained a precisely true account of occurrence. No two historians ever wrote identical narratives of a war or a nation's life. The writing of actual history has never been other than the more or less careful exercise of the chronicler's constructive imagination.

On the other hand the myth is, as nearly as the highest human-divine genius can construct it, a clear picture of the more real import of life itself. It is possible for conscious beings such as men to live through actual events of history and yet largely, at times completely, miss the reality, in a profounder philosophical sense, of the very experience they undergo. What history thus misses the myth expresses. History is never more than a partial slap-stick comic or heavy tragic flirtation with the deep realities; the myth is a clear delineation of them. The myth is no more a fiction than a good photograph is a fiction. It is a true picture. In the hands of semi-divine mythicists of old it was a splendid photograph of something that is of far greater utility to men whose divine destiny entails a struggle for spiritual culture than any uncertain chronicle of man's tawdry fights and scrambles could ever be. It was made to be a glowing pictograph of those basic archai, those eternal principles of truth, those immutable laws of growth and structure which are the everlasting essence of all being. So the myth is ever truer than history. It is a portrayal of the meaning and

structure of all history. It pictures and preserves forever for the grasp of unfolding divine consciousness in man that golden light of true realization which alone elevates his historical experience above animal sensuousness and vegetative existence.

With this revised comprehension of the myth it is now possible to approach with better qualification for a successful resolution of difficulties the matter of the historicity and the psychological potency of the central figure in the early Christian and all antecedent systems. That central figure was in the myths and in the religious dramas of most ancient nations for thousands of years B.C. It stood there drawn and limned by the astutest dramatic genius the race has ever produced, to be the perennial reminder to all men of all religions of their own divine endowment, and to serve as dynamic instruction in the methods of attaining its progressive evolution in and through history.

In the counsels of the Sages, who were men of our own humanity graduated in earlier cycles to the place of mastership and perfected knowledge of the whole earthly evolution—St. Paul’s “just men made perfect”—the problem facing them in their task of giving to early humanity compendia of truth and wisdom that should guide the race through the course of self-controlled unfoldment was one that called for a determination of the best practical method of both holding before man the ideal of all his striving and stimulating his steady zeal to pursue it. It is not known now as it was in ancient days that a grade and council of perfected men, risen through humanity to divinity, stood in the relation of tutors and teachers to infant humanity, and prescribed codes of morals, religion, philosophy, law, mythology, literature and art, as well as mathematics, science and physics, not to forget agriculture, for the beginnings in civilization and culture. These are the authors of the great sacred books of antiquity, the instructors in pyramid building, the founders of human progress. Their graduate status at once explains the otherwise inexplicable phenomenon that has bewildered and confounded the savants of modern knowledge,—how it was that races that were still in the semi-barbaric stage already held in their possession tomes of the most exalted wisdom and philosophical insight, as well as moral purity, which their own undeveloped mentality could not have produced.

These men, both by evolutionary selection and by humanitarian choice on their own part, performed the function of formulating the cultural heritage of the human race, particularly in the domain of religion and philosophy. One of the greatest of the problems confronting them in their sublime work was the choice of method by which mankind could be most deeply impressed with the sublimity of the divine goal toward which the race was struggling and most intelligently

spurred on to attain it. The plan adopted by the counsels of the most august wisdom was based on the decision to place before the world systems of religion, in which the outline of the drama of life, the place of the world in the cosmos, the place of man in the hierarchy of being, the moral conflict leading to evolution, and the eventual deification of humanity at the “end of the age” or cycle, should be clearly set forth for the behoof of all generations. In order that there should be no possibility of man’s missing the mark, or failing to understand exactly the goal of perfection to which his whole incarnational series was destined to lift him, the Sages resorted to the measure of placing at the very heart of every religious system an ideal personage who should typify and personify man himself, in his dual nature as human and divine, 27 struggling forward to the consummation of his high glory. This central character embodied the divine element that was to deify mankind, and the drama depicted the final victory of the god within over the lower forces in the human compound. The figure was of course that of the Christos, who in his last triumph is clothed in robes of solar light, to indicate that the deity within man is of kindred essence with the sun and that as man progresses toward his final exaltation in glory his garments shall be white as the light and his righteousness shall cause him to shine like the sun in the kingdom of his Father. In this glorious character men could see pictured their history, their destiny and their eventual conversion into angels of light. This was the model, the archetype, the paragon of excellence decided upon by the council of perfected men to be made central in every religion given to the early nations, as their chosen means of most cogently impressing humanity’s millions through the ages to strive after the shining ideal of divinity. In order that historical man could never forget that ideal or drift away from it, the Sages incorporated in every religion this very copy and replica of the man become God, so that it needed only for men to look at the model to see the image of their own life and their apotheosization. If mankind needed to be stimulated to the good life by the force of a divine ensampler, the Sages saw to it that the great spiritual allurements were provided. The radiant figure of the Sun-God, man himself divinized, stood at the heart of every old religion. High wisdom comprehended that mortal men needed to have a picture of their own glorious goal set before their eyes. The picture was given. The psychological power of a paragon to lure impressionable mankind was recognized and the paragon supplied. The whole history of man was diagrammed and with consummate genius depicted in a great drama, with the Sun-God always the central and significant character. It is known that the features and play of the drama were of such impressiveness and moving power that no device of human conception could have transcended the purificatory, or as the Greeks called it, the cathartic moral efficacy of this representation. It was a veritable baptism of the spectator and candidate in transfiguring elevation of consciousness.

It will presumably still be urged that if these exalted personages possessed the wisdom attributed to them they must have known that the example of one living Christ on earth would be more effective for salutary influence than any number of dramatic figures. At least two considerations weighed against their holding any such opinion or acting upon it. They realized for one thing that merely to present to the world one living example of perfect humanity would defeat the very psychology they aimed at. It would have been pointless and superfluous in a world that was to be taught that the rough road of evolution would bring every man to Christhood. Again they knew that it would be both confusing and disconcerting to intelligent people everywhere to proclaim the advent of one perfected soul in unique isolation, when it was already the general knowledge of instructed men in early days that more than one of humanity's chain had reached the mark of the high calling of God in the Christos, that a number would attain it in every age, and that all men would eventually do so. The proclamation and the production of one only example of accomplished divinization would have been meaningless and lacking in significant virtue in a world that was intended to be rightly instructed on fundamental verities. If there were but one living paragon, only one generation would see him, and if he was an obscure person like the Galilean, only a few hundred persons would know of him through personal contact. The sheer difficulty of having his name, fame and life and teaching advertised to the rest of humanity would have to be managed against real obstacles. If he himself proclaimed his unique divinity, how could he make ignorant, blind humanity accept him? His heralding by angels and portents might readily fall afoul of the general ancient vogue of such things, and pass unheeded.

It was not perhaps even considered for a moment that a purely typical ideal figure would serve to inspire men less than a living example, because every man, it was known, became a living example in the proportion in which he embodied the ideal in his life and person. Nothing was thus to be gained by a historical example that could not be better won by the ideal type impersonation. There was no point in producing one living paragon to prove to the world that man could become divine, when it was already known that all men would in due time become divine. All mortals, as they became intelligent, knew that they had the struggle of evolution before them and that perseverance would land them at the gates of godlikeness. What they needed was the vivid dramatization of the quality and character of that perfection toward which they were to aspire. These were clearly and impressively outlined in the dramatic type figure. The essential ingredients for compounding the most efficacious virtue in an ensampler were all present in this situation. Nothing was lacking that a living man-Christ could have supplied. The prime element was the knowledge that every man must be his own savior. This item of philosophical truth being known, the dramatic model possessed more sanely compelling force than a living personation. The

knowledge of universal salvation robbed the latter of any advantage over the other. An embodied Christ would have been an impressive spectacle, but not overwhelmingly or inordinately so, for the knowledge that men were advancing into the highest stages of purity and illumination everywhere at all times deprived the fact of its uniqueness. One perfected man would not have been one alone, but one among many. It is sharply to be recognized that the mere presumption of superior psychological advantage in a living type figure became possible only with the decay of knowledge that man's upward progress is the work of the individual himself in conjunction with nature, and the consequent entry of the vicarious concept through the corruption of ancient divine philosophy. In the end the orthodox presupposition that human salvation demanded the driving force of a personal God in the flesh, so far from proving its natural correctness, demonstrates only that the world's keenness of philosophical insight had been blunted to the degree that a totally insupportable thesis could be imposed upon the millions without a chance for successful repudiation.

The momentous task of providing nations and peoples with a divine model and exemplar was accomplished by the sagacious tutors of the race through the institution of a ritual drama designed and formulated to produce the most beneficent effect. It was adopted as the method that most readily met the terms of natural expediency and practicability. It would minister in full to the psychological needs of a race endowed and constituted as mankind was. With transcendent genius the Sages formulated the systems of myths, allegories, fables, parables, numerological structures and astrological pictographs such as the zodiac and the planispheres or uranographs to supplement the central ceremonial drama. The whole structure was, however, fabricated with such esoteric subtlety that, the keys once lost, the system has defied the best of medieval and modern acumen to recapture its cryptic import. The divinity in man being a portion of the ineffable glory of the sun, and necessarily therefore typified by it, the great scenic portrayal was built upon the solar allegory, and the successive phases of man's divinization were enacted around the solar year in accordance with the significance of the orb's monthly and seasonal positions. Ancient religion was for this reason called solar religion or "sun-worship." Temples were built to the sun and hymns to the sun written to extol its splendor as typical of man's inner splendor. The meaning of the drama thus interwoven at every turn with the movements of the great natural analogue and type of our divinity, every detail of the ritual would receive an enormous enhancement of impressiveness and meaning for celebrants, who would be subjected in this way to the greatly magnified psychic power that was generated by the co-ordination of their highest spiritual conceptions with the redoubtable truth of nature. Ancient sapiency linked spiritual law and natural law together in a kinship and correspondence that endowed the former with all the impregnable certitude of the latter. This link

between the two aspects of truth was broken about the third century, and religion has ever since been crippled by want of a reinforcement so naturally strong. The modern religious consciousness has to make shift as best it can in almost total privation of the vital sources of assurance and stability which flowed into the mind from the correlation of its spiritual tenets with natural truth. Every theological presentment must necessarily fall upon mental comprehension with a manifold strength if it is immediately seen to be corroborated by the open facts of nature. Mystical experience will be vastly certified to intelligence if it can be illuminated by the glow of meaning emanating from natural symbols. A graphic representation of hidden meaning is always far more effective to stamp the mind with living images than language of itself can accomplish. Hence the resort to drama in the first place, and next to a drama that was based on and interwoven with the most obvious of all natural phenomena—the rise and setting of the sun in the daily round and the larger counterpart of the same routine in the seasonal cycle. These two daily and annual operations, the alternate victory and defeat of the sun, typify of course the very gist of the whole human drama, the soul's descent into its "death" in mortal body and its recurrent resurrection therefrom. This is the core of the central theme in all religious scripture. The daily sinking of the sun at eve in earth or ocean, and its rising again in the east at dawn, or its yearly descent to the south in the autumn and its succeeding return northward in the spring, all prefigure the descent of the soul, a unit of God's own conscious mind, into incarnation in its "night" or "winter" of "death" and its subsequent resurrection from the tomb of the body. The fact that ancient insight allied tomb and body in one meaning is astonishingly indicated by the identity of the Greek words, soma, body and sema, tomb.

In this ceremonial drama the central figure was the sun-god, or Son of God, the Christos, Messiah. He was likewise the Avatar, the Bodhisattva, the World-Savior. A generic term for him was The Coming One, or "The Comer" in Egypt. And never until the decadent epoch that fell like a pall upon early Christianity in the third century was the Messianic Messenger ever thought of as "coming" in the sense of being born as a person in the world. This is a fact of momentous significance. The many world saviors antecedent to Jesus were types and not persons born in history. They were typical characters portraying that spirit of divine charity which should transform and transfigure human life from the rapacity of the beast to the graciousness of unselfish love. Its "coming" would be its gradual growth and its mounting sweep in the hearts and minds of humanity as a whole. It would not be "born" until it came to overt expression in the active lives of mortals. Its taking root and gradually expanding in world consciousness was likened unto the planting and flourishing of the tiny mustard seed in the Gospel parable. No Christos can possibly "come" into the world except it arrive on the waves of charitable impulse that well up in

individual and mass motivation. No Christ can bring godliness in his single person. No Messiah can impart it to men in the mass by any other method than the transforming of all hearts through the throb of Christly compassion and the exaltation of all minds into the likeness of the Christly intelligence.

Treated cursorily already, the argument that for full inspirational suggestiveness humans must have their faith fortified by the assurance that one man at least actually did attain to Christhood and manifest the ideal of perfection, must receive somewhat fuller scrutiny. Its force was already weakened by the consideration that the one character in history alleged to have furnished mortals this assurance was not a man of our own evolution, and had not attained his divinity over the same pathway that we must tread, but was an immaculate emissary from inaccessible heavens, a guest from remote empyreans. It must be accentuated that this situation introduces into the picture the negative depressing influence of man's realization of his own hopeless inferiority, the impossibility of his stepping up beside the Christ. In striking contrast to this the method adopted by the Sages obviated any such disastrous negativism. It carried with it the invincible certainty of attainment for every man. There was never a question of achievement, but only of effort, method and perseverance. The very manner of the presentation of the ideal figure carried the presupposition of final victory to the aspirant. The type was exhibited on no other grounds than that it was the picture of what could be achieved by all. Obviously there could be no sense or reason in holding before all men in all religions the type of what they could not attain. Attainment was an inevitable implication of the representation from the outset. One man's superb attainment could only add evidence to what was already known. But the proclamation that only one man had ever reached the goal would have thrown dismay into minds long assured of the high destiny of all. Heraclitus' discerning observation that "man's genius is a deity" had placed a god in potentiality deep within the heart of every life, and the envisaged prospect of divinization was simply a long growth of latent into active powers and faculties, a process that could be in no wise affected by the birth of any exceptional personage. That the eventual deification of all humanity should be considered to depend upon such a birth would have been received in ancient times with bewilderment and total incomprehension. When the true nature and terms of the problem of human spiritual advancement were succinctly understood, there was no way in which the Bethlehem event on the historical plane could be given a place of crucial importance in the universal task. It will be seen that the entire argument for the historicity on the grounds of its superior psychological influence collapses finally under the force of the admission, which must be made by all parties, that even if Jesus of Nazareth lived and is the Vicar of God on earth, every man must work out his own salvation on exactly the same terms as though he had not existed! Since

Jesus can not come to any man and take his evolutionary problem off his shoulders and effect his salvation for him, the only psychological value left to the fact of the historicity is reduced to the mere force of a sort of hero-worship. The 33 Jesus life and character, his sufferings and virtues, can stimulate devotion and desire to emulate. His lofty moral preachment sets a norm for ideal human attainment. The very contemplation of his pure life and radiant divinity inspires an answering nobility in millions of lives. The power of a noble example, the more especially one enhanced in beauty by centuries of pious glorification, is not questioned. But the same beauty and indeed the same lofty spiritual preachment was afforded imitative devotion in the case of the sun-god figure. In the end the sublime figure of the type character was there purely for inspirational incentive, standing free from any suggestion of vicarious salvation for the adorer. It moved to noble effort, but in not the least hint did it delude the worshipper with the fatuous notion that any power save his own consecrated struggle could win his salvation for him. The greater the claimed psychological power of the historical Jesus over the devotee, the greater the tragedy of delusion thus wrought upon millions, since this stimulating influence has never been detached from the concomitant imputations of vicariousness inseparably linked with it in Christian theology. Thus the greater part of the alleged beneficent force of the living example in the end evaporates into pure delusion not unattended with disastrous consequences.

A few sentences in the preceding chapter alluded to a situation brought to light by the study of Comparative Religion and Mythology which adds further vast weight to the probability that the whole enormous body of psychological prestige exerted by the belief in the historical Jesus is grounded on a chimera and not on a fact. The events in the alleged life of Jesus are pushed closer and closer to the point of myth by the astounding fact that, as the ever-clearer implications of these studies show, they are seen to match with nearly perfect fidelity the similar cycles of purely allegorical “events” in the dramatic and mythic representations of some sixteen or more—indeed probably fifty or more—earlier type figures recorded in ancient sacred Bibles of the nations. It is certainly to be regarded as more than passing strange that when the only-begotten Son of God did descend to earth to implant the genius of the one true religion to save mankind, his life only copied or matched in great detail the dramatized typical characters or sun-gods of antecedent religions. And the earlier figures whose careers he repeated were definitely non-historical or at best legendarily semi-historical, such as Zoroaster, Orpheus and Hermes. The Christians of the third and fourth centuries were plagued to distraction by the recurrent appearance of evidence that revealed the disconcerting identity of the Gospel narrative in many places with incidents in the “lives” of Horus, Izdubar, Mithra, Sabazius, Adonis, Witoba, Hercules, Marduk, Krishna, Buddha and other divine messengers to early nations. They answered the challenge of this situation with the desperate

allegation that the similarity was the work of the devil! The findings of comparative religion and mythology constitute at this epoch a far more deadly challenge than they did in the third century, for there is the massive body of the Egyptian religious literature to increase the mountain of identities between Christian and antecedent pagan gospels and there is less of Christian hypnotism to overcome now than at the earlier date. In more formidable form than ever before the Christian proponents must face the open implications of the query that springs to mind out of these comparative religion discoveries, why, if the model life had already been proclaimed by numerous Avatars before Jesus and he therefore had nothing new to add, the need or occasion for his passionate sacrifice at all? The model he displayed had already been on view in nearly every ancient nation for centuries! So far from being the climax and grand consummation of a series of ever fuller revelations, his advent was rather an anti-climax. The enlightened and emancipated study of comparative religion, vitally reinforced by the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, bids fair to become a veritable Nemesis to the exorbitant claims of Christianity. It was these momentous disclosures of identity in the material of Christian and pagan literature that gave impetus to the present undertaking, provided the data for proof and lent overwhelming warrant to all the major conclusions to be reached. And it is this body of evidence that sweeps in with crushing force to devastate every one of the arguments from psychology that have been considered. In its totality it constitutes a bulwark of strength on the side of the non-historicity that must be rated virtually inexpugnable.

It can now be stated with little chance of refutation that the Gospel “life” of Jesus had been written, in substance, for five thousand years before he came.

The record is in Egypt. An Egyptian Jesus—Horus—had raised an Egyptian Lazarus from the dead at an Egyptian Bethany, with an Egyptian Mary and Martha present, in the scripts of that ancient land that were extant at least five thousand years B.C. And a carving in relief, depicting scenes of angels announcing from the skies to shepherds in the fields a deific advent, of an angel, Gabriel, foretelling to a virgin that she should be the mother of the Christos, of the nativity in the cave, and of three sages kneeling in adoration before the infant deity, had been on the walls of the temple of Luxor at least seventeen hundred years B.C. The Virgin Mother had held the divine child in her arms in zodiacs on temple ceilings for millennia before the Galilean babe saw the light. What indeed becomes of the grandiose message he brought and the shining light of deific perfection that he flashed on the world, if both were already here long before he came? There remains another spectacular aspect of the psychological problem to be dealt with, not now of the influence of the divine personal advent, but this time having to do with the psychological phases connected with

the sheer fact of how the world could recognize the Christ in Jesus or any other embodiment. How could he be known and identified on the historical arena? The amount of mental ineptitude displayed by votaries with minds drugged into doltishness by the overweening power of “faith” and literalism is everywhere great in religion. But hardly everywhere does it show itself in such glaring inanity as in this item.

In the process of converting myth over into “history” the transformers swallowed many a camel of factual ridiculousness or impossibility without choking. But surely it must occur to even palsied minds that the matter of knowing or recognizing as the one divine Avatar in all history a man who is declared to have been in all respects like other men save without sin, is a thing that lies beyond the realm of all human practicability. The whole matter of his recognition and identification as uniquely divine has been so aureoled with romantic suggestiveness, so exotically perfumed with semi-celestial fragrance, that it is quite impossible for votaries to bring their minds to take a realistic view of the practical possibilities in the case. It seems impossible to bring them out of the shimmering roseate light of adoration and mental sycophancy and have them face the blunt realities of such a situation. Not a man or women of them but would say that if Jesus appeared to them tomorrow as he appeared in his daily mien in Judea, they would immediately recognize him and be so overwhelmed that they would instantly prostrate themselves in adoration at his feet. This is questionable; but what is not questionable is that if another cosmic figure equally divine appeared tomorrow in the guise of ordinary humanity these folks would not recognize him. By what credentials would any man of “regular” human appearance, even with the saintliest of faces, enable us to distinguish him from the commonalty of the race and accept him as the one cosmic divine being, God’s only Son, come to earth? How could any spectator determine from looking at him that he was the one person in all ages set apart from the generality of mankind and really a god from the skies? Such a rating and such a distinctive uniqueness could not be determined from looking at any man in mortal flesh. Every age, indeed every community, has seen men of not only saintly appearance and bearing and wisdom, but of saintly life. Thousands of such people have lived lives essentially as blameless, innocent and charitable as his. How could any man in person exhibit unmistakably the marks of the supra-human distinctions claimed for Jesus in his life by Christian ecclesiasticism? These claims included first his uniqueness in all history as the only-begotten Son of God; then the totally novel and only single instance of a life utterly sinless and pure; then his cosmic election as the Logos of God, according to John’s first chapter description; then his role as the second person of the cosmic Trinity; then his commission as the agent of man’s evolutionary salvation; and finally as the embodied fulfillment of all ancient Messianic hope and realization. How could such qualities and functions be seen by merely looking

at a man of ordinary human constitution? What stupefaction of mind is necessary to nurse the belief that the people of his day could identify him as the impersonation of all the exceptional and wholly unnatural characterization ascribed by religious fetishism to him must be left to the students of abnormal psychology to determine. It will be howled at this analysis that it is an attempt to treat a sacred thing in ribald fashion. On the contrary it is an attempt to take the situation exactly as Christian apologists represent it. If caricature is introduced it emanates from the side of ebullient faith and not from honest realism. The travesty of all natural possibility in the case is created by that naïveté of mind which even the learned theologians of every age down to the present have displayed in this matter. They have based many an argument or exegesis on the bald assumption that any person coming in sight of the man Jesus would have been at once overpowered with awe and 37 would have known that he was looking at the only cosmic deity ever seen on earth. The sheer sight of his person would elucidate at once all the theological implications of his celestial errand. Forsooth he carried unmistakable credentials of his cosmic character with him in look, speech, majesty. Cosmic character shone all about him, glowed in his face, bearing, speech. The universal ascription to him of such egregious persuasion raises the next question as to how, if these were so, the humble people he was alleged to have contacted came to be instructed in the difficult art of recognizing cosmic characteristics. There is no evidence that the public of today has knowledge of any way to identify cosmic character.

Part of the rejoinder to this would be that he told the multitudes that he was the Son of God, the Messiah they were eagerly waiting for, the true vine, the celestial shepherd, the door and the way. They did not have to surmise; he gave them explicit information. In answer to this argument it need only be suggested that if people and popular attitudes of that day were in any way like what they are today, there is nothing that could have advanced the evidence of his cosmic mission that would so unfailingly have discredited his professions as his own statement that he was the one and only Son of God. It is the one sure token that the present age would accept as certain evidence of his not being what he claimed. Words that could appropriately and impressively flow from the mouth of the personified solar deity in a great ritual drama would create a riot in an actual street scene. One has but to use constructive imagination realistically for a moment to be assured of the vast improbability of the personal Christ's being recognized for what he is claimed to have been in theology. If this is not convincing enough, let some claimant to divine status try it today! Were he the man with the saintliest mien, with the spiritual mystic's benignant physiognomy and uttering the holiest of precepts, the moment he went about proclaiming his unique cosmic status a police call would in an hour be necessary to rescue him from the clownish roughness of the crowd. And the thing that would arouse both pity and subtle resentment in the

crowd would be the evidence of general witlessness and lack of good sense thus flaunted in their faces. It is of course easy to ridicule or cheapen an essentially holy thing or a sincere action. Raillery is no true answer to real sincerity. Still pious religionism has asked us to accept without smiling a host of situations in 38 the context of theological and Biblical interpretation that are wholly outlandish or screamingly ridiculous (such as the picture of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday sitting astride the backs of two asses at once!). It is after all no service to any man so to reduce his powers of judgment under the sway of religious infatuations that he is unable any longer to apply his faculties to envisage events realistically. The many events of Gospel narrative would take on quite a different aspect in the minds of gullible believers if they could be viewed in the broad light of factual realism instead of through the glamor of uncritical acceptance. The assumption that a mob of people could “spot” an Avatar—much less the only cosmic one in world history—in any ordinary pious man of saintly appearance merely by looking at his physical person, is one of those implications of Christian doctrinism that has been painted upon the tractable imagination of millions until all power to view the circumstance through the eyes of actual occurrence has been lulled into stupor. Even in India, where holy men openly do parade their pretensions to sanctity, the self-advanced claims of one Yogi to the unique cosmic distinctions predicated of Jesus would be looked at askance. Various disquisitions on the Gospels and the life of Jesus often seriously picture the multitude as suddenly realizing in the Galilean peasant the physical fulfillment of all epic religious prophecy. And Joseph Warschauer, in his *The Historical Life of Christ*, dissertates on the theme of Jesus’ own awakening, at about the stage of his baptism in the Jordan, to the “humble” realization that he was to be in his single person the one living embodiment of divine messengership from God to humanity, and that through the brain, nerves and blood of his one little body were to flow the currents of a power that should redeem the human race. Even in spite of the fact that the whole ancient world looked for the coming of Messiah, and the exoterically taught masses expected it in the form of a living person, how the idea could have taken form in the mind of any intelligent man that his own body would be the vehicle or incorporation of that cosmic power is a glaring feature of the situation not explained by Warschauer or any other apologetic writer. It is left to the omnivorous camel-swallowing maw of that great monster of the genus of stupid religious gullibility, that ever-faithful animal that has carried on its back the priestcraft of the world, to ingest it without choking. The paralysis of the mass mind by the narcotic power of 39 pious indoctrination affords one of the sorriest spectacles in all history. The cry for sanity in religion through the play of keen critical faculty will be met with violent reprobation by offended traditionalists. “There is no wild beast like an angry theologian”

was the comment of the philosophic Julian, the Roman Emperor following Constantine. It has lost little of its truth in the intervening time.

This matter of the impossibility of the recognition of God's only Son in mortal flesh has been treated with sufficient cogency, yet it is of such importance that it needs all the elaboration it can receive. It is difficult to present it with adequate impressiveness. It will be next to impossible to bring minds habituated to wholesale acceptance of the romanticism that has been built like a halo around the person of the Jesus figure to any fully detached and emotionally unprejudiced view of the matter. Psychology knows full well the hypnotizing force of religious inculcations implanted on the sensitive plate of the mind in childhood. They produce what the psychologists have called a conditioned reflex. This is hard to supplant or overcome by any merely mental presentation. It often persists even when the reason negates it. Said W. J. Bryan, "I would accept every statement in the Bible literally, no matter how it contravened my reason." This well illustrates the massive emotional predisposition that is being dealt with here. "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

Reason has an almost insuperable weight of psychological skullduggery to overcome and push aside before it can gain a hearing at all. In the religious domain the reign of reason has been challenged and its sovereignty abrogated by the usurpation of irrational elements that spring from mysticism, and that carry an alleged higher authority than "mere" intellectuality. The mind itself is supposed to be transcended and overridden by something called spiritual intuition or direct vision of God. The failure of the effort to harmonize the rational and irrational elements in religion has been the crux of the great debacle of human sanity in this most important area of culture. It is a question demanding a volume for adequate handling; but as touching the subject under discussion it may be summed up with the statement that even if there are aspects of cognition and realization that transcend reason, their deposit in consciousness can not be presumed to have authority or credence in flat despite of reason. Evolution developed reason as an instrument for the guidance and safe progress of the human monad in the earthly life. It would be working at odds with its own purposes if it at the same time deployed another faculty that proved reason unsafe. Anything that is salutary to the welfare of the organism must in the end prove to be in consonance with reason; otherwise there would be, so to say, a self-contradiction within the constitution of being itself. Yet it is believed that in spite of arrant psychologization and mental obsessions of the deepest tenure a movement's vivid imagination used in the reconstruction of the "life" of Jesus in its every-day aspects will carry home to any sane mind the full and indisputable truth of the assertion that the world could not possibly recognize a Person of the Cosmic Trinity if such a Person could be

supposed to come to earth in human body. Ages do somewhat differ in set and temper, but it could hardly be contended that there ever was an age in which the appearance of a self-proclaimed cosmic Avatar would not be greeted with the utmost skepticism and derision by all classes of people. There are not rationally conceivable any credentials such a claimant could present that would allay incredulity, overcome suspicion, implant credence and carry certitude. The impregnable truth of the matter is that such a claimant could not be accepted in seriousness, could not be identified in the character and role claimed, could not be recognized and known as outside the category of a human being of ordinary stature. In Eastern lands where yoga phenomena of healing and other extraordinary occurrences were common and understood without marvel, not even his performance of miracles and the incidence of portents would prove to be cosmic credentials. The argument is long, but it can be condensed and concluded with the bald assertion, supported by every common sense consideration, that the presupposition posited by nearly all writers on “the life of Christ” as to Jesus’ being recognized by the populace or the age as the only-begotten Son of God ever to appear on the planet merely by seeing his person, is from bottom to top the most outlandish chimera of nonsense ever to creep into the deluded minds of pious people.

So drugged indeed is the traditionally indoctrinated mind of religious susceptibility that it has no intelligent comprehension whatever of the great body of peculiar doctrine that it has, like a boa-constrictor, attempted to swallow. It is in no sense realistically aware that in upholding the historical Jesus it is accepting not only the personalization of a divine principle, cosmic love, but also of the cosmic Aeon of the Gnostics, the Demiurgus or Cosmocrator of the Greeks, the Ra of Egypt and finally the Logos of John and the second person of the creative Trinity. The unthinkable crassness of this acceptance has never once occurred to people in whom “faith” operates in place of thought. When the sarcolatrae or worshipers of a Christ in the flesh, transformed the Christly principle into a mortal man, they did not know or consider what went naturally with it, what mighty powers and functions the slender body of the man Jesus would have to carry. They did not reckon with the many ancillary implications of the transfer. It did not occur to them that the character claimed for Jesus had to cover also the power and range of the Lord of the Cosmos, and that his body would then have to contain the unimaginable creative energy assigned to this person in the hierarchy. For what is the Logos? God the Father is the supreme generator, planner, designer and creator of the universe. God the Son, the Logos, is that universe in its manifested creation. The Logos is God’s boundless power and wisdom deployed in the active work of creation. The Logos is the infinite force that upholds the galaxies of countless solar systems and carries on their evolution. It needs only a moment of sober reflection to reveal the degree of stupefaction necessary to induce any mind to believe that the cosmic power great enough to create the infinite

hosts of the suns and their planets could have been contained in the tiny body of a Judean peasant on one of the smallest of planets! If the tiniest billionth of such a mighty force were infused somehow into the mortal body of a man on this earth it would burn it to a crisp in a second. This idea that Jesus the man could be the second Person of the Trinity is as dire a hallucination as any that has ever been perpetrated even in the name of religion. Allegiance to a doctrine that has to be secured by an ecclesiastical system at the price of so frightful an obfuscation of the thinking genius of man is itself a tragic affliction. The whole situation which has made such an abnormality possible is an enormity of ghastly proportions and of ominous portent. The Logos, forsooth, embodied in the person of a carpenter! We hold the Greeks in derision for—as we allege—believing that Jupiter, the God of heaven, was a man who ran off with Io and other beautiful maidens and could be jealous or vindictive. It is now known that the Greeks were only toying with a marvelous imagery. But modern moronism is not saved by allegory. In 42 sober earnest we have claimed that the unimaginable cosmic might of the Logos that swings the galaxies through their orbits came to earth and was a man of flesh! Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity! That millions have for centuries been made to “believe” such folly is a sickening realization. This was one item in the catastrophe that was precipitated on half a world for sixteen centuries as a result of turning myth and drama into alleged “history.” A heavy price to pay for bad scholarship! The pious faith of the ignorant Church Fathers did not save them from precipitating the Western world into the Dark Ages, the blame for which has been laid at the door of an innocuous “paganism” of the northern lands of Europe, whose systems of a profounder esotericism were ruthlessly destroyed by advancing “Christianity” of the literalized variety. Perhaps it is now possible to round out the argument as to the comparative psychological influence of a historical Christ and a dramatized typical Christ figure. Since the indwelling activity of Christos is the basic indispensable factor in salvation, anything that weakens it must be held detrimental to critically vital values. The great struggle in the human breast between the impulses of the natural man and the implanted seed of divine growth is ever so critical, the forces of “evil” resident in the carnal man so persistently powerful, and the issue of the conflict at all stages so delicately balanced, that any influence which in the least degree lessens the developing strength of the inner god, or which detracts from the personal effort to exercise its powers, dangerously imperils the outcome and the individual’s evolutionary destiny. As the worship of the historical Jesus does, by the very measure of its sincerity, divert attention from the culture of the inner spirit, it becomes perilous to that degree. In the end there is no dodging this issue in the moral field of our life. It is incontestable that the exact amount of psychic energy that we expend in actualizing our reliance upon a historical savior is so much less available for our task of developing the inner deity. While the outer savior is receiving

our devotion, the inner Christ is permitted to lie unawakened. Mankind is so constituted psychologically that by so much as it can lean upon extraneous help it will not exert itself in its own behalf. The purpose of life in the flesh is to force souls who have come here from the empyrean to exert themselves against pressure, stress and strain in order to develop their greater potential divinity. It needs to be said in 43 clarion tones for the benefit of overweening piety and uncritical faith, that any influence which in the least degree diminishes the individual's conviction of the necessity of reliance upon his own hidden divinity must inexorably be calamitous for his progress. The image of Jesus the man and the theological teaching of his power to save us intrude to break the force of the knowledge that our only savior is within. And never will the mortal man be able to bring the full resultant of his living experience in the world to bear upon the problem of his evolutionary growth until he divests himself of all artificial props and stands squarely on his own feet, making his fight alone. Only when he meets the exigencies of his life here by calling upon the resources of his potential savior within him will he be fulfilling the conditions requisite to cultivate that savior's dynamic possibilities. If in the stress of experience he habitually looks to a hypothetical power outside himself, he lets the real powers of his own divinity lie fallow.

Much so-called "spiritual science" of current development has worked on the assumption that a technique adequate for attainment of consummate results in this field involves only subjective effort. In the wake of the popularization of Hindu mysticism in the West practice has taken the direction of an inward retirement. Values in consciousness are sought by way of detachment from sensual experience and contemplation of purely spiritual things. But this movement stands sorely in need of the reminder that the seed power or sheer potentiality of Godhood in man requires for its development something more than mere meditation upon divine things. The spirit might dwell eternally in the world of abstraction if it could follow its own inclination, as a man might choose to lie comfortably in bed instead of getting up and exerting himself for desirable ends. But if it did so it would never achieve its evolution. It would never grow. God could have no children if his spirit did not go forth into an intercourse with matter, the eternal Mother, and implant the seed of a new birth in her universal womb. For the birthing of his progeny, the gods, archangels, angels, heroes and men, there is needed the conjunction of spiritual potentiality with the active energies of what the Greeks called *physis*, or nature. Clear down the diapason from God to atom every power of mind or soul has to be linked with its *sakti*, or physical energy, if it is to implement its ideal structure for creative purposes. Spirit can not evolve when not in relation to matter. It lies static, inactive; it is sheer ideal abstraction. To actualize its thought structures, to bring its creative designs to pass, it must be wedded with matter. It must use the energies loaded in the atom of matter to realize its *entelechy* (Aristotle), or final purpose. The

whole flow of evolution, therefore, depends upon the stimuli provided by the contingencies arising in and from the soul's experiences in material body. Without matter spirit can have no experience. Not the transcendent but the immanent deity grows. Says Emerson, "The true doctrine of the Omnipresence is that God exists in all his parts in every moss and cobweb." The conditions of experience bring latent spiritual capacity to active expression under the impact of the strong forces at play in the world of nature. Spirit awakes and exerts itself by virtue of the necessity of responding to the incidence of blows from the side of matter. Even the dangers threatening the existence or welfare of its own body, its instrument, on the good state of which its own unfoldment depends, elicits its unexercised powers. The concept of world salvation by a personal redeemer not one's own inner deity is thus inexpressibly wide of the mark for the basic meaning of religion. If the one and only begotten Son of God performed the racial redemption, the god within each man would be deprived of the opportunity for growth which is created only with the dawn of full consciousness of its own entire responsibility for the consequences of acts. Any influence that depletes the utter reliance of the outer personality upon the inner deity is an interference with the planned economics of moral and spiritual evolution. It should have been noted in the study of homiletics that manifestations of divine help, as if coming from an outside savior assumed to be Jesus—in olden times the tribal god—generally occur when one has exhausted all known or available helps and is forced by dire anguish to call upon some spiritual or cosmic agency in last despair. From this it might be assumed that a degree of inner agony is just the stress needed to arouse sleeping divinity to active exertion. Thus the exigencies of the outer man in mortal experience prove to be the agencies of the divinization of the inner man. And the Christ of the age-old ritual dramas was the type of the divine Self in humanity undergoing the strain, stress and strife requisite to bring to light the grand epiphany of his solar glory. What can be said for the psychological influence of the historical 45 Christ is that the concept has engendered in Western civilization for sixteen centuries a massive emotionalism and sentimentalism arising from thought of his personal life and sufferings, which, if it can be shown that the Gospels are not histories but spiritual dramas, that their contents were in existence thousands of years before his alleged date, must be seen at last as the most prodigious waste of psychic force, the most devastating hallucination and the most stinging humiliation of pride in human history.

It may be appropriate to close this preliminary survey of the more obvious features of the discussion with consideration of another item that is closely related to the psychological utility of the Christ conception. In fact it is the nub and core of the final judicial determination of the relative merit of the two opposing theories. If it can be determined finally that, of the two, one is entirely necessary for the beneficent working of its effects on humanity, and the other not

indispensable, but only an adventitious accompaniment of the first, the verdict for superior utility must go to the necessary one. As between the Christ in the heart of all children of God and the Christ in one man, the first is the one both primarily and ultimately necessary for the redemption of the individual. It is a condition *sine qua non*; the other is merely superfluous and accessory at best. Had there been one personal Christ or a thousand, it is still the leaven of Christliness in the soul of a man that must save him. It is the agency that must be present and operative even if the other be extant. The other could be dispensed with and salvation still be effected. This could not be put vice versa. If the immanent Christos be not a reality in consciousness, the historic Jesus can avail nothing for the suppliant. Salvation could be won without his existence—as it must have been done before he lived! For all his life and death it could never be won without the saving grace of the impersonal Immanuel. The historical Christ is therefore only a superadded and supernumerary theological luxury. He is a negligible element in the system of redemption, in no wise indispensable. So far from being true that the scheme of human salvation rests critically and centrally upon him, the truth is that it does not even vitally need him. It could do without him. He is surely not the keystone of the arch or the cornerstone of the temple. The structure rests solidly on the presence in all men of the deific leaven, and if he enters the picture it is as mere adornment. He is not basic but extraneous and decorative.

His addition to the theological equipment makes the house of religion more attractive to people of emotional susceptibilities. His humanity, especially his infancy, babyhood, childhood and the imagined pains his frail body suffered in Passion Week, make a strong appeal to emotional sympathies and thus help perpetuate the institution of religion.

The story is a long one, but to it this work is dedicated, with the motive of restoring Christianity to its original exalted purity and of redeeming it from the degradation of having crucified anew the spiritual Christ in the heart on the cross of a material concept in human thought as “wooden” as the alleged “tree of Calvary.”

The Logos was made flesh, yes, but not only one hundred and eighty pounds of it.

Chapter III TRUTH WEARS A MASK

The logical point of departure for the investigation is the study of ancient methodology in the writing of sacred literature. It has been quite largely due to modern ignorance of a special methodology employed in such writing, one bearing no relation or kinship to any known technique in our period, that misinterpretation of arcane books has come about. In spite of voluminous authentic testimony to the fact of such an extraordinary literary method, scholars down to the present day have failed to take note of the evidence for it, and have with unmitigated obduracy flouted the claims for the fact and its overwhelming implications for our understanding the whole of ancient lore. The consequences have been disastrous over the whole range of religious interest. It is therefore necessary to begin with a scrutiny of the peculiar style of representation which was indigenous to the ancient mind and its approach to the grasp and expression of religious truth.

If it can be shown that the ancient sages wrote their great books of wisdom in a form that was purely typological or representative, and in no sense objectively historical, a presumptive argument of nearly clinching force will be established in favor of the non-existence of Jesus, as far as the New Testament is concerned. If practically the only documents in which his "life" is recorded are proven to be non-historical literature, the presupposition is well grounded from the start that he was not a living man but a typical personification of the god in man. The entrenched interests of ecclesiastical orthodoxy have persistently withstood the claims and the evidence for the correctness of this thesis, but it can be said in the face of such resistance that the case for it is established beyond the point of speculation or further controversy. If this is still controverted, it is designed to present in the work at hand a volume of data that will render the case virtually impregnable at last. The purpose of this chapter is to adduce plentiful witness that the 48 sages of antiquity wrote their Bibles in a method of designed cryptology and as much to hide their real meaning as to reveal it. Contrary to all modern reasoning and expectation, they did not write for the obvious purpose of informing, instructing or enlightening the largest number of people. Rather it is evident that they wrote primarily to preserve from popular desecration a treasure of recondite spiritual wisdom and cosmological truth, that was designed to be transmitted as nearly intact as possible from early antiquity to all later ages. Ancient literary interest centered about the safety and purity of a great jewel of knowledge, and not, as in modern days, about the most rapid general purveying of every item of discovery to the largest number of people possible. The golden motive in writing the sacred books was not how quickest to get truth to the populace, but how most surely to keep the great secrets of divine teaching untarnished by the populace, for the benefit of those of

every age who would use them aright. To preserve the heritage of truth intact, and not to disseminate it among the illiterate and unappreciative masses, was the primary aim of the writers of the arcane books.

This aim and purpose dictated a peculiar type of writing, obviously one not directly open and simple in meaning, but one of indirection and disguise. Books were therefore composed in what is known as the esoteric method. An inner profounder and always more spiritual meaning than the one ostensibly carried by the outward sense of the words was intended to be embodied, and the expectation was that it would be divined by the more intelligent segment of society and missed by the unworthy and uncultured. For the attainment of this end the great cosmic, evolutionary, philosophical and religious truths, along with the vital data for understanding, were expressed, “not in dialogues, but in a wide variety of typical representations, the main forms of which were drama, myth, allegory, nomenclology (or name structure), number formulations (as chiefly in the Pythagorean system), and astrographs, or pictorial designs drawn on the open face of the sky about the star clusters. The aim was to dramatize or pictorialize truth and evolutionary process, and to this end there was invented, through the exercise of the most profoundly astute insight ever exhibited by the illumined human brain, an entire language of symbolism, composed of an alphabet of symbolic characters drawn from living nature, ranging from atom to earth-worm or beetle to stars and gods. The great archaic texts of wisdom were therefore not only collections of myths, allegories and dramas, but they were couched in a language of the most extreme subtlety, ability to read which conditioned upon the profoundest knowledge of the science of natural analogy. The symbolic characters in this cryptic alphabet were by no means mere algebraic x’s in the fashion of a cipher code or system. They were actual biographs of the idea to be expressed, living and objective types of the thing connoted. This very fact alone presupposes as the foundation for adeptship in the handling of such a language a knowledge of life and of nature that would be the acquirement of only the most perspicacious philosophical genius. It would require a volume in itself to reconstruct the science of correspondences or analogy resting on the kinship or parallelism known to subsist between the two worlds of objective and subjective reality, or as Emerson puts it, “betwixt the inner spirit and the outer matter,” by virtue of which the discerning mind of man can interpret the outer phenomena as the counterparts or reflection of the inner consciousness. Nature is the analogue of the spirit; the world is the antitype of the soul. The universe is the physical construct of the Creator’s thought, and therefore he who can handle the alphabet of the hieroglyphs of divine ideation in the objective presentment of nature can read God’s mind after him. Natural forms thus become a living language of the most nearly divine comprehension man is capable of, and afford him the most voluble vehicles or symbols of the clearest expression he can

frame. As the most penetrating insight into the profounder aspects of both consciousness and nature were prime essentials for such usage, obviously the mastery of a science so recondite would be confined to a minority of the most developed individuals. These were of course the philosophers, the illuminati, the hierophants of the temples and the initiates in the Mysteries. They were the members of the group to which was entrusted the custodianship and transmission of the Arcane Philosophy.

A cryptic typology and a symbolic alphabet or language were then the essential structural features of the ancient esoteric literary methodology. The logos of esotericism is a theme of the utmost profundity, which taxes the human mind to grasp its rational essence. It again would take a volume to expound, since its analysis would run deep and broad into the nature of life and consciousness alike. There is no room in this work for any full attempt at elucidation of the abstruse subject, though much of the work bears pretty closely upon the central answer. It may be in the end the gist of all effort at comprehension of the secrecy of initial world wisdom to understand simply that as the full inner meaning of life is as deep as the deepest mind of man, the attempt to render that full meaning for the grasp of lesser minds must be couched in terms and forms that will lay the heaviest toll of intelligence and sagacity upon the faculties of the student or aspirant. The answer is in part also inwoven with human psychology, by the conditions of which nothing but these living symbols can in the ultimate awaken in sluggish men the quickened flare of genius for the apprehension of the most real sense and values. It is recognized in all education that the drama carries far greater psychic impressiveness than the best of spoken language. We can learn a mighty lesson from the Greeks who in their dramatic rituals effectuated a mighty moral purification in the consciousness and character of the auditors which was spoken of under the designation of "catharsis." It was known to them that the drama could be used to work a purification of the innermost springs of thought and conduct in the individual, as the beholder was made to live over vicariously in the persons of the actors the crises and heroic or tragic episodes of the human moral conflict depicted on the stage. The whole intent of the drama and the Mystery ceremonials was to bring the force of the most impressive living realization home to the inner consciousness of the audience personnel, and to stamp in the most vivid manner upon the susceptibilities of the participants the deepest sense of the incarnational drama in which all mortals are adventuring. It needs no elaborate dialectic to make clear the perception that drama carries a far more effective power for impressing moral issues upon the mind than any language can achieve. It is a copy of living reality; it is life itself in the particular and in miniature; and it is all drawn up in such a form as to present to the mind the structural nature of both action and meaning. In pain and its happiness. It gathers up a tangled or loose thread of unrelated occurrence

and displays the fateful pattern of weal or woe into which it is being woven by the shuttle of life—or, as most ancients saw it, of many lives.

As to the symbolism in language, it was of the same order of rationale as the drama, but cast in smaller scale. Both the drama and symbolism draw their dynamic psychological effectiveness from the fact that they bear to truth in the large the relation of truth in miniature. It was the knowledge of the early teachers of mankind that all smaller process was a diminutive copy of all larger process, or of life process in any measure. The law of life was universal. Therefore all forms of its expression, large or small, exemplified the same one law. The microcosm, they said, was a tiny reflection of the macrocosm. The fragment bore the image of the whole. Man was made in the image of God. The atom and the world are alike descriptive of the universe. Each revealed the pattern, and there is but one pattern, though it has endless modifications in minor detail. Man is looking at the whole of truth when he looks at any living part of creation. It is more than a poet's fancy that all of God is present everywhere, and that every common bush is aflame with deity. Hence all nature is an alphabetic language, and every form is a symbol. Autumn is the eternal symbol of death and spring of resurrection. The leaf is the alphabetic character that reads repeated incarnation for the life of the tree. The seed is the greatest of all hieroglyphs, for it is the end product of one cycle and at the same time the beginning stage of the next, thus furnishing the key to the whole ongoing process of life. The career of a dragon-fly is the whole epic of human life lived in the four worlds of sense, emotion, thought and spirit, typed in the old language by earth, water, air and fire. The symbol is therefore a powerfully moving photograph of life and reality, a thumbnail portraiture of the whole vast meaning of the cosmos. Language is itself nothing but a designed set of symbols. But symbols taken directly from nature have the additional cogency of being parts of life itself in immediate view. In dealing with symbols man constantly bathes his mind in reality. They are his safeguards against folly and error. They are his perennial instructors. They unfold before his eyes the forms and designs of the pattern of life. Says Emerson: "A good symbol is a missionary to convince thousands."

In its power over the human mind language comes close to deserving the term magical. Symbols, therefore, have been employed in the sphere of philosophy and religion to wield upon general consciousness a kind of potent charm akin to spiritual "magic." This is indeed the true magic. For thought is the great Magician of the cosmos, transforming one thing into another and calling the worlds into being by the wand of its vibrational power. The simple and natural meaning of the word "magic" is this power of mind to throw matter into the form outlined by thought.

Thought makes or mars lives; it is the eternal prestidigitator. Its legerdemain brings the invisible to visible appearance.

All this is implicit in the nature and use of the symbol. The picture of truth presented by it imprints its image upon the open tablet of the mind. Through the rapport which the part feels with the whole, the unit of consciousness with the entirety of consciousness, and the instinctive urge of the fragment to re-become one with the All, the impact of a symbol upon mind anywhere is inevitably to awaken in it a stir of latent cognitive delight, the impulsive thrill of its recognition of its harmony with all being. This recognition and delight become life's truest guide to rectitude. Symbols keep the mind aligned with truth. They hold it in line with verity. They save it from vagary and fantasy. Such is the magic might of the symbol.

This magic is finally the ground of esotericism. It is admissible without cavil that mystic susceptibility to the wizardry of symbols would be developed and become operative in even step with the individual's growth in culture. It would be a manifestation of strength of genius and a high degree of intellectuality. Obvious it is then that a literature conceived on the basis of a science so profound, expressed in its recondite symbology and dependent finally upon the possession in its recipients of the astute faculty requisite for its due appreciation, would have to be cast in a language of esotericism. Inevitably failing of comprehension amongst the populace, it would appeal to the more sagacious and the more illuminated. The norms of culture were set by the more intelligent minority, as they must ever be. The wardship of culture is in the hands of a small group, whose deeper criteria of value at once set store by things which are beyond the mob, and thus esotericism is inexorably introduced into the cultural or religious situation.

It has been necessary to elucidate the nature and bases of esotericism because the stubborn recalcitrancy of savants in the time since the closing of the Platonic Academies in the fifth century has imposed on a truth-seeking scholar the task of vindicating it against the in-orthodox refutation of its legitimacy. It remains next to array in considerable volume a mass of data that will establish beyond further evasion or quibbling the fact of its ancient prevalence and its place in the methodology of scripture writing.

It is to be understood at the outset of this enterprise that, considerable as is the evidence amassed here, it is only a tiny portion of what might be assembled if all books could be consulted. Indeed that presented here is merely additional to what has been collected in an earlier work, *The Lost Light*. It is by no means the main body of such authentication. The quantity given here could easily be trebled or quadrupled. In the face of such an amount of testimony the question will arise

in many minds why the scholars of our day and previous periods should have so obdurately held out against the indisputable regnancy of esotericism in the ancient literary field. Substantiation of the position taken will call for much quotation of documents and authorities.

A modern theologian agrees with the fundamental rationale of the esoteric method. Benjamin W. Bacon, of Yale Divinity School, in his valuable work, *Jesus and Paul*, (p. 207) says that just as in modern times we are conscious that truth may be imparted often more effectively by fiction than by plain statement, so it was with the ancient world, but in much higher degree. To this another modern, the Harvard Santayana (*Dialogues in Limbo*, p. 185) adds his confession that “allegory has its charms when we know the facts it symbolizes, but as a guide to unknown facts it is perplexing; and I am another lost in your beautiful imagery.” Strange that the philosopher should admit his incapacity to follow natural imagery when he himself employs it in many beautiful analogies, and the general requirement of intelligence is no greater than necessary to see the fine allegorism in such a quotation as this from the same work of his (p. 56): “The soul, too, has her virginity and must bleed a little before bearing fruit.” Are we to assume that natural parallelism is permissible when used by modern poets, but to be distrusted when employed by the philosophic sages with more systematic handling?

How truly the same thinker came to stating the full truth with regard to a greater chapter of history shown in his statement (*Winds of Doctrine*, p. 50) that “it seems to many of us that Christianity is indeed a fable, yet full of meaning if you take it as such.” This is forthright corroboration of the basic thesis of this study, which claims that the scriptures yield their true meaning only when taken as allegory and fable, and yield nonsense when taken as history. It is worth completing his statement:

“for what scraps of historical truth there may be in the Bible or of metaphysical truth in theology are of little importance; whilst the true greatness and beauty of this, as of all religions, is to be found in its moral idealisms, I mean, in the expression it gives, under cover of legends, prophecies, or mysteries, of the efforts, tragedy and the consolations of human life. Such a moral fable is what Christianity is in fact; . . .” Here is great sanity of discernment, and it largely tells the whole story of religion. Yet the same mind shows confusion again when he writes (*Winds of Doctrine*, p. 33): “Even the pagan poets, when they devised a myth, half believed in it for a fact.” There is no tangible evidence anywhere to vindicate this stricture. To be sure, they “believed” in their myths when comprehended esoterically; but surely none but the grossest of ignorant folk ever “believed” in them as factual occurrence. That enormity of childish folly was reserved for the

modern academicians. Bishop Laurence in the preface to his work on the Book of Enoch (p. xlvi) says that the singular and fascinating “system of allegorical subtleties” predominant in the philosophies of the East is as inseparable from Oriental modes of thought and expression “as the shadow is from the substance.” Bulfinch (*Age of Fable*, p. 12), in writing of the creation of the world, says that “the ancient pagans, not having the information on the subject which we derive from the pages of Scripture, had their own way of telling the story.” As to which it may be observed that it is possible to say now that the ancient pagans had these same and many more scriptures long before we had them, and knew infinitely better what they meant than we do. But it is noteworthy that he admits they had their own peculiar method of writing the account.

One of the most direct revelations of the basic interrelation of symbols with consciousness is given in a sentence from Proclus, the fourth century expounder of Platonism who was nearly equal in esoteric wisdom to the master himself, in which he says that “the paternal nature disseminated symbols in souls,” and through the world. This statement pierces closer to the heart of the rationale of the science of symbolism than anything ever likely to be said in the elucidation of that abstruse science. The divine creative or paternal mind, or Logos, has scattered symbols through the world and placed in souls a power capable of being excited by their impingement on the outer sense. This is an item of Greek philosophy that could profitably be brooded over by thinkers today. It would tend to dispose us to a more friendly and harmonious relationship with outer nature, and would reveal to us anew the indispensable truth known to the Egyptians that, as Gerald Massey puts it, “the symbolical can only be interpreted by the natural.” This must be so for the very sound reason that generally the symbolical is the natural. For nature is herself the greatest lexicon of symbols extant. Massey enlarges upon this theme when he says (*Book of Beginnings*, II, p. 37) that “typology consists of various things set forth by means of one original type. Symbolism was a mode necessitated, not a system designed, because the one principal type had to serve many purposes of expression.” This, it has been seen, was true because there is but one universal law, and this one law, seen in every phenomenon, has to serve as the one norm of interpretation.

This discernment of Massey is corroborated by the observations of C. O. Müller, who is quoted by Lundy (*Monumental Christianity*, p. 18):

“Ancient Greece possessed only two means of representing and communicating ideas of the Deity—Mythus and Symbol. The mythus relates an action, by which the Divine Being reveals himself in his power and individuality; the symbol renders it visible to the sense by means of an object placed in connection therewith. . . . The symbol is an external visible sign with which a

spiritual emotion, feeling or idea is connected. The mythic representation can never rest upon arbitrary choice of expression; so, too, the connection of an idea with a sign in Symbolism, was natural and necessary to the ancient world; it occurred involuntarily; and the essence of the symbol consists in this supposed connection of the sign with the thing signified. Symbols in this sense are evidently coeval with the human race; they result from the union of the soul with the body of man: nature has implanted the feeling for them in the human heart. The human face expresses spiritual peculiarities; and so all nature wore to the ancients a physiognomical aspect.”

With the art or science of the interpretation of nature’s physiognomy the ancient sages were profoundly conversant. It is one of the greatest of all “lost arts.” Lundy adds to Müller’s perspicacious analysis the 56 observation that “if the mythos has no spiritual meaning, then all religion becomes mere idolatry, or the worship of material things,” i.e., the symbols in their literal reference. “But we have seen symbols of Oriental Pagan religions which indicate a supreme Power and Intelligence above matter; and also how early Christianity abhorred idolatry.”

Proclus in his great work on the theology of Plato speaks of “all the fables, therefore, of Plato, guarding the truth in concealment.” And he adds that “if certain persons introduce to us physical hypotheses of Platonic fables . . . we must say that they entirely wander from the intention of the philosopher, and that those hypotheses alone are interpreters of the truth contained in these fables, which have for their scope a divine, immaterial and separate hypostasis and which, looking to this, make the compositions and analyses of fables adapted to our inherent anticipations of divine concerns.” Which is to say in plainer terms that those who take a physical or historical meaning out of the allegories, mistake the intent of the great dramatist and blindly miss the sense; while the true import is to be found in a mystagogical perception of truth deeply veiled.

The same great philosopher, speaking of the “mystic ceremonies” of the Mysteries, says that “every part is full of symbolical representation, as in a drama.” Thomas Taylor, editing Proclus’ work, says “the reader may perceive how adultery and rapes, as represented in the machinery of the Mysteries, are to be understood when applied to the gods; and that they mean nothing more than communication of divine energies, either between a superior and subordinate, or subordinate and superior divinity.” He adds that the “apparent indecency” of these symbolic depictions had nothing to do with their “mystic meaning,” but that they were indeed “designed as a remedy for the passions of the soul; and hence mystic ceremonies were very properly called *akea*, medicines, by the obscure and noble Heraclitus.” Drama and symbol used as moral medicines!

Taylor in his Introduction to the philosophy and writings of Plato, quotes Proclus as saying that those who treat of divine concerns either 57 speak symbolically and fabulously, or through images. Some, he asserts, speak according to science, but others according to inspiration from the gods. He states that those who attempt to set forth the nature of the gods through symbols are Orphic, whilst those who use “images” are Pythagoric. “For the mathematical disciplines were invented by the Pythagoreans in order to a reminiscence of divine concerns, to which, through these as images, they endeavor to ascend. For they refer both numbers and figures to the gods.” It is notable that the Platonic philosophers rated the mathematical discipline and the contemplation of the numerological structure of the universe as the very highest and most direct path by which the human mind could approach a rapport with the divine.¹ Proclus then elucidates the reasons “when the ancients were induced to devise fables,” and this remarkable passage is worth quoting if only for the sake of reminding a science-ridden age that it is utterly wrong in continuing to hold in contempt one of the greatest of all sciences, analogy.

“In answer, then, it is necessary to know that the ancients employed fables, looking to two things, viz., nature and our soul. They employed them by looking to nature and the fabrication of things as follows: Things inapparent are believed from things apparent and incorporeal natures from bodies. For seeing the orderly arrangement of bodies, we understand that a certain incorporeal power presides over them; as with respect to the celestial bodies, they have a certain presiding motive power. As we, therefore, see that our body is moved, but is no longer so after death, we perceive that it was a certain incorporeal power which moved it. Hence, perceiving that we believe things inapparent from things apparent and corporeal, fables came to be adopted that we might come from things apparent to certain inapparent natures; as, for instance, that on hearing the adulteries, bonds and lacerations of the gods, castrations of heaven and the like, we might not rest satisfied with the apparent meaning of such like.” ¹

In the light of which statement it may perhaps be true that Albert Einstein, the famed physicist of our day, when, in response to his challenge to the clergy to put an end to their preachment of an anthropomorphic God, he was bluntly told by them to stay in his own mathematical field and not presume to invade one in which he was not intelligent, might be considered to stand closer to an apprehension of divinity than his clerical detractors. 58 particulars, but may proceed to the inapparent, and investigate the true signification. After this manner, therefore, looking to the nature of things, were fables employed.”

There are passages in the books of the ancient philosophers that fairly shout—to the discerning student—their regal wisdom in our ears, and this is one of them. Had the potential enlightenment in these words been caught and held by the scholars of the earlier centuries and incorporated in western philosophy, the entire history of Christian Europe and America would have run a happier course. The fogs of religious insanity would surely have been dissipated by the intelligence that would have arisen from contemplation of God's natural handiwork, seen as the analogue of the verities of the unseen spiritual world.

The irrational and fanatical mysticism inspired by the preachment of sheer faith would have been replaced by a mysticism of rational foundation, springing from the reading of the eternal mind in the open book of natural revelation. And Paul's adjuration to add knowledge to faith would have averted the endless sickening horrors of pious bigotry and persecution. The great science of analogy has been condemned even in spite of St. Paul's complete endorsement of Greek insight in his amazingly clear and simple statement that "that which may be known of God is manifest," and that "the invisible things of Him" may be clearly seen, by looking at the visible world around us. The long and gruesome train of ills that have been engendered by the medieval and modern contempt for ancient "paganism," the mawkish and revolting scorn heaped upon the alleged "primitive" child-mindedness of past civilizations spiritually more enlightened than our own, would have given way to a cultural sensitivity that must surely have kept the pages of the historical record free from the black stains they now bear. The spectacle of the supercilious contempt shown toward an ancient culture by a civilization that has not even evolved the intelligence to comprehend its subtleties has darkened the human outlook on life and defeated the power of the light to break through the darkness and shed its benignant rays of intelligence and sanity upon the world. It was so much easier for a mentality that could not comprehend the Greek myths to cast the stigma of its own incapacity upon the framers of the myths than to admit its proper applicability to itself. It is time that it be proclaimed in ringing tones that the alleged incomprehensibility of the myths is due to modern doltishness and not to ancient ignorance. Wisdom was so deeply grasped that the symbols which alone could awaken its cognition have left us gaping and mocking, incredulous and uncomprehending.

Had not the illustrious Platonic literature been pushed aside for a spurious and emasculated version of it, we could have been better instructed by such a sentence as this, which Proclus adds to the foregoing: "It may always be said that a fable is nothing else than a false discourse shadowing forth the truth, for a fable is the image of truth." Had we the discerning sense to lay hold of the great fact expressed in his next sentence—"But the soul is the image of the

natures prior to herself”—for a grasp of which the study of the whole of the great Orphic-Platonic system is requisite—we would be in better position to accept his conclusion that “hence the soul very properly rejoices in fables, as an image of an image.” And we could then follow his last sentence in the paragraph: “As we are therefore from our childhood nourished in fables, it is necessary that they should be introduced.”

Staggering rebuke to the stolidity of this age is implied in his further exposition:

“The poetic fable abounds in this, that we must not rest satisfied with the apparent meaning, but pass on to the occult truth. . . . But it is defective in this, that it deceives those of a juvenile age. Plato therefore neglects fables of this kind and banished Homer from his Republic, because youth, on hearing such fables, will not be able to distinguish what is allegorical from what is not.”

As it was unthinkable for us of the modern world in 1914 to believe that in a few years the whole fabric of human liberty that had been built up by centuries of struggle against tyranny would be toppling to ruin, so it must have seemed unthinkable to Plato and, seven hundred years later, to Proclus that the long-enduring structure of esoteric philosophy could be torn down and its ruins submerged under the debris of literal and historical nonsense. A juvenile age indeed!

What could be clearer than Proclus’ statement that “the Orphic method aimed at revealing divine things by means of symbols, a method common to all writers of divine lore (theomythias)?” [The word means “God-myth.”] And he quotes Plutarch (*De Pyth. Orac.*, xviii):

“Formerly the wisdom-lovers exposed their doctrines and teachings in poetical fiction, as for example Orpheus and Hesiod and Parmenides and Julian, the so-called Apostate. . . . Many of the philosophers and theologians were myth-makers. . . . Concerning the myths of the Mysteries which Orpheus handed down to us, in the very things which in these myths are most incongruous, he drew nearest to the truth. For just in proportion as the enigma is more paradoxical and wonderful, so does he warn us to distrust the appearance and seek for the hidden meaning. Philostratus asserts that in the *Iliad* the poet was philosophizing in the Orphic manner.”

Plutarch (*De Daedal.*, Frag. lx, 1, 754) writes that

“the most ancient philosophers covered up their teachings in a lattice work of fables and symbols, especially instancing the Orphic writings and the Phrygian myths.”

“That ancient natural science both among the Greeks and foreigners was for the most part hidden in myths of an occult and mysterious theology containing an enigmatical and hidden meaning, is clear from the Orphic poems and the Egyptian and Phrygian treatises.”

G. R. S. Mead, in *Orpheus* (p. 51) quotes Pico della Mirandola, Italian occultist of the Renaissance, as writing:

“He who does not know perfectly how to intellectualize sensible properties by the method of occult analogy, will never arrive at the real meaning of the Hymns of Orpheus.”

Mead further endorses Thomas Taylor, the enlightened interpreter of Plato:

“Taylor says that the Grecian theology was first ‘mystically and symbolically’ promulgated by Orpheus. . . . To understand that theology, therefore, we must treat it from the point of view of mysticism and symbolism, for no other method is capable of extracting its meaning.”

And Mead adds Proclus’ assertion that

“the whole theology of the Greeks is the child of Orphic mystagogy, Pythagoras being first taught the ‘orgies’ of the gods (‘orgies’ signifying ‘burstings forth,’ or ‘emanations,’ from @insert greek) by Aglaophemus, and next Plato receiving the perfect science concerning such things from the Pythagorean and Orphic writings.”

In his book *New Platonism and Alchemy* (p. 6), Alexander Wilder makes the unequivocal statement:

“There was in every ancient country having claims to civilization an esoteric doctrine, a system that was designated WISDOM, and those who were devoted to its prosecution were first denominated Sages or wise men. . . . Pythagoras termed the system he gnosis ton onton, the Gnosis or knowledge of things that are. Under the noble designation of WISDOM the ancient teachers, the sages of India, the magians of Persia and Babylon, the seers and prophets of Israel, the hierophants of Egypt and Arabia and the philosophers of Greece and the West included all knowledge which they considered as essentially divine; classifying a part as esoteric and the remainder as exoteric. The Rabbis

called the exterior and secular series the Mercavah, as being the body or vehicle which contained the higher knowledge.”

Clement of Alexandria, Christian philosopher of the third century tersely said that “it is requisite to hide in a mystery the wisdom spoken.” This is the echo of St. Paul’s “wisdom hidden in a mystery.” No statement could be more explicit than Clement’s: “All, then, in a word, who have spoken of divine things, both barbarians and Greeks, have veiled the first principles of things and delivered the truth in enigmas and symbols and allegories and metaphors and such like tropes.” In speaking of the exoteric version of the fables and allegories Origen, Clement’s learned pupil and one of the prime formulators of early Christian theology, asks: “What better could you have for the instruction of the masses?” Paracelsus (Vol. I, p. 17) centuries later wrote that it was “the property of the common herd to take false views of things.” It is certainly true that almost every conception harbored in the minds of the “average man” today, as in the past, concerning the true meaning of the deeper things of theology, is atrociously in error.

In Orpheus (1, p. 60) Mead declares: “These myths are not only set forth in verse and prose, but were also represented pictorially and in sculpture in the Adyta of the temples.”

“Myriads on myriads of enigmatical utterances by both poets and philosophers are to be found; and there are also whole books which present the mind of the writer veiled as that of Heraclitus’ ‘On Nature,’ which on this very account is called ‘the Obscure.’ Similar to this book is the Theology of Pherecydes of Samos. And so also the work of Euphorion, the Causae of Callimachus, and the Alexandra of Lycophion.”

Mead follows these statements with the observation that while the veiling of high truth under gross outer symbols could in a pure state of society be done without moral damage, nevertheless a degenerate age would run the risk of stopping at the outer symbol, forgetting the inner reference and thus would plunge religion into grave dangers of fatal misconceptions. Also in Orpheus (p. 24) Mead, describing the discipline enforced in the Mysteries, says:

“Another and most important part of the discipline was the training in the interpretation of myths, symbols and allegory, the letters of the mystical language in which the secrets of nature and the soul were written so plainly for the initiated, so obscurely for the generality. Without this instruction the mythical recitals and legends were unintelligible.” Sixteen centuries of unintelligibility that still enshrouds the great myths of antiquity surely add unimpeachable corroboration to Mead’s assertion. Mead says the allegories may be interpreted either

microcosmically or macrocosmically, but in either case yield the meaning of the evolution of mind. In his magnificent Encyclopedia of ancient symbolic literature Manly P. Hall declares that nearly every religion of the world shows traces of astrological influences, and that the Old Testament of the Jews, its writings breathing the aura of earlier Egyptian culture, is a mass of astrological and astronomical allegories.

In a long passage in his great work on the theology of Plato Proclus points out how the master philosopher holds back the use of fables among those who through incapacity and shallowness would conceive only a perverted meaning from reading them, yet assents to their employment among those who are able to penetrate into the hidden mystic truth veiled by them. So, he says, Plato rejects the “apparatus of the fables” in the Republic and in certain dialogues, but admits them in the Cratylus, where “these things Socrates indicates in the Cratylus, jesting and at the same time being serious in what he says.” Proclus says that in the Fourth Book of The Laws Plato celebrates the life under Saturn, obscurely signifying the hidden meaning “through fabulous fictions.” The Cratylus is a splendid example of the easy victimization of the alleged towering modern intelligence by ancient astuteness in concealment. Present academic opinion still contends that in the Cratylus Socrates spent an afternoon in punning. He points out such “puns” as that the Greeks called the body soma and the tomb sema, and the pundits of today still can see no suggestive connection between the two words, in spite of the fact that hundreds of times the Greek philosophers have told us that in Orphic theology the soul while in incarnation in the body was as though dead in its tomb. “The body is the sepulcher of the soul” is almost an axiom of Greek philosophy. Behind every one of Socrates’ “puns” hides some great and luminous item of the piercing Platonic insight into deep mysteries. A vivid forecast of all later imbecility of the masses in religious superstition is made by Proclus for Plato when he says that while Plato “allows the poets that are inspired by Phoebus to signify things of this kind obscurely and mystically, he excludes the multitudes from hearing these things because they believe without examination in the fabulous veils of truth.” Proclus speaks of the proper intelligence “unfolding the concealed theory which they contain.” Socrates hints at the deep psychological springs of the symbolic methodology when he writes in the Phaedrus “that an alliance to the demoniacal genus, prepared the soul for the reception of divine light, excites the phantasy to symbolic narration.”

Proclus states that Orpheus “greatly availed himself of the license of fables.” And once more he avers that Socrates (Plato?) “narrating the types and laws of divine fables, which afford this apparent meaning, and the inward concealed scope, which regards as its end the beautiful and

natural in the fictions about the gods,” dodges the mental stolidity of the crass to reach the subtler intelligence of the initiated.

The second-century esotericist, Plutarch, says that “so cautious and reserved was the Egyptian wisdom in those things which pertained to religion”; “and like them Pythagoras conveyed his doctrines to the world in a kind of riddle.” In reference to Plato’s last book, *The Laws*, written “when he was now grown old,” Plutarch says that Plato threw off the esoteric mask, spoke not “in riddles and emblems, but in plain and proper terms” of the more recondite aspects of truth. In *De Iside et Osiride* (IX) Plutarch states that if the choice of king fell upon a soldier, “he was immediately initiated into the order of the priests and by them instructed in their abstruse and hidden philosophy, a philosophy for the most part involved in fable and allegories and exhibiting only dark hints to us in many instances, particularly by the sphinxes, which they seem to have placed designedly before their temples as types of the enigmatical nature of their theology.”

In the same work (XI) Plutarch elucidates one of the animal representations of a god in such a fashion as to enable the dullest brain to catch a concealed meaning behind a symbol and to get an inkling as to how they operated the symbolic language.

“When you hear, therefore, the mythological tales which the Egyptians tell of their gods, their wanderings, their mutilations and many other disasters which befell them, remember what has just been said, and be assured that nothing of what is thus told you is really true or ever happened in fact. For can it be imagined that it is the ‘dog’ itself which is revered by them under the name of Hermes? It is the question of this animal, his constant vigilance and his acumen in distinguishing his friends from his foes, which have ever rendered him, as Plato says, a meet emblem of that god who is the chief patron of intelligence.”

And in another passage Plutarch tells his age that if one will hear and entertain the story of these gods from those who know how to explain it consistently with religion and philosophy, and will steadily persist in the observance of all those holy rites which the law requires, and moreover will be disposed to the conviction that to form true notions of divine natures is more acceptable to them than any sacrifice or mere external act of worship can be, one will by this means be entirely exempt from any danger of falling into superstition, an evil no less to be avoided than atheism itself. Gerald Massey, the profoundest and most discerning of Egyptologists, in his fine work, *The Natural Genesis* (Vol. II, p. 378 ff.) writes:

“The lost language of celestial allegory can now be restored, chiefly through the resurrection of ancient Egypt; the scriptures can be read as they were originally written, according to the secret wisdom, and we now know how the history was first written as mythology.”

He adds that the Revelation assigned to John the Divine is the Christian form of the Mithraic Revelation, that in the Parsee sacred books the original scriptures are always referred to as the “Revelation,” and that the Bahman Yasht contains the same drama of mystery that is drawn out and magnified in the Bible Revelation. He asserts that the personages, scenes, circumstances and transactions are identical in both. Each revelation relates to the Kronian allegory and in both the prophecy is solely astronomical. He explains that Egypt is the mother of the world’s primeval religion and that the myths of Egypt were the origin of the Mysteries of the world. The main theme of most of his voluminous work is that the Hebrew “miracles” are nothing but the original myths of Egypt, misread as history. In his Reply to Prof. A. H. Sayce he says:

“I have amply demonstrated the fact that the myths were no mere products of ancient ignorance, but are the deposited results of a primitive knowledge; that they were founded upon natural phenomena and remain the register of the earliest scientific observation.”

He hammers endlessly on the point that the whole grand structure of luminous ancient doctrine crashed to ruin on the rocks of the early Christian stupidity which converted into literal history a vast body of drama and allegory that “was never anything but frankly mythological.” And he has written thousands of pages to support his contention that what purports to be “history” in Christian systematism was actually pre-extant as Egyptian mythology. He cites as proof of his main thesis the fact that the Biblical material is found to be nonsensical and chimerical, in fact impossible, as history, but becomes lucidly intelligible and possible as myth. The massed material of his great volumes goes far to substantiate this claim.

He calls attention to the fact that the Jesus character both in the Gospels and in the Gnostic Christian work, the Pistis Sophia, announces to the inner circle of his initiated disciples that he will speak with them freely “from the beginning of the truth unto the completion thereof . . . face to face without parable.” Parable was the declared method of his speaking to “them that are without” the circle of the initiated. In the full release of light and knowledge to the trained disciples parable and myth could be discarded for direct revelation.

We need the directness of Massey's phrasing of the following passage, the truth of which is of ominous import for civilization:

"The human mind has long suffered an eclipse and been darkened and dwarfed in the shadow of ideas the real meaning of which has been lost to the moderns. Myths and allegories whose significance was once unfolded to initiates in the Mysteries, have been adopted in ignorance and reissued as real truths directly and divinely vouchsafed to mankind for the first and only time! The early religions had their myths interpreted. We have ours misinterpreted. And a great deal of what has been imposed on us as God's own true and sole revelation to man is a mass of inverted myths. . . . Much of our folk-lore and most of our popular beliefs are fossilized symbolism."

His great contention—with Max Müller—was that the Märchen and folk tales are not reflections, but refractions, or distorted popularizations of the original mythos, and that, contrary to Müller's assertions, it was the mythos that passed into the folk tale and not the folk tale into the mythos. The myths were first and the Märchen were their product, through the inevitable deterioration which all esoteric truth sooner or later undergoes when floated among the unlettered masses. "Typology and mythology are twins from their birth and one in their fundamental rootage." (Nat. Gen. I, 313.)

In the same volume, preceding page, Massey has a long and enlightening dissertation on the nature of the gods as just the "elementary powers of nature," and he reads the logical conclusions from the fact that they were represented symbolically by the animal types. Much other material is assembled to depict the wide variety of figures under which the gods and goddesses were exhibited. The hundreds of religious insignia, emblems, types and figures which Sir James Frazer presents but is powerless to interpret in his famous *The Golden Bough*, Massey clarifies with astute penetration into cryptic meanings. "Mythology" he says, "is one as a system of representation, one as a mold of thought, one as a mode of expression, and all its great primordial types are practically universal."

Testimony of another life-long research student in the field of archaic philosophy confirms Massey's conclusions. Godfrey Higgins, in his monumental work, *The Anacalypsis*, (p. 441) says that "one thing is clear—the mythos of the Hindus, the mythos of the Jews and the mythos of the Greeks are all at bottom the same; and what are called their early histories are not histories of man, but are contrivances under the appearance of histories to perpetuate doctrines . . . in a manner understood by those only who had a key to the enigma. Of this we shall see many additional proofs hereafter."

The Anacalypsis is some 830 pages of additional proofs. Page 446 of this work gives his final summation of his life of investigation:

“When all the curious circumstances have been considered, an unprejudiced person will, I think, be obliged to admit that the ancient epic poems are oriental allegories, all allusive to the same mythos, and that many of these works which we have been accustomed to call histories are but allegorical representations of mythologies, of the secret doctrines of which I am in pursuit and which have been . . . concealed and perpetuated . . . for the initiated, under the veil of history.”

He makes the unequivocal statement that “two clear and distinct meanings of the words will be found; one for the initiated and one for the people. This is of the first importance to be remembered.” He quotes Niebuhr as showing that what we call early Roman history was “mere mythos,” and explains that this will account for what on any other thesis is incredible, the “degree of superstition” evidenced by the Romans. He cites an Englishman, Lumsden, as saying that events purporting to be Roman history are drawn from the heroical legends of Greece and therefore must have been copied from them; that they were not copies of one another, but all drawn from a common source; and were in fact the remnants of a mythos almost lost but constantly renewed, discoverable everywhere in the East and West—“new Argonauts, new Trojan Wars,” and the like. The works of early writers without exception were “deeply tainted with allegory,” he declares elsewhere. “The mythos, not history, is the object of the writer.” It is to be presumed that Higgins erred in saying that the ancient sages Plato, Pythagoras and others disguised the doctrines of wisdom because they were too sublime for the mass of mankind; but he agrees that they did disguise them, alleging that this concealment laid the foundation for the priesthoods “whose interest it became to take care, by keeping the people in ignorance, that the doctrines should always remain too sublime for them.” Higgins seems not quite to have arrived at the point of seeing that mystic truth is by its own nature esoteric, and disguise is not entirely artificial, but rather natural to it. He contends that there have been writers against “the modern or 68 exoteric Christianity,” “but never have we had a Hobbes, a Herbert or a Bolingbroke to endeavor to discover their secret.” He earlier states that the Oriental sects were in the habit of using figurative language to disguise their metaphysical doctrines from the vulgar, but he says this gave their enemies the opportunity, by construing them literally, to represent them as absurd and outlandish. He connects the myths closely with astrology. He states that the book of Genesis was considered by most if not all of the ancient Jewish philosophers and Christian Fathers as an allegory. What testimony could be more explicit than that of the Psalmist (Psalm 78) who says: “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old which we have heard and known and our fathers have told us”? And

how could he have anticipated that these “dark sayings” would lead to sixteen centuries of a nearly total obfuscation of sense and sanity in the religion of half the world?

In the wake of this quotation Massey observes:

“It was the same with the Hebrew teachings brought out of Egypt as with the Egyptian writings, of which Origen observes, ‘the priests have a secret philosophy concerning their religion contained in their national scriptures, while the common people only hear fables which they do not understand. If these fables were heard from a private man without the gloss of the priest, they would appear exceedingly absurd.’”

Moses, avers Massey, received two laws on the mountain, the written and the oral. This oral law was the primitive tradition that contained the Apocrypha, the secret doctrines of the dark sayings and parables, the clue and key to all their hidden wisdom. That which was written was intended only for the ignorant outsiders; the interpretation was for the initiated. With the written version of the Jewish sacred books alone in our possession, we have been locked outside and left there without the key.

Origen’s teacher, Clement, speaks of the necessity of hiding in a mystery the wisdom which the Son of God had taught; of the hindrances which there were in his day to his writing about this wisdom, lest he should cast pearls before swine; of the reason why the Christian Mysteries were celebrated at night, like the Pagan ones, because then the soul, released from the dominion of the senses, turns in upon itself and has a truer intelligence of the mystery of God “hid for ages under allegory and prophecy,” but now revealed by Jesus Christ, and only spoken of by St. Paul “among such as were perfect” (perfected in the Mystery initiations), giving milk to the babes and meat to men of understanding; and of those mysteries as entered upon through the tradition of the Lord, or the great oral transmission from those divinely illuminated. Massey insists we can not understand the thought of primitive man without first learning the language of symbols in which it was expressed, and says that “the wisdom, or Gnosis, so carefully hidden and zealously guarded in the past” can not be regained by mere pious lucubration. To recover it we must resort to the aid of the same nature-logic that the sages used to give it expression. Origen makes a categorical declaration of the esoteric sense when he says (*Contra Celsum*):

“The learned may penetrate into the significance of all oriental mysteries, but the vulgar can only see the exterior symbol. It is allowed by all who have any knowledge of the scriptures that everything is conveyed enigmatically.” We turn to Philo and Josephus, both living about the time

of the “historical” Jesus. There is a tradition that Philo was converted to Christianity by Peter. If it is credible it would put him in close touch with the very earliest Christian sentiment. His testimony should carry considerable weight in the argument. He writes (D.V.C.):

“Now the interpretation of the sacred scriptures is based upon the understanding in the allegorical narratives; for these men look upon the whole of their law-codes being like to a living thing, having for the body the spoken commands, and for the soul the unseen thought stored up in the words . . . unwrapping and unrobing of the symbols . . . and bringing to light the naked inner meanings, for those who are able with a little suggestion to arrive at the intuition of the hidden sense from the apparent meaning.”

Massey says that Philo “Platonizes the myths,” reading new ethical meanings into them. But Philo’s forthright declaration on the esoteric method is found in his terse assertion, when speaking of the rib of Adam: “The literal statement is a fabulous one; and it is in the mythical that we shall find the true.” For those who in spite of a mass of such testimony from eminent and godly men of the past continue to assert that there never was any genuine and sincere esoteric knowledge, it is desirable to quote another statement from Philo:

“Now I bid ye, initiated men, who are purified as to your ears, to receive these things as mysteries which are really sacred, in your inmost souls, and reveal them not to any one who is of the number of uninitiated, but guard them as a sacred treasure.”

“In the Mosaic writings,” says Josephus (Preface to Antiq.) “everything is adapted to the nature of the whole, whilst the lawgiver most adroitly suggests some things as in a riddle and represents some things with solemnity as in an allegory; those, however, who desire to dive into the cause of each of these things, will have to use much and deep philosophical speculation.” He again (Ibid.) says that all the sacred writings have a reference to the nature of the universe; whilst the legislator, Moses, speaks some things wisely but enigmatically and others under a fitting allegory. What authority from antiquity can be cited with more weight than the first historian, Herodotus? In dealing with the Mystery celebrations of the Egyptians held on a lake within the sacred precincts of the temple at Sais, dramatizing the birth, life, death and regeneration of Osiris, he says that he considers it impious to divulge the name of the god.

“On these matters,” he goes on, “though accurately acquainted with the particulars of them, I must observe a discreet silence. So, too, with regard to the Mysteries of Demeter [celebrated at

Eleusis in Greece], which the Greeks term 'The Thesmophoria,' I know them, but I shall not mention them, except so far as may be done without impiety."

One must ask why such direct testimony from credible men of the ancient world should be flouted by modern savants. The effort to discredit the existence of a real esoteric system in the ancient day makes liars of nearly all the outstanding philosophers of the early world.

H. Y. Evans-Wentz, in his work *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, states that archaeological research has now proven that the Mysteries consisted of symbolical dramatic performances open only to the initiates and neophytes fit for initiation, illustrating the universally diffused esoteric teachings concerning death and resurrection; and that the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul into animal bodies was not intended to be taken, as it has been by the uninitiated, literally, but symbolically, as in Plato's *Republic*. Herodotus (ii, 122) is cited as documentary support for the statement.

Alexander Wilder, previously quoted, in reference to the Bacchic Mysteries says that every act, rite and person engaged in them was symbolical; and the individual revealing them was put to death without mercy. So also, he adds, was any uninitiated person who happened to have heard them. Here is strong evidence that the ancients surely believed they had a secret supremely worth safeguarding from desecration.

The noted modern Egyptologist A. E. W. Budge, says that every act of the ceremonial dramas was symbolical in character and represented some ancient belief or tradition.

"And there was not the smallest action on the part of any member of the band who acted the Miracle Play of Osiris, and not a sentence in the Liturgy which did not possess importance or vital significance to the followers of Osiris." Again he says that it is this "emblemism," spoken of by moderns as fetishism and idolatry, that has had a false construction put upon it, mainly by missionaries and travelers, although the Christian religion, he asserts, has been evolved from the same identical germ and on somewhat similar lines. Emblemism he explains as a merely external formula of an inner cult worship. Though the charge would have far more fitness if made against the Christians after the third century, it was made even in the days of Grecian philosophy by Diodorus Siculus, who tells us that the Egyptians treated the Greeks as impostors because they reissued the Egyptian mythology as their own history. If the Greeks were guilty of converting myth into history, it merely indicates that that process of esoteric degeneration which inevitably set in in every occult religion had begun early and has continued ever since. Celsus, the learned Jew in

debate with Origen, chuckles over the (literal) account of the Christian deluge with its ridiculous ark and impossible physical details, finding it a part of his own mythology literalized and amplified. Tom Paine, Voltaire and Ingersol chuckled in the same fashion later.

The Roman poet Sallust even classifies the fables as theology of the physical and animistic sort. He enlarges on the characteristics of each. He says the theological belongs to philosophers, the physical and 72 spiritual to poets, but an intermediate mixture of both belongs to the initiatory rites (Greek: teletais), "since the intention of all mystic ceremonies is to conjoin us with the world of the gods." The Jewish Maimonides comes up with the declaration that Genesis, taken according to the letter, is absurd and extravagant. Whoever should find the true sense of it ought to take care not to divulge it. This, he says, is a maxim which all the sages repeat to us, respecting the exact meaning of the work of the six days. If anyone should discover the true meaning, he should be silent, or speak of it only obscurely and in an enigmatical manner. An important statement is found in that venerated work on the first three centuries of Christian history, Baron Von Mosheim's "History." "It is not, therefore, Origen who ought to be termed the parent of allegories amongst the Christians, but Philo . . . many of the Jews, and in particular the Pharisees and Essenes, had indulged much in allegories before the time of Philo, but of this there can be no doubt, that the praefects of the Alexandrian school caught the idea of interpreting Scripture upon philosophical principles, or of eliciting philosophical maxims from the sacred writers by means of allegory, and that by them it was gradually propagated amongst the Christians at large. It is also equally certain that by the writings and example of Philo the fondness for allegories was vastly augmented and confirmed throughout the whole Christian world; and it moreover appears that it was he who first inspired the Christians with that degree of temerity which led them not infrequently to violate the faith of history and wilfully to close their eyes against the obvious and proper sense of terms and words . . . particular instances of it . . . may be shown from Origen and others, who took him for their guide, and who, manifestly, considered a great part both of the Old and New Testaments as not exhibiting a representation of things that really occurred, but merely the images of moral actions."

One can express with a sigh the wish that the discerning practice of Origen and Philo had persisted down the centuries!

The Schaff-Herzog dictionary of religious terms gives four meanings for such a name as "Jerusalem," following the gradient of classification laid down by Philo. Literally the name means the city in Palestine; morally, the believing soul; allegorically, the Church; and anagogically the city

of heavenly peace, located only of course in consciousness. While this scheme of interpretation permits it to mean the geographical town, it by no means confines it to that rendering, which the historical view does.

In the Anti-Nicene Library (Vol. XXIV, p. 127) in the section of Selections from the Prophetic Scriptures we read:

“We must therefore search the Scriptures accurately, since they are admitted to be expressed in parables, and from the names hunt out the thoughts which the Holy Spirit . . . teaches by imprinting his mind, so to speak, on the expressions . . . that the names . . . may be explained and that which is hidden under many integuments may, being handled and learned, come to light and gleam forth.”

Jowett, Plato’s academically accredited interpreter (Thomas Taylor’s most discerning work being frowned upon) writes: “I am not one of those who believe Plato to have been a mystic or to have had hidden meanings,”—this in the face of evidence that is mountainous in height and weight. It is now far over a century since C. F. Dupuis published his once-famous and still valuable work, *L’Origine de Tous Les Cultes*, in which he asserted that John the Baptist was a purely mythical personage, and identified his name with that of the Babylonian Fish-God, Ioannes, of the Berosan account. We should not omit reference to a statement by Isaac Myer, the learned Kabalist scholar, in his work *The Oldest Books in the World* (VII):

“There was undoubtedly an extremely subtle and sublimated thought in existence among the learned of the ancient Egyptians which modern thinkers have not yet fully grasped and which busied itself mostly with endeavors to arrive at the bond uniting the unknown and the known or materially existing; this was more especially limited to a religious philosophy and in that mostly to the spiritual nature in man. The mural paintings on the walls in ancient Egyptian tombs are not for decoration; they are symbolical and mystic and the figures thereon are intended for a religious purpose.”

In the Gemara of the Jews, it is said that he who has learned the scripture and not the Mishna “is a blockhead.” The Bible, they say, is like water, the Mishna like wine, the Gemara liked spiced wine. The law is as salt, the Mishna as pepper, the Gemara as balmy spice. To study the Bible can scarcely be considered a virtue; to study the Mishna is a virtue that will be rewarded, but the study of the Gemara is a virtue never to be surpassed. Some of the Talmudists assert that to

study the Bible is nothing but a waste of time. The Gemara embodied the anagogical or esoteric interpretation.

Rabbi Simeon Ben-Jochai, compiler of the Zohar, taught only the esoteric signification of doctrines, orally and to a limited few, holding that without the final instruction in the Mercavah the study of the Kabbalah would be incomplete. The Kabbalah itself says (iii-folio 1526, quoted in Myer's Qabbalah, p. 102):

"Each word of the Torah contains an elevated meaning and a sublime mystery." "The recitals of the Torah are the vestments of the Torah. Woe to him who takes this garment for the Torah itself. The simple take notice only of the garments or recitals of the Torah, they know no other thing, they see not that which is concealed under the vestment. The more instructed men do not pay attention to the vestment but to the body which it envelops." Godbey, in his searching work, *The Lost Tribes a Myth* (p. 697), asserts that the Jews lost the origin and meaning of the term "Israel" more than two thousand years ago.

"There is no agreement in their ancient literature upon that point. All record and tradition of the old Peniel sanctuary where Jacob became 'an Israel' has been lost."

But one of the most revealing intimations that the Christian movement early departed from the genius and spirit of the well-known esoteric methodology is found in a sensational passage quoted in Mead's *Orpheus* from Origen in his work *Contra Celsum*:

"The story of Dionysus and the Titans is a dramatic history of the wanderings of the 'Pilgrim-Soul.' And curiously enough we find the story of the resurrection of Dionysus . . . compared by the most learned of the Christian Fathers with the resurrection of Christ. Thus Origen (*Contra Celsum* IV, 171, Spenc.), after making the comparison, remarks apologetically and somewhat bitterly: 'Or, forsooth, are the Greeks to be allowed to use such words with regard to the soul, and speak in allegorical fashion (*tropolegein*), and we forbidden to do so?' . . . thus clearly declaring that the resurrection was an allegory of the soul and not historical." (*Orpheus*, pp. 185-6).

It will be well to place alongside of Origen's lament over the deterioration of splendid allegory into crass literalism the unguarded utterance of Synesius, a Bishop of Alexandria after Origen's time: "In my capacity as Bishop of the Church I shall continue to disseminate the fables of our religion, but in my private capacity I shall remain a philosopher to the end." By the "fables" he meant the mass of literalized legend which the Fathers purveyed to the ignorant laity, of which

Celsus says that they were so outlandish that even a stupid child's-nurse would be ashamed to tell them to children. And what he meant by remaining a "philosopher" would shock the churchmen who have for centuries decried the great Platonic and Neo-Platonic systems which, in spite of their protestations, have contributed so much to the foundations of Christianity. The unedifying spectacle of a Bishop fooling the populace with fables he knew were fictions, whilst he fed his own mind upon the deeper meanings of philosophy from pagan schools, goes far to support the claims made in this work and elsewhere as to the nature and causes of the terrible calamity that befell Christianity in the third century, ending in the conversion of allegory into a literalized Gospel and the befuddlement of the world.

From current reading we take a remark made by G. R. G. Mure, in his small work on Aristotle (p. 230), relative to the force of figurative or symbolic language:

"The eye for an effective metaphor is, in fact, a mark of genius and unteachable. And in devoting more space to illustrating that form of metaphor which depends upon analogy,--as when old age is described as 'Life's sunset,'--Aristotle means, perhaps, to mark the manifestation within the poet's imaginative world of that hierarchic order of analogous stages which pervades the whole Aristotelian universe. The last and least important element in tragedy is spectacle."

From Esdras (XIV, 6, 26 and 45) we take the following passages:

"These words shalt thou declare, and these shalt thou hide. And when thou hast done, some things shalt thou publish and some things shalt thou show secretly to the Wise."

". . . . and Highest spake, saying, The first that thou hast written publish openly, that the worthy and the unworthy may read it: but keep the seventy last, that thou mayest deliver them only to such as be wise among the people. For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom."

It is Mosheim who in his famous history of the early Church (Vol. II, 167) discloses how the matter of esoteric writing and cryptic meaning became a nub of controversy between Origen and his opponents. It is well to quote Mosheim's statements in full for the sake of their explicitness. He is referring to Origen when he says:

"Certainly he would have had no enemies if he had merely affirmed, what no one then called in question, that in addition to the sense which the words of Scripture convey, another sense latent in the things described is to be diligently sought for. This will be manifest if we consider who

were the men that inveighed so bitterly against Origen's allegories after he was dead. I refer to Eustatius, Epiphanius, Jerome, Augustine and many others. All these were themselves allegorists, if I may use that term; and would undoubtedly have commended any man, as a great errorist, who would have dared to impugn the arcane sense of Scripture. . . . There must, therefore, have been something new and unusual in Origen's exegesis, which appeared to them pernicious and very dangerous.

"The first and chief was, that he pronounced a great part of the sacred books to be void of meaning if taken literally, and that only the things indicated by the words were the signs and emblems of higher objects. The Christians who had previously followed after mystic interpretation let the truth of the sacred narratives and the proper sense of the divine laws and precepts remain in full force; but he turned much of the sacred history into moral fables, and no small part of the divine precepts into mere allegories. "Nearly allied to this first fault was another; namely, that he lauded immoderately the recondite and mystical sense of Scripture, and unreasonably depreciated the grammatical or historical sense. The latter he compared to earth, mud, the body and other things of little value; but the former he compared to the soul, heaven, gold and the most precious objects. By such representations he induced the expositors of Scripture to think little about the literal sense of passages and to run enthusiastically after the sublimer interpretations."

All this is so directly valuable a contribution to the inner story of the great catastrophe that overtook early Christianity that the long quotations can be forgiven. Here we see the most learned of the Christian Fathers, Origen, clinging tenaciously to what he knew was the true method of esoteric interpretation, but already beset by the subversive and crippling insistence on the literal and historical rendering which spelled devastation for the true meaning of scripture. This was the beginning of the tragedy that has engulfed all spiritual exegesis of holy writ ever since. Origen was the last champion of a true Christianity going down to defeat under the swelling tide of Philistine crudity of mind. A good part of the reason why the literalists feared Origen's method escapes in a naïve paragraph from Mosheim, who says that it appears strange that a man of so much discernment as Origen was should not have seen that his use of allegories and denial of the historicity of scripture would place directly into the hands of the Gnostics and others whom he sought to persuade to Christianity "the very means of overthrowing the entire history of the life and death of Christ." Unquestionably this strikes close to the heart of the whole matter. Once having committed itself to the personal and historical resolution of the Christos figure, the ecclesiastical power could not give countenance to the allegorical interpretation. The validation of the latter would present an immediate and constant menace to the whole historical structure of

Christianity. Ever since early times it has had to battle with the implications of comparative religion study to avoid the general acceptance of conclusions massively obvious on the side of allegorism. With Egypt's evidence now available, the day of reckoning can no longer be held off.

Mosheim sets forth Origen's stated view that, as "the philosophical grounds of Christian doctrine are wrapt up in figures, images and facts in the sacred volume," if "we adhere to the literal meaning, that harmony between religion and philosophy can not be found." Mosheim admits that "in the objections of the enemies of Christianity, there are not a few things which can in no way be fully cleared up and confuted, unless we abandon the grammatical and historical sense and resort to allegories." This goes far forward strengthening Origen's (and this work's) general position, and is recommended to the close attention of all modern literalists and fundamentalists.

So extended an array of data has been necessary to establish the existence and influence of the esoteric method in the whole of ancient literature. It must be kept in mind that, lengthened as it is to the point of prolixity, it is only a tiny segment of what could be adduced. The significant fact in reference to it is that in spite of the mass of authentic evidence the effort has persisted in academic circles to maintain a denial of both the employment of such a distinctive method and its obvious and momentous involvements. It is by no means an unwarranted assertion to hint that the hostile attitude toward esotericism has been an item in the policy of a great conspiracy, operative ever since the third century, to diminish the influence of the pagan teachings. Evidence to support such a forthright statement is not wanting, although, as Sir Gilbert Murray has noted, most of the evidence supporting the pagan side has been destroyed by the Christians. Whatever the motive actuating a resort to the method of violence to negate an important fact in religious history, it must be held in any case a hazardous enterprise to flout the truth. It argues something less than full intellectual integrity, something sinister and disquieting. The world is still waiting for a good and adequate explanation of the harsh measure that prompted the closing of schools that purveyed such lofty wisdom and sage philosophy as the Platonic Academies of sapient Greece in the fifth century. According to von Mosheim, Origen "introduced the whole of the Academy into Christian theology." Bishop Synesius preferred "philosophy" to lying legend. Neo-Platonism brought to the modern Dean Inge his highest illumination in religion. It will call for a good case indeed to defend the suppression of truth and light of this sort. In our longer view it becomes ever more patent that in the ignorant policy by the Church the world witnessed the triumph of irrational piety and fanatical zealotry over rational religion. The mystical and the rational sides of the religious motive, expressed in general by two quite diverse types of human beings—the one the feeling, the other the thinking—have always been at variance and often in conflict in the movement, and the resurgent

sweep of one or the other has marked the epic of religious history. Hardly any event in the annals of mankind has wrought more serious consequences than that sudden and overwhelming change of character in early Christianity from a philosophical religion to one of devotion and feeling, so fateful for later times. The Christian world is still enthralled by the iniquitous influences to which this portentous event gave birth. It is with the design of breaking the deadening spell of much of this irrational enchantment still operative today that the great massing of data in this work is undertaken.

Chapter IV

WISDOM HAUNTS THE COUNTRYSIDE

It might be presumed that the authentic status of myth and religious allegory had been sufficiently demonstrated. But it should further greatly strengthen the whole case and prove of vital worth on its own account to assemble additional data that will reveal an even closer tie between the myths and the basic genius of all religion. This research will enable us to establish a connection between myths and another ancient mode of religious expression, a link which is little known or suspected by modern students. Indeed it will answer in large part the great question as to the origin of the myths. The conclusion reached by the investigation will again almost certainly be warmly disputed. A shorter chapter will suffice to present what must surely be considered an important body of evidence.

The collated data point to an origin of the myths in a place which itself vastly enhances their innate and fundamental kinship with religion. Lacking more accurate knowledge about them, we have been disposed to think that the myths were an independent and whimsical creation of the free fancy and childish imagination of peoples whom we have insisted on dubbing "primitive." That they were not thus an arbitrary product, unrelated to the profoundest philosophical wisdom and the highest spiritual insight of the ancient world, is evidenced by the material here collected. The evidence almost indisputably indicates their origin from an older religious institution or expression—the ritual drama. The myths find their basic character and their unity at last in the features of a great universal dramatic rite, the importance of which has been too stubbornly belittled and neglected through the force of Christian prejudice, even where its very existence has been granted.

First spokesman is no less an authority than Sir James Frazer, author of *The Golden Bough*. From his lectures (p. 374) we take his item:

"We shall probably not err in assuming that many myths, which we now know only as myths, had once their counterpart in magic; in other words, that they used to be acted as a means of producing in fact the events which they described in figurative language. Ceremonies often die out while myths survive, and thus we are left to infer the dead ceremony from the living myth." Corroboration is added by H. J. Rose (*Folk-Lore*, p. 104): "The legend has pretty certainly grown out of the rite, as usually happens." Says Miss J. E. Harrison in her *Themis* (p. 328): "A mythos of the Greeks was primarily just a thing spoken, uttered by the mouth. Its antithesis or rather correlative is the thing done, enacted."

Significant is the sentence from Prof. A. B. Cook (quoted in Lord Raglan's work, *The Hero*): "Behind the myth (of the Minotaur), as is so often the case, we may detect a ritual performance." J. A. K. Thomson, in *Studies in the Odyssey* (p. 54) states that not only is the myth the explanation of the rite; it is at the same time the explanation of the god,--the central character in the rite.

Forthright is the testimony of A. M. Hocart in *The Progress of Man* (p. 223):

"If we turn to the living myth, that is, the myth that is believed in, we find that it has no existence apart from the ritual. The ritual is always derived from some one and its validity must be established from its derivation. . . . Knowledge of the myth is essential to the ritual, because it has to be recited at the ritual."

Prof. Malmouski (*Notes and Queries in Anthropology*) writes:

"Psychologists like Wundt, sociologists like Durkheim, Herbert and Mause, anthropologists like Crawley, classical scholars like Miss Jane Harrison, have all understood the ultimate association between myth and ritual, between sacred tradition and the norms of social structure. . . . Myth as it exists in a savage community, that is, in its living primitive form, is not merely a story told but a reality lived. It is not of the nature of fiction such as we read today in a novel, but it is a living reality, believed to have once happened in primeval times and continuing ever since to influence the world and human destinies."

It must be pointed out that lack of keen discernment is shown in claiming that an intelligent view of the myths ever accepted them as having actually occurred, or that they were not known to be pure fiction in their outward form. Error and confusion at once enter the moment we attribute to them any other than typical reality. The whole miscarriage of ancient meaning sprang from the incorrigible tendency to assert that the ancient intelligent people believed their myths. There is the great chasm of difference between saying they believed them and saying they believed in them, and the chasm is that between truth and error. Never did intelligent people believe them; they believed what they represented, typified, adumbrated. The whole issue of right and wrong appraisal and judgment of them and the ancient hangs on this distinction. This work for the first time insists that this distinction is the critical point in the evaluation of all ancient literature. The first blows in the wreckage of archaic spiritual systems fell when the shadow of this misconception crept in upon the mind of the early Christian following.

Correcting the apparently slight, but really formidable misconception, it is necessary next to repudiate utterly this same writer's views on the myths, as thus expressed:

“We can certainly discard all explanatory as well as all symbolical ex-interpretations of these myths of origins. The personages and beings which we find are what they appear to be on the surface, and not symbols of hidden realities. As to any explanatory function of these myths, there is no problem which they cover, no curiosity which they satisfy, no theory which they contain.”

This opinion needs refutation because it will be seconded by many readers who are instant in opposition to anything that extols the religion of “paganism.”

How any scholar acquainted with the facts of the ancient ritualism, and possessed of ordinary reasoning power, could asseverate that the ceremonies were entirely meaningless, is beyond comprehension. This is to accuse Plato, Euripides, Sophocles, Aeschylus and a long list of antiquity’s most celebrated men of perpetrating a performance, presented annually before thousands of people, that was in the end nothing but gibberish. The actions and speeches in the drama reenacted the experience of mankind in its evolutionary cycle; yet this critic asserts that there was no problem or construction bearing relation to reality in the mythic representation. Criticism of this sort is farcical, and represents a total failure to grasp meanings which, however faintly apprehended by the unschooled, can still be discerned by any intelligent mind. So gross a misjudgment of a great form of ancient culture is inexcusable. From a stupendous amount of such biased incompetence in assessing the value of early formulations in religion and philosophy the world has suffered incredibly.

While putting forth the questionable conjecture that the myth had nothing to do with speculation or exegesis, any more than with historical data, the next witness, Lord Raglan, English author of a most valuable work, *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama*, contributes to the discussion a body of data, comment and cited material that goes far to make the case impregnable. His work stands as one of the first open-minded approaches to the investigation of the world’s hero-legends, folk lore and Märchen, and adduces evidence which negates the historical view of the hero stories. He is perhaps the first modern to clarify the distinction between legend and real history. He classifies the myth roughly as little else than the form of words which accompanies the performance of a rite. Citing the incongruity of the content and form of the myth with the ordinary products of the folk (to whom all previous consensus had assigned their origin), he states the highly important conclusion that the literature of the folk is not their own production, but comes down to them from a source above them. The author here brings out in clear and irrefutable fashion the discernment that it has been a great error to attribute the creation of folk lore to the folk themselves. The myths were made for the folk, but not by the folk. They were

constructed with a view to catch the popular fancy and be retained easily in the folk memory. To claim that they were originated by the folk is to argue that the products of the highest cleverness and genius came from the ranks of the untutored and ignorant. The tales and ballads lived amongst the folk, but they were not their creation. But to the modern student Raglan's statement that, since they were not an indigenous folk production, they must have come down to them from above, is mystifying. This is due to the failure of modern thought to envisage properly the ancient prevalence of esoteric spirit and methodology. There should be no more skepticism about the realities of esoteric truth and teaching than about the situation in any college, where faculty, representing the acquired wisdom and maturity of an older generation, presides over and instructs the members of a younger generation, its pupils. The from above in Raglan's pronounce-83 ment hints at nothing more weird and exceptional than the fact that more enlightened sages from time to time since remote days have contrived to issue for the benefit of the general mass of uninstructed humanity bodies of truth encased in the amber of popular legend, ballad, castle-tale and household fable. From above here signifies no super-intelligence achieved by the spiritually illumined aspirants, whether in ancient days or since. The myths came down through the ages from a distant source in a mountain-spring of attained wisdom. Raglan presents this view and strengthens his conviction regarding it by a citation from Budge, the Egyptologist, who says (From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt, p. 156):

"It would be wrong to say that the Egyptians borrowed from the Sumerians, or the Sumerians from the Egyptians, but it may be submitted that the literati of both peoples borrowed their theological systems from some common but exceedingly ancient source."

Budge here spoke more truly than he has done at other times. His words are indeed the truth on this matter, so largely missed otherwise. Raglan declares that a dozen learned writers show that the religious systems of many countries possessed many fundamental characteristics in common. They were obviously systems designed for the good of the community by the proper performance of the given ritual. This possession of a common religious denominator by many nations looms as vitally important, since it becomes the backbone of the argument that all the myths had one common origin in a primal construction wherein all the ingredients were at hand from the beginning.

Raglan's outline of the pervasive features of the ritual is a valuable summary. He says in effect that the basic pattern consisted of a dramatic ritual in which the death and resurrection of the king, who was also the god, performed by priests and members of the royal family, were the

central events. There was also a sacred combat, in which the victory of the god over his enemies was won, and a triumphal procession, participated in by the neighboring gods, also an enthronement, with a ceremony by which the destinies of the state for the year ahead were determined, and finally a sacred marriage. Somewhere in the drama was interjected the recitation of the story whose outlines were enacted in the ritual. This was the myth, and its repetition engendered a strong psychic potency equal to that of the ritual itself. From the start the words and the actions were inseparably united, although in the course of time they became separated and each gave rise to its own literary, artistic and religious forms. He states a little farther on (p. 154) that while the separation of Greek myth from its accompanying ritual may be due in part to the ancient philosophers, who composed allegories which seemed to tear the myth apart from the ritual, the divorcement of the two is chiefly due to modern classical scholars who have failed to recognize the close connection between Greek poetry and Greek religion and who have likewise missed the fact that the Greek descriptive writers such as Herodotus and Pausanias never cite a myth apart from a reference to some rite or to some sacred locality.

If at any time the sages composed myths that had no connection with the ritual, it could only have been that there was no structural or organic linkage with it. It is hardly possible to conceive how they could have composed myths unrelated to the ritual, for all the myths were picturizations of the same elements of meaning which the ritual portrayed. Perhaps not distinctly related in form, but related in meaning, to the ritual they must have been.

Raglan says that Miss Jennie Weston (*From Ritual to Romance*, p. 176), after dealing with a large group of Grail stories, concludes that these stories “repose eventually not upon a poet’s imagination, but upon the ruins of an august and ancient ritual, a ritual which once claimed to be the accredited guardian of the deepest secrets of life.” But so strong is the inveterate tendency to assume that history must somehow be interwoven in ancient constructions that Miss Weston supposes that certain historical outlines have crept into these narratives. Nothing but later ignorance and exoteric degeneracy ever compromised with the pure myth to the extent of insinuating historical reference into it. A penetrating judgment is pronounced by Raglan (p. 225) when he definitely asserts that the myth took its rise from the dramatic features of the ritual, and that all traditional narratives show, by both form and content, that they derive neither from historical fact nor from imaginative fiction, but from acted ritual. There can be little doubt, he states, that all drama is the product of ritual drama. The *dramatis personae*, even when they are given historical names, are not individuals but types. The Homeric poems, he says, have the form

of dramas. The drama, he insists, was originally a religious ceremony, and the whole community shared in it. (The Hero, p. 240.)

Mr. MacCulloch, in alluding to the Algonquin stories, says: "All form part of a mythological cycle dealing with the life of the hero-divinity, Manabush." Raglan subjoins that the Homeric poems are all mythological cycles dealing with the lives of hero-divinities; but, he ventures, nothing so arouses the fury of scholars as the suggestion that these cycles are based on ritual, or sprang from it. He says they take the Tale of Troy as sober record of historical fact, woven together from scraps of romantic fiction. As there is nothing in the Bible that can not be found in antecedent literature, so, Raglan contends, there is nothing in "Homer" that can not be found elsewhere. Who was Homer?--he asks. And he answers with the pronouncement of Prof. J. A. K. Thomson, that "Homer" was the title given to the victor in the minstrelsy contest held at the festival of Apollo at Delos. He was the eponymous-hero of the hymn-singers and sacred dancers, and was a personification of the Delian Apollo. "The hymn," says Prof. Thomson, "has given birth to the heroic-epos. For these 'men and women' are the old local Daimones,--Achilles, Helen and the rest. Their legends have combined to form one great legend recited at the Delian festival in honor of Apollo, the father-god of all the Ionians. . . . The hymn gradually added to itself more and more of the inherited or borrowed legends of the Ionian race until it grew into the proportions of all 'Homer.' And as Homer was the traditional author of the original hymn, so he remained the traditional author of all the rest."

Mr. W. F. J. Wright is cited as saying that the name of Troy is widely associated with mazes and labyrinths, and that various instances in the Iliad correspond with known features of a once widespread maze ritual. And Prof. Hocart is drawn on as authority for the datum that there are twenty-six common features which characterize the installation of kings in all parts of the world; and the inference is that these common features stem from a common source, the ancient spiritual drama.

Raglan says the conclusion is inevitable that such characters as the ogre, giant, devil, dragon, troll, cannibal and sorcerer are nothing but titles for a personage acting in a liturgy, representing the terrifying demon of the initiations. There is much indeed to support the expressed view of Raglan (p. 220) that the character known as the Horned Man was taken from the ritual and became invested with real life, gaining a status in popular belief far more real than that of any historical character. Perhaps Jesus is more real as mythical hero than as a once-living person.

Anent this Raglan expresses his astonishment that Sir James Ridgeway should have been misled into taking the stock figures of myth for actual people.

The principal characters in the ritual are two, a hero and a buffoon who meet with various adventures together and live on terms of the greatest familiarity—naturally, since they represent the god and the animal nature of man, who live together in the same body! And this accounts for the special privilege accorded the fool to jest at the expense of the castle baron, and for the horse-play and buffoonery permitted at the Saturnalia and the autumn equinoctial festivals (surviving in the rough mischief of our Hallowe'en), when higher and lower, god and irresponsible joker in man, were placed on the same level of existence. Fools were considered sacred on the seventh day, symbolizing the raising of the animal man to his human-divine dignity on the Sabbath, the seventh and last “day” of the cycle.

The incarnation of the divine soul in man's animal body is the basis of all the legends of the sorcerers' turning the hero or his men into animals, or their disguising themselves as animals. The Hallowe'en animal mask is the survival and replica of the same thing, for the masks were originally the hides of animals! The prominence given this phase of the drama's meaning is attested by what Raglan writes (p. 261). He says that a prominent feature of every type of traditional narrative is the man in animal form, or the animal that can speak.

Persons disguised as animals are so universal a feature of ritual and drama as not to need demonstration, he avers. And the answer to the query why ancient Egyptian ritual was performed largely by people in animal masks, and why Greek gods and goddesses were so often represented as animals or birds, holds in its symbolic purport one of the central items of the drama of human life. For the religion of these early peoples throbbed with an innate sense of kinship with nature and religious ideas were sympathetically adumbrated and reflected by nature's phenomena. Participants in the Mithraic Mysteries wore animal masks. Obviously the masks typified the outer personality of man, for the Latin word for “mask” is *persona*, and man's personality is an animal body! It is quite worth a moment's digression from data to exegesis to say that the world's failure over many centuries to read the simple explication of this animal typism, as dramatically depicting the incarnation of the soul in the human-animal, and not the beast-animal, body, has buried the trap to catch untold millions of religiously simple-minded people in its disguised subtlety. Had the esoteric implications of the drama been kept in ken, all that mass of lucubrated assertion by numberless writers that the ancients endorsed the belief in transmigration of the once-human soul into the bodies of animals at death, would not have disgraced the pages of literature. Scholars,

historians and sociologists can now be told that they have been shooting, not at an authentic poacher in the garden, but at a scarecrow.

Raglan cites that the Council of Trent believed that people can take the form of animals! The ancients, as we have seen, are accused of “believing” their myths. It was only the later Christians that believed them, with both humorous and tragic results.

Greek drama, like Egyptian, is predominantly tragic, because what moderns term “happiness” was not the one supreme motif of the human experience, as envisaged by Greek philosophy. By etymology “tragedy” means “goat-song.” The goat was of course the zodiacal Capricorn, coming at the winter solstice, when the sun, typifying the soul in the dead “winter” of its incarnation, was in the throes of “death” as the scapegoat to carry the onus of man’s redemption. For obviously man’s only possible redeemer—from benightedness, nescience, animal carnality—is his own soul. If it can not make the grade into charity, love and compassion, what else can uplift him? Let the Church which has gulled its childish millions by substituting a historical for an immanent scapegoat, answer.

This concludes the limited assemblage of data to demonstrate that the myth came from the pristine ritual drama. If it is not enough to prove the point, there is doubtless much more material of perhaps greater strength that could be found and presented. The fact, if considered sufficiently demonstrated, might seem to be remote from any bearing on the question of the Jesus historicity. It is indeed not remote. If it can be shown that the Christ of the Gospels was a myth-88 ical character, we could then confidently look for agreement of all aspects of this mythical figure with the central character-personage in the ancient religious ritual, out of which the myths grew. Comparative religion study has already demonstrated this close relationship of the two figures, the Christ of the mythos and the Sun-God of the ritual. Some material in the present work may further strengthen that identity. If the ritual and the myth are shown to be in point of fact practically identical, and the features to match closely the characterizations of the Gospel Jesus, a strong presumptive case has already been established in support of the conclusion that the Gospel hero was but another of the many mythical type-figures, and not a Galilean peasant.

Chapter V FANCY'S FABRIC TURNS INTO HISTORY

The story turns next to a chapter in revelation that must strike all but a few readers as incredible beyond all possibility of its being the simple truth. Even if the weight of the evidence submitted seems indubitably to support the position, it will still fail acceptance by many. It will leave even those convinced by the presentation shocked, bewildered, incredulous. That so gross a blunder, both gigantic and stupid, could have been perpetrated, and that it could have been foisted upon the world's intelligence for sixteen centuries without detection by the united acumen of all scholars over that period, will appear impossible. It will be the giraffe whose existence the farmer denied while looking it up and down. It will come close to upsetting Lincoln's witty apothegm, and almost prove that all the people can be fooled all the time, or for sixteen centuries. It brings the disconcerting realization that after all fifty million Frenchmen can be wrong. The upset of cherished maxims of human polity is distressing. The foundations of homiletics will be shaken. So vast a miscarriage of wisdom, embroiling the mental life of millions for centuries in the darkest superstitions, setting spiritual culture back for ages, will seem too enormous a price to pay for a mere misreading of myths. A consequence of such enormity would seem out of all proportion to the apparently trivial nature of the cause.

But the misreading of myths and allegories, fables and dramas, brought the historical Christ into hypostatization, euhemerized the central spiritual conception in all religion, and thus emasculated what was to have been the most potent dynamic of the whole religious life. It left the world chasing a chimera instead of focusing effort on the culture of spirituality. It threw a possible great civilization under the pall and handicap of the most fantastic conception that ever misdirected the moral genius of man into eccentric and bizarre and eventually cataclysmic channels. It killed the psychological efficacy of the whole religious enterprise, diverting zeal from the one pivot point where zeal *go* alone counts,--the life of the inner consciousness and seat of character, the soul.

The revelation thus heralded and now to be substantiated by accumulated documentation, is the colossal blunder, perpetrated from the third century on, of mistaking myth, drama, ritual, allegory and other forms of typical representation for objective history, and following this by turning the body of myths into alleged occurrence. This chapter and indeed the entire work is the answer to the raucous chorus of protestation that will arise on all sides against the possibility of such a thing, declaring it absurd and demanding the evidence to prove it. In many quarters the

declaration will be laughed out of court and given no chance to present its credentials. It can be said in patient appeal for examination of the supporting data that the closer one looks into the matter, the more completely does the apparent absurdity fade away and probability increase to certainty. When scrutiny has been carried on penetratingly enough, the absurdity of its being true turns quite around and gives place to the absurdity of any other view. Not only can the mistake be established on factual evidence, but the perception that a mistake has been made supplies the only hypothesis that yields a full and consistent explanation of all the data extant in the case. It alone provides a formula which solves all the difficulties and tangles involved in the problem. If this is so, it must be accepted and accredited as substantial proof. For if research elicits a formula which enables all the data to be explained rationally and consistently by its key, the formula is considered as satisfactorily established. The key that fits all locks must be the master key. A thousand questions, complications, inconsistencies, contradictions, illogicalities in current interpretation both of scriptural text and historical implication are resolved into entirely consistent intelligibility when the true key is applied. If this resultant can not be accepted as ultimate proof of the correctness of the thesis, it at least gives it the field over every other proposal that does not so resolve the difficulties with half the consonance and reasonableness.

The ancient illuminati depicted the soul's experience in this life by means of myth, drama, allegory and pictorial ideograph; and in the third century the increasingly ignorant Christian laity and the decreasingly intelligent Christian priesthood conspired at last to convert the whole into supposed history. That is the whole story in a thimble. But we can not go far with it in the thimble. Its full detailing demands a great elaboration. It is frankly the gigantic task to support the claim against determined and crafty opposition, for the very obvious reason that esotericism did not openly proclaim or defend itself, and therefore its defense is not in evidence in rebuttal of opposing claims. The opposition also has possessed the enormous advantage of being able to destroy all the evidence of the other side, a point which has been strikingly mentioned by Sir Gilbert Murray in his studies. It seems clear that a case which must be upheld by the destruction of opposing evidence stands already prejudiced as a weak one.

But there are times when history itself enacts an amazing drama of poetic justice in the operation of moral forces. So long as the voice of ancient Egypt's wisdom was hushed in silence, so long as the Egyptian papyri and stelae could not be read, the pious imposture could go on. Nearly two millennia passed, with Egypt's testimony unavailable. But in the fullness of time Napoleon's Colonel, Broussard, dug up the Rosetta Stone and Napoleon wisely saw its possible value. It is questionable whether, for direct cultural value to all races, any event, battle or reformation in

human history surpasses this simple discovery of an entablatured rock. It is fast proving the ghost of retribution, the instrument of justice, the Nemesis of a Christianity fostered by ignorance and superstition. It opens up the vast treasure-house of ancient Egyptian literature, where, once exposed to view, there lies before our eyes the full and incontestable evidence of Christianity's false claims. That literature supplies the direct missing links in the body of comparative religion study, a study which proves beyond cavil that Christianity was not the first pure divine release of the one "true religion," but only at best a badly mangled copy of earlier Egyptian religion. So far was it from being an advance or improvement over pagan cultures that it is possible to say it was not even a good reprint of them, was in fact a vitiation and sheer caricature of more perfect ancient systems. However much this sounds like the vilest heresy and contumacy in flouting the traditional poses of orthodoxy, the truth should not be suppressed merely because it shocks those who prefer to hold to the set grooves of acceptance and who for a hundred reasons are unwilling to face a humiliating readjustment. Conservatism ever finds an error, when coupled with security, a more comfortable companion than truth admitted to the house with disturbing consequences. Only after new truth has slowly crept into the general body and settled itself commodiously amongst the former elements, will the conservative group adopt it, with the lying manifesto that they had been standing for the innovation all the time. Particularly has this been true of religious conservatism. The last to yield old ground to new positions, it is yet the loudest to extol the new form when finally it has established itself firmly. History supports this analysis. The Rosetta Stone and Champollion's marvelous work in deciphering its cryptic hieroglyphics will force Christianity to face its pagan origins and admit at last its long-denied parentage in the ancient Egyptian wisdom. It has spurned its true ancestry, and having in the meantime heaped obloquy and contempt upon it, now finds it humiliating, when the true descent is established, to accept the connection. But it must do so or—perish. It can no longer support its claims in the face of contradictory evidence, which, with the release of Egypt's hidden wisdom, the rediscovery of the "lost language of symbolism" in which all ancient scriptures were written and the recovery of the buried esoteric meaning of all ancient religion, has been raised in height and volume from hillock to mountain size. With candid truth-seeking as its guiding star, there needs to be instituted a sincere scholastic research of all available documents to trace the causes, motives and circumstances of that devastating surge of forces which swept over the masses in the Roman Empire about the third century and with fell violence stamped out the cult of esoteric wisdom and closed up its schools and academies. With dispiriting unanimity the religious historians and Christian writers hail the suppression of the Mystery Brotherhoods and the philosophical schools as the happy ending of a degenerate paganism and the beginning of a Christianity of spiritual purity. By what distortions or

chicanery of logic or sophistry the extinction of the great Plato's still unexampled wisdom, Socrates' magnificent dialectic of truth and Aristotle's consummate perspicacity can be twisted into a triumph of truth over error and the bright dawn of a new day for humanity, is surely not easily discerned. The logical inconsistency of the position is brought vividly to light in the historical phenomenon that transpired a thousand years later, when the strength of the whole Christian system was by the Medieval schoolmen built up on the foundations of the books of the same Plato and Aristotle, the obliteration of whose philosophies from the early Christian doctrinism was hailed as the end of world 93 benightedness and the beginning of world enlightenment. During some earlier centuries of the Medieval period Plato's *Timaeus* was the principal authority for Christian exposition; and for nearly a thousand years later Aristotle was the venerated master for all the Schoolmen, with Aquinas in the lead, of the regnant Church. Forsooth, then, it was a benison to humanity to have earlier closed their great colleges under the sycamores of Greece! This is the crooked logic of factual history and in the light of it the world can see at last that Christian claims and Christian acts do not lie straight in the same bed. Had it not been for the Arabians and Moors the Schoolmen would probably never have had a Plato or Aristotle manuscript to found Medieval Christianity upon. The Christian propaganda office has vociferated a thousand times that the closing of the Platonic academies in the fifth century ended the Dark Ages of paganism and heralded the era of true religion. The Catholic Church vociferates with equal vigor that the revival of Aristotelian philosophy and its use as the bulwark of a rationalized Christianity was again the end of the Dark Ages of later Europe. It is a little confusing to be told that the world was saved by the suppression of Grecian esoteric wisdom and saved again by its renaissance. A fuller survey of some aspects of this muddled situation will be undertaken in a later chapter. The marshaling of data to corroborate the positions taken will again require much quotation of authorities. The pointed force of documentary statements is in large measure lost when reported indirectly. The apology for so much direct quotation is that a work of this kind, combating universally accepted theses and putting forth conclusions which will be everywhere challenged, has no recourse but to summon a powerful array of authoritative statement to its side. The importance of the issues involved will amply justify the extensive citation. We can put confidence in the sincere utterance of a fair-minded scholar like Mr. G. R. S. Mead, when he makes the following impressive statement (*Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?*, p. 12):

“Canonical Christianity gradually evolved the mind-bewildering dogma that Jesus was in deed and in truth very God of very God, unique and miraculous in every possible respect; and the Church for some seventeen or eighteen centuries has boldly thrown down this challenge to the intellect and experience of humanity. .

. . It is because of this stupendous claim, which has perhaps astonished none more than Himself, that the Church has brought upon herself a scrutiny into the history of her origins that it is totally unable to bear.”

We can do no better than continue with some exceedingly valuable declarations from the pen of Gerald Massey, which, however heterodoxical they may appear to the orthodox, cut to the heart of the truth with startling incisiveness. This clear-eyed scholar, with the open pages of Egypt’s symbolical and analogical wisdom under his gaze, showing the complete case for the derivation of Christian material from that august source, stood at a vantage point where few others have stood. Facing this perspective, his decisive advantage was his possession of both penetrating insight into things Egyptian and an unprejudiced open mind. It is to be hoped that our return to sanity and our more piercing discernment into ancient religion may bring us at last to see what he saw ahead of us, and may dispose us to do belated justice to the name of this truth-seeking student whom our blindness cheated of his legitimate honor and reward in his lifetime.

Massey says that the Mosaic account of the creation is allowed by the most learned of Jewish Rabbis, by Philo, Paul and certain of the Patristics to be a myth or symbolical representation; yet the whole structure of the Christian theology is founded on the ignorant assumption that it was not mythical but a veritable human occurrence in the domain of fact. As history, he avers, the Pentateuch has neither head, tail nor vertebrae. It is an indistinguishable mush of myth and mystery. He notes a logical consideration that has been missed by blind zeal to countenance the impossible in a religion of fanatical faith, but that must be granted much validity as an argument. This is the fact that had the Pentateuch been a real history, Palestine and Judea ought to have been found overstrewn with implements of war and work, both of Hebrew manufacture and that of the conquered races, whereas, outside of the Book, no evidence of the numberless combats and the devastation of Jehovah’s enemies in great battles is to be found. Also the country of a people so rich that King David in his poverty could collect one thousand millions of pounds sterling toward building a temple is found without art, sculptures, mosaics, bronzes, pottery or precious stones to lend credence to the Bible story. Proofs of Bible “history” will not be found, avers Massey, not though Palestine be dug up in the search. And how fatuous after all to think of digging in the earth to find the proofs of spiritual myths and allegories! No amount of archaeology can prove a myth.

But there was bound to come a time when the ancient world would begin to write history of the factual sort, or when, as recondite learning and deeper esoteric comprehension waned, the

process of weaving actual history into the texture of the myths would make headway. In nearly every land the custodians of the myths sooner or later intermixed some national history with the spiritual dramas. As is so clearly evidenced in Virgil's Aeneid, the temptation was almost unconquerable at times for the hierophants of religion to interweave the brighter deeds or virtues of a regnant king in the ritual drama, the more particularly since the king in all ancient countries did become the national type and personation of the Sun-God of the temple ceremonies. Kings were almost invariably named after the spiritual Sun-King of the drama. The titles of the Emperor of Ethiopia and Oriental monarchs still testify to this old custom. As nearly as can be determined, the time when this transition from myth to history occurred in Jewish history was in the days of Hezekiah. From then on the allegories of the descent of the gods to earth are made to run into and blend with a line of historical personages. This process, as Massey saw it, so confused the impossible situations found in myth and allegory with the ostensibly possible facts of history that to accredit the narrative as history the mind had to entertain many bizarre and fabulous incidents under the rating of miracle. The blending of history with myth opened the door to the entry of that derationalizing scourge born of religious ineptitude, the belief in miracle, Massey contends. It created the susceptibility to take stock in prodigy, the supernatural, the ominous, which nearly all minds engender from a literal reading of the scriptures. Massey feels that religion has unsettled men's minds by its glorification of the miraculous and the supernatural, when the whole basis of its true strength and salutary influence for humanity lies in its inculcating the majesty and divinity of the ever-present miracle of the natural. He attests that the sane ancient religion was founded upon the natural, the highest spiritual verities being everywhere presented in the light of their analogy with some natural phenomenon. Massey would have endorsed Emerson's wise discernment that "the true mark of genius is to see the miraculous in the common." The Hebrew writings were preserved, Massey continues, on account of the sacred mystery that lay underneath the veil of symbol, the veil that Isis boasted no man had lifted from her person. The writings were held in sanctity because of what they veiled; but to the Christians their sanctity goes no deeper than the veil, and is bred and kept alive only by ignorance, "absolute, unquestioning, unsuspecting ignorance of the meaning of symbolism." With them the veil itself is the treasure, and they know not the real treasure beneath it. And since they have centered all the sanctity in the veil, when that is torn off, all the sanctity is lost for them. They have disciplined no faculty which would enable them to see the real treasure when it is exposed to view. They howl that their treasure has been stolen away from them, when only the ornamentally carved lid of the treasure chest has been removed. And this indeed has been the tragedy of the situation. Voltaire, Paine, Ingersol, the Encyclopedists, the Deists, the atheists and the Freethinkers and religious skeptics generally have

effectively torn away and trampled underfoot the outer garments of Bible myths, all unaware that these clothed the body of truth. The revelation of the absurdity of Bible allegory, taken as supposed history, broadcast by these efforts, set on fire in millions of minds a burning resentment against the whole institution of religion, and the Bible, theology and priestcraft as its criminal accessories. They see nothing in religion worth saving. This upsweep of rationalism, as reaction against centuries of omnicredulous faith, threatens to abolish religion from the earth. This is the price the world is paying for the loss of symbolic genius in the third century. Nothing will save the cult of genuine religion from this menacing hand but the quick restoration of the knowledge that there is no absurdity and nonsense, but only grandeur of truth, when the scriptures are read as sublime spiritual allegories instead of histories. Nothing will stay the besom of devastation but the quick recovery of the lost language of symbolism. For nothing else will bring to light the treasure beneath the veil.

Massey maintains (*Book of the Beginnings*, Vol. II, p. 180) that when the Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek in the third century B.C. by some Alexandrian Jews, the process of elimination of the esoteric is very visible.

Dates were altered to conceal the true sense. And after the allegories had been transformed into histories, the true or symbolic reading according to the principles of the secret tradition was forbidden to be taught in schools. The Pharisees were so fearful of the popular despoliation of the Apocryphal wisdom by the unworthy that they sought to prevent the teaching of writing to the masses. Testimony that Massey is correct in saying that myth and history inevitably tend to merge into one is found in the book of a writer whose aim is to disprove the mythical interpretation of the scriptures. T. J. Thorburn, in his *The Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels* (p. 120), writes:

“The myth proper is an explanation of some occurrence in nature—not in history—which deals chiefly with legend in its early stages. The personifications which take place in myths, however, help to link nature with history and to parallel events and persons in history with the phenomena of nature. Thus the legendary and even historical stories often become paralleled, and even confused with mythical ones. . . . In this way it is possible that John (and in a certain sense . . . Jesus also) became analogues of personified natural phenomena.”

Very instructive for us today is Thorburn’s next sentence:

“To the modern and European mind this process obscures and weakens the historical character of the human counterpart; to the ancient and Oriental mind it merely added vividness and reality to his picture.”

It seems likely that the writer of this sentence did not catch the profounder significance of his own words, which hint at a superficial meaning when really great truth is being uttered. He did not realize that “the human counterpart” of the mythical analogue was man collectively, and not only some characters in Gospel narrative. And what dialectic or logical justification there is in his using the word “merely” in his last sentence it is difficult to see. It seems to be there as evidence of the insatiate impulsion in orthodox minds to cast a slight upon pagan systems at every turn. One of the high purposes of the mythicizing tendency of ancient scripture was directly to “add vividness and reality” to the productions. The writer’s insertion of the word “merely” commits him to saying in effect that the adding of vividness and reality to sacred narrative was something trivial and inconsequential. If the method succeeded in adding vividness and reality, it at least accomplished something that has been lamentably lacking in later presentation of religious material. But Thorburn, in the very effort to discredit the utility of ancient mythicism, has splendidly stated its entire validity. His charge that the admixture of myth in scripture has obscured and weakened the full force of its educative power has a semblance of truth in it only because the interwoven myth has been uncomprehended. The presence of myth in the record has been a stumbling block only because all power to interpret it had been lost. It still remains true that the understanding use of myths by the ancients did vastly enhance the vividness and reality of the truths thus poetically embellished. But it turns out that a statement meant to deprecate the influence of the myth really concedes the claim for its high utility. Thorburn’s unpremeditated admission states with great precision the signal distinction between the ancient sagacious use of the myth and the modern ignorant miscomprehension of its function.

Massey divides humanity into two classes, the knowing and the simple, and says that the knowing ones kept back the esoteric explanation of the myths to let the belief of the untutored masses in the real history take root. “The simple ones, like Bunyan, ‘fell suddenly into an allegory about the journey on the way to glory,’ which allegory, they were led to believe, was purely matter of fact.” The great truth of history remains to be faced, Massey insists, that the Gospel of “Equinoctial Christolatry” was written before, with a totally different rendering, and that the sayings, dogmas, doctrines, types and symbols, including both the cross and the Christ, did not originate where we may have just made acquaintance with them. This cryptology was written before in the books of secret wisdom, now interpretable according to the recovered Gnosis. It was

pre-extant in the types which now have been traced from the lowest root to highest branch. It was inscribed before in the records of the past drawn on the starry skies. The truth is that the real origins of the cult of true Christolatry (not Christianity) have never yet been reached; hardly indeed have they even been suspected, because of the supposed “New Beginning” in human history which was taken for granted by those who knew no further. The evidence for all this, however, could not have been adduced before the mythology, typology and Christology of Egypt were discovered in the keeping of the mummies and disinterred from the vaults of the dead. Now, fortunately, the lost language of celestial allegory is being restored, chiefly through the resurrection of ancient Egypt, and scriptures can be read in the sense in which they were originally written.

In *The Book of the Beginnings* (Vol. II, p. 226) Massey says that 99 one of two things is sure: “either the Book of Enoch contains the Hebrew history in allegory, or the celestial allegory is the Hebrew history. The parallel is perfect.” Nor is there any escape by sticking one’s head in the sand and foolishly fancying that the writer of the Book of Enoch amused himself by transforming a Hebrew history into celestial allegory and concealing its significance by leaving out all the personal names. “On the contrary it is the allegory which has been turned into the later history.” Sacred history may and does begin with mythology; but mythology does not commence with history. Massey’s claim here has been disputed as a farcical fancy; but it can not be waved aside with a mere snort of ridicule when the evidence has to be faced. The Book of Enoch certainly contains the same characters as the sacred and secret history of the Jews, and as these belong to the astronomical allegory in the one book, that is good evidence of their being mythical in the other. There is no doubt that the Book of Enoch is what it claimed to be, the book of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, with no relation whatever to human history. It should be subjoined to Massey’s last statement that he does not mean that the celestial allegory, while it has no reference to human history objectively, is not all the while the allegorical portrayal of the meaning of all human history. The same is true of the book of Revelation.

Tersely he says that the Hebrew miracles are Egyptian myths, and as such, and only as such, can they be explained in harmony with the nature and reasoning principles of the mind. Held as miracles they are amenable neither to natural fact nor to rational rating. “The sacred writings of the world are not concerned with geography, chronology or human history. The historic spirit is not there. This is so in writing as late as the Talmud.” What started out to be the type of history came to be taken as the matter of history, as ignorance submerged the keener diagnosis. The hidden significance fades out from less competent mentality and slips away, letting in more and more the “historical” assumptions. How slow the modern mind has been to see this process at

work! Massey promises to restore the lost key hidden in Egypt by the data of comparative religion, which will be remorselessly applied.

Godfrey Higgins is found standing beside Massey in these general conclusions. In *The Anacalypsis* (p. 366) he writes his rebuke to ecclesiastical insincerity in forceful terms:

“How can any one consider the infinite correlations found in comparative study and not see the mythologic nature of nearly all epic poetry and early ‘history’?”

“Mr. Faber, Mr. Bryant and Nimrod have proved this past doubt. . . . Our priests have taken the emblems for the reality. . . . Our priests will be very angry and deny all this. In all nations, in all times, there has been a secret religion; in all nations, in all time the fact has been denied.” Another passage declares vigorously that it all raises a very unpleasant doubt in his mind, after long consideration, as to whether “we really have one history uncontaminated with judicial astrology.” He adds that Sir William Drummond has shown that the names of most of the places in Joshua are astrological, and Gen.

Vallency has shown that Jacob’s prophecy is astrological also, with a direct reference to the constellations. To this probably Jacob referred when he bade his children read in the book of the heavens the fate of themselves and their descendants.

Higgins quotes Bryant as saying that it is evident that most of the deified personages never existed, but were mere titles of the Deity, or of the Sun, Deity’s universal symbol, and for our solar system, Deity’s embodiment, as was earlier shown by Macrobius. Nor was there ever any such folly perpetrated in ancient history as the supposition that the gods of the Gentile world had been natives of the countries where they were worshipped. Bryant well observes that it was a chief study of the learned to register the legendary stories concerning the gods, to conciliate the absurdities and to arrange the whole into a chronological series—a fruitless and drudging labor. “For there are in these fables such inconsistencies and contradictions as no act nor industry can remedy. . . . This misled Bishop Cumberland, Waker, Pearson, Petavius, Scaliger, with numberless other learned men, and among the foremost the great Newton.” As to the last name, it is not so certain that the great Newton was so completely misled. He states in his *Principia* that he was led to his great discoveries by many implications of the esoteric study, especially in the books of Jacob Böhme, the shoemaker esotericist. Bryant then goes on to demonstrate that the whole of such material, if literally understood, was a mass of falsity and rubbish. Higgins makes the direct charge that sublime philosophical truths or virtues have been clothed with bodies and converted into living

creatures. Starting with the plausible attempt to screen them from “the vulgar eye,” the purpose of concealment worked with such thoroughness that the generality of men came at last to treat them in a literal sense. He attributes the change which resulted in the loss of the esoteric sense to the inevitable fluctuations that come in the run of evolutionary progress.

But the chief fault he places where Massey and others lay it—at the door of a designing priesthood:

“That the rabble were the victims of a degrading superstition I have no doubt. This was produced by the knavery of the ancient priests, and it is in order to reproduce this effect that the modern priests have misrepresented the doctrines of their predecessors. By vilifying and running down the religion of the ancients they have thought they could persuade their votaries that their new religion was necessary for the good of mankind; a religion which in consequence of their corruptions has been found to be in practice much worse and more injurious to the interests of society than the older.” This is frank talk, but nearly every scholar who has covered the ground of the ancient situation with a mind not set in advance against the pagan religions, has felt that this is essentially the truth. One such expression may be given. It is from the pen of the modern Harry Elmer Barnes (*The Twilight of Christianity*, p. 415):

“What might have happened to western society if the teachings of Jesus had been literally applied, we can not well know with any precision. There seems little doubt, however, that the total results of Christianity to date have been a decisive liability to the human race. There is no doubt whatever that Christianity has actually produced more suffering, misery, bloodshed, intolerance and bigotry than it has ever assuaged or suppressed. Massey (*Luniolatry*, p. 2) says there is nothing insane or irrational in mythical representation when the allegorical connotation is thoroughly understood. “The insanity lies in mistaking it for human history or Divine Revelation. Mythology is the repository of man’s most ancient science, and what concerns us chiefly is this—when truly interpreted once more, it is destined to be the death of those false theologies to which it has unwittingly given birth.”

Allegories misinterpreted as supposed history have created a veritable cult of the unreal which is blindly believed.

Commenting on the cry that he would take the living Jesus away from believers, he retorts that we can be none the poorer for losing that which never was a real possession, but only a psychological wraith which deluded us with its seeming substance. To find the true we must first

let go the false. In Goethe's words, until the half-gods go, the whole gods can not come. Massey says pointedly that there is no greater fraud than that which grew out of the historical interpretation of early legend. This factitious "history" is forever at war, he affirms, with all that is prehistorically true. It not only misinterprets the legend, which would have its own value if rightly scanned, but misrepresents the actual history of early days. Massey stands firmly on the blunt assertion that the doctrines and dogmas of Christian theology are derived from Egypt and its arcana, and holds that this must be admitted when better acquaintance with that mine of recondite wisdom is made. The door to its adyta is only now opening. The pre-Christian religion was founded on a knowledge of natural and verifiable facts, but the Christian cult was founded on egregious faith which swallowed all that was impossible in fact and unnatural in phenomena. Current orthodoxy is based upon a deluding idealism, derived from literalized legend and misconstrued mythology. The ancients handed over to later generations the science of the human soul, and the Christians have lost it. They substituted the phantom of faith for the knowledge of truth. They propagated a religion that could live only on blind belief, and persecuted all those who would not blindly believe. They shut out the light of nature from their sealed domicile and compelled all others to live in the same dark prison. The ancient legends and myths do not tell us lies, Massey insists. The men who created them did not deal falsely with us or with nature. "All the falsity lies in their having been falsified through ignorantly mistaking mythology for divine revelation and allegory for historic truth."

Lord Raglan cites Prof. W. Gronbeck (Vol. I, p. 249) in a passage that shows true discernment of the situation which has bred no end of confusion in all philosophical effort:

"In the history of the sacrificial hall the individual warrior is sunk in the god, or, which is the same thing, in the ideal personification of the clan, the hero. This form of history causes endless confusion among later historians when they try their best to arrange the mythical traditions into chronological happenings and the deeds of the clan into annals and lists of kings, and the confusion grows to absurdity when rationalistic logicians strive by the light of sound sense to extricate the kernel of history from the husks of superstition." This is an accurate, though partial, analysis of the general course which esoteric degeneration has taken, supporting Massey's robust contention that the Märchen are the distorted wrack and debris of the myths. Until this basic perception of the truth of the relation between general folk lore and religious origins is gained, the efforts of modern studentship to evaluate the place and significance of this important aspect of human interest will be so much groping in the dark and continually missing the truth.

A part of the process of degeneration of esoteric mythology appertaining closely to Christianity is well delineated by G. R. S. Mead in his fine work on Gnostic Christianity, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (p. 118). He writes that in its popular origins the Christian movement had deeply entangled itself with the popular Jewish traditions, which were innocent of all philosophical or kabalistic mysticism, that is, esotericism. But as time went on, either men of greater education joined the ranks or the leaders were forced to study more widely to meet the arguments of educated opponents, and consequently more liberal views obtained a hold among a number of Christians. In time also other great religious traditions and philosophies contributed elements to the popular stream. All such more latitudinarian views, however, were still looked upon with suspicion by the “orthodox.” And before long even the moderate esoteric proclivities of Clement and Origen were regarded as a grave danger; so that with the triumph of narrow orthodoxy and the resultant hostility to learning, Origen himself was at last anathematized. It may not be conclusive proof of the evil transformation of good myth into bad history to cite this broad change in Christian polity in those early centuries; but the fact that such a change of posture took place lends to the contention that trends in the direction of literalism and historization of scripture were strongly in current at the time.

Express confirmation of one of the stages described by Mead is at hand in the statement of an eminent modern theologian, Benjamin W. Bacon, of Yale Divinity School, in his work, *Jesus and Paul* (p. 23). He declares that by creditable estimate Christianity lost one half of its following to Marcion and other Gnostic “heretics” bent on tearing it away from its Jewish associations and making it over in the true likeness of a Greek Mystery cult of individual spiritual realization. This was the movement which Mead has spoken of, due to the influx of Platonic and esoteric philosophies from Alexandria and Hellenic centers. It was an effort on the part of the more knowing ones to save Christianity from the debacle toward which it was fast heading through the corruption of the sound esoteric teaching. Almost every apologist for Christianity has hailed the defeat of the Hellenic philosophy’s incursion into the early theology of the Church as the triumph of the faith and the salvation of Christianity. A fuller treatment of this chapter of Christian history is reserved for other connections in the study. It must suffice for the moment to say here that if by the repulse of Greek philosophy the Church gained the ignorant masses of the people, it not only failed to help their unintelligence, but further it lost its own power to bring spiritual light and rational nourishment to the more illumined of mankind.

It may be that there is an exoteric rendering of spiritual allegory that would purvey true meaning to the lower brackets in the intellectual scale. The supposition prevails that the truths of life can be made simple, for the simple.

It has rarely worked out that way. In all historic cases where the esoteric rendition has been lost and the exoteric substituted, the popular conceptions of the profounder purport have become, not truth simplified, but truth distorted into untruth. There perhaps could and should be the milk for babes as well as the meat for stronger digestion. But, as it has worked out in actuality in the course of history, the exoteric milk, once it is dispensed among the populace, always tends to become churned into a little-nourishing cheese. Instead of instructing the simpler minds in simpler aspects of the truth, it ends by plunging them into myriad forms of outright error. In the historical sequel, it is sadly to be said, it has been proven that esotericism has carried the true meaning and exotericism only a false caricature. The exoteric doctrine has ever mistaught the popular mind. So Massey says: "An exoteric rendering has taken place of the esoteric representation, which contained the only true interpretation." And he gives the reason: wisdom designed for the enlightenment of the inner spiritual consciousness of evolved men "was converted into history" for the secular mind and "all turned topsy-turvy by changing" the soul of all humanity into one mortal man. "In this way the noble, full, flowing river of old Egypt's wisdom ended in a quagmire of prophecies for the Jews and a dried-up wilderness of desert sands for the Christians. And on these shifting sands the 'historic' Christians reared their temple of the eternal which is giving way at last because it was not founded on the solid rock, and because no amount of blood would ever suffice to solidify the sand or form a concrete foundation or even a buttress for the crumbling building."

The Gospel of the Christians, he expounds, began with a collection of Sayings of Jesus, "fatuously supposed to have been an historic teacher of that name." It originated, he implies, as a set of moral apothegms, but ended as believed history. Even the Jerusalem, which was a name to denote the heavenly Paradise of spiritual bliss, or the Jerusalem above, became in ignorant minds the Jerusalem on the map! And the Exodus of the children of Israel from this mundane sphere in a passage across the Reed Sea of this mortal life to the home of celestial glory, became the screaming farce of 2,125,000 marching men, women, children and camp followers, parading about for forty years over Sinai's and Arabia's desert sands, trailing millions of sheep, oxen, and cattle, subsisting in an arid land with little vegetation and water! Verily "history" must be strained to fairy-tale credulity, when it has to stretch its possibilities to accommodate the free sweep of imaginative typology. Massey concludes one sentence with the clause—"in an Exodus from Egypt which can no

longer be considered historical,” an Exodus that he says elsewhere “was never more than frankly allegorical.” That Massey is not merely indulging in iconoclastic swashbuckling, it is to be noted that whatever pretense the Exodus from Egypt had to being considered as history has been demolished at one blow by Moffatt’s proper translation of the Red Sea as the “Reed Sea,” a term used by the Egyptians to denote the human body, which is seven-eighths water, and must be crossed by the evolving soul to reach the Promised Land. When it is seen that the Exodus of the Old Testament is finally identical with the Resurrection in the New, it can be granted that the literal rendering of the Israelites’ journey from Egypt’s bondage to Canaan’s milk and honey becomes excellent material for light comedy. But light comedy comes close to turning into heavy tragedy when it is further realized that the soul’s dramatized bondage to the flesh in the “Egypt” of the body, has likewise been construed into the “historical captivities” of the Jews in Assyria, Babylon and Nineveh!

Incidentally it may be interjected that according to the evidence so far collected in Massey’s day (at least to 1900), there has never been found on the monuments of Egypt any mention or record of the Israelites’ sojourn in Egypt, or their having played a part in Egyptian history save in one case. Petrie discovered on a stele erected by King Merenptah II a reference to “the people of Ysiraal.” “But,” says Massey, “there is nothing whatever in the inscription of King Merenptah corresponding to a corroborative of the Biblical story of the Israelites in the land of Egypt on their exodus into the land of Canaan.” The inscription found by Petrie says that the people of Ysiraal in Syria were cut up root and branch by Merenptah. Massey insists that “Israel in Syria was not Israel in Egypt.” Israel in Egypt was not an ethnical entity, but the spiritual “children of Ra” in the “lower Egypt of Amenta, which is entirely mythical.” Mythical, yes; but typical of the real home of living mortals in this “lower Egypt of Amenta” that is the dramatic ritual name for a planet called Earth,—a fact, it must be confessed which even Massey did not discern. Herodotus, affirms Kenealy, makes no mention of the Israelites—nor of Solomon. The Book of Revelation, Massey contends, is the drama of the astrological mysteries and has been mistaken for human history; and the mythical aeonial cataclysm at the end of the cycle has been misread into the catastrophic “end of the world.” Revelation, he goes on, has been commonly assumed to constitute a historic link between the Old Testament and the New.

“It has been taken as a supplement to the Gospels, as if the history of Jesus had been continued into the wedded life after the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb, and that they dwelt together ever after in that New Jerusalem which ‘came down out of heaven’ ‘as a bride adorned for her husband,’ when the tabernacle of God which was to dwell with man took the place of the Old

Jerusalem that was destroyed by the Romans. The present contention is that the book is and always has been inexplicable because it was based upon the symbolism of the Egyptian astronomical mythology without the Gnosis or ‘the meaning which hath wisdom’ that is absolutely necessary for an explanation of the subject-matter; and because the debris of the ancient wisdom has been turned to account as data for pre-Christian prophecy that was supposed to have had its fulfilment in Christian history.” Besides being the parent of a mass of false religious “history,” mythicism evidently has been the father of endless ecclesiastical folly. One aspect of this folly has been the misinterpretation of Revelation as aspects of world history, when, as Massey says, “the book as it stands has no intrinsic value and very little meaning until the fragments of ancient lore have been collated, correlated and compared with the original mythos and eschatology of Egypt.”

Revelation has been found to be cognate with the Enoch manuscripts and, says Massey, “Enoch, like John, was in the spirit. His internal sight was opened and he beheld a vision which was in the heavens. But his vision was admittedly astronomical. In it he ‘beheld the secrets of the heavens and of paradise according to its divisions’ (Ch. 41). The record of his vision is called ‘the book of the revolutions of the luminaries of heaven,’ and is said to contain ‘the entire account of the world forever, until a new work shall have been effected, which will be eternal’” (Ch. 71).

Much more material of the sort shows Enoch to have been the source of Revelation and the contents of both books to be astronomical allegory. Why scholars have been so slow to see the intimate relation between Revelation and its obvious prototype, the Enoch, is another of the riddles of ecclesiastical history which cry aloud for solution.

It was no less a Christian celebrity than Albertus Magnus of the Medieval Church who uttered the following, relative to a connection between Christianity and astrology:

“The Mysteries of the Incarnation, from the Conception on to the Ascension into heaven, are shown us on the face of the sky and are signified by the stars.” The sole fulfillment of prophecy, according to Massey, was astronomical, in the lunar and stellar cycles, marking the stages of cosmic 108 evolution. The basis of Massey’s conclusions is well laid if his contention is true—and he presents massive evidence for it—that all that went into the making of the Christian historical set-up was long pre-extant as something quite other than history, was in fact expressly non-historical, in the Egyptian mythology and eschatology. For when the sun at the Easter equinox entered the sign of the Fishes, about 255 B.C., the Jesus who stands as the founder of the so-called Christianity was at least ten thousand years of age, and had been traveling hither as the Ever Coming One through all this preceding time. During that vast period the young Fulfiller had been

periodically mothered by the Virgin (of the zodiac!), with Seb (equated by many symbolic indication with Joseph) for his reputed foster-father, and with Anup, the Egyptian baptizer (equated likewise with John) as his herald and precursor in the wilderness. All that time he had fought the battle with Satan in the desert or on the mount during forty days and nights each year. During those ten thousand years that same incarnation of the divine ideal, in the character of Iusa, the Coming Son, had saturated the mind of Egypt with its exalting influence. Little did the men of that epoch dream that their ideal figure of man's divinity would in time be rendered historical as a man of flesh and be hailed as the fulfiller of astronomical prophecy.

If more evidence be needed to show that the origin of the data of the Christ's "life" was in the astronomical mythos, it is at hand in the historical datum that there was in the early Church a diversity of opinion among the Christian Fathers as to whether their Christ was born in the winter solstice or in the vernal equinox. According to Clement of Alexandria the twenty-fifth of March was held by the Christian following to have been the natal day of the Lord from heaven. Others maintained that this was the day of the incarnation. But in Rome the festival of Lady's Day was celebrated on the twenty-fifth of March, in commemoration of the miraculous conception in the womb of the virgin, who gave birth to the divine child at Christmas, nine months afterwards. According to the Gospel of James, or the Protevangelium, the birth was in the equinox and consequently not at Christmas. It is as clear as any fact can be that this uncertainty as to the birth-date of the Christos and the argument as to whether it occurred at the solstice or the equinox imply indubitably that the birth itself was not being considered as transpiring historically, or as an 109 event, but as an item of astronomical symbolism. The very fact that it was placed on such a cardinal point in the year as the solstice, or the equinox, is practically decisive on this point. Indubitably the birthday of the Messiah was hardly ever thought of as a date, but rather always as a point of significance. This was so true in the ancient days that almost it could be said that it was the date that was the significant thing rather than the event allegedly transpiring on it. If the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem had been regarded as purely historical, the only point at issue would have been simply: on what day of the year did it occur? Why was it held that the blessed event necessarily had to occur at the most pivotal point in the solar allegory? Of course the only true answer to all this is that all ancient religion was clothed in the solar myth. No denial of this general fact can stand. On the basis of this datum, so well known to comparative religion students, so little known to the hypnotized occupants of church pews, how can it be denied that in the minds of all people of intelligence in antiquity the fulfillment of sacred "prophecy" was to come in the cloak and guise of astronomical periodicity, and not as once-upon-a-time or once-for-all history? Not only, avers Massey, did the later scribes follow the scheme and ground-plan of Egyptian solar

mythicism, but they seem actually to have gone so far as to copy the earlier scriptures. Khebt, the birthplace of the child in “lower Egypt,” and Mitzraim, Egypt, are names of the old Sabaeen birthplace in the north belonging to the celestial allegory, and were later applied geographically to Egypt the country. The Egypt of the Hebrew writings is a “country” in the astronomical myth, the “land” of mental bondage, bordered by a “Red Sea” that was never on any map save that ancient uranograph or chart of the heavens picturing the details of the soul or solar myth under astrological signatures. Khebt, Mitzraim, Egypt are names of that lower house of nature where the soul descends to have its incubation and death until the course of growth is finished. At the end of the cycle of mundane experience it hears its Father’s voice exclaiming: “Out of Egypt have I called my son.” The Exodus out of Egypt, under that or another name, “is the common property of all mythology,” says Massey.

Another most important elucidation from his pen is the following (Book of the Beginnings, I, p. 186):

“The earliest nomes of Egypt were astronomes, the divisions of the stars, whence came the name of astronomy; not merely a naming but a naming of the stars into groups, divisions and nomes. . . . Enough at present to affirm that the earliest chart was celestial and that its divisions and names were afterwards geographically adopted in many lands from one common Egyptian original.” Lest this critically vital pronouncement on the science of ancient astrology fail to receive its due consideration in the counsels of modern studentship, it should be added for greater explicitness here that the divisions, localities, features, together with their names, found in all ancient religiography were taken directly in the first instance from the early allegorical charts of the starry heavens and scattered over the maps and insinuated into the histories of all ancient civilized lands. (Perhaps the work most clearly demonstrating this procedure and its startling results is Godfrey Higgins’ grand old tome, *The Anacalypsis*, to which reference should be had for fuller evidence.) He who would interpret the sage scriptures must begin with the uranograph, where consummate wisdom—not childish fancy—first wrote the allegory of man’s true history. It is a fact of stupendous significance for those who can see what the ancient books are teaching that in the primitive books of early Egypt Hermes instructs Taht in the nature of the “tabernacle of the zodiacal circle.” Massey can at least cite the Gnostic wing of early Christianity as supporting his conclusions in this field. He writes:

“The Gnostics asserted truly that celestial persons and scenes had been transferred to earth in the gospel and that it is only within the pleroma or the zodiac that we can identify the originals of both.” (The Natural Genesis, II, 422.)

This does not need to rest on his bare assertion. Christianity’s own historian, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons in the second century, corroborates it: “The Gnostics truly declared that all the supernatural transactions asserted in the Gospels ‘were counterparts (or representations) of what took place above.’” (Irenaeus, Book I, Ch. VII, p. 2.)

Further Christian testimony along the same line comes from that other early historian of the cult, Eusebius, whose statements are often important, however (as universally recognized and admitted) twisted and unreliable they generally are (Eusebius, b. ii, C. XVII). On this

history Massey bases the statement that “it is admitted by Eusebius that the canonical Christian gospels and epistles were the ancient writings of the Essenes or Therapeutae reproduced in the name of Jesus.” Eusebius did not admit things he should have admitted, and he certainly was the last historian to admit anything hostile to the Christian movement. If he has admitted this point it was because he could not avoid it. It must therefore be true. And if true, there are no words at immediate command to acclaim the significance of this amazing admission. It concedes the whole truth of Massey’s great volumes, and virtually does the same for the contentions of the present work. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament were ancient books of the Essenes! Eusebius was merely testifying to what nearly all men of intelligence in his age knew to be the truth, that the Gospels, Epistles and Apocrypha were just portions of the mass of arcane esoteric wisdom transmitted, for centuries orally in the Mysteries, and later in written form, from remote antiquity to their age. One can envision the different, and happier, course that medieval and modern Occidental history might have taken had this admission of the Christian historian not been hidden out of sight for long centuries. The ghost of those dead centuries might justifiably come forth and demand to know why this admission was buried. And the living voice of the present generation, torn with a titanic strife that has grown out of ideologies that were warped by the lack of fundamental truth in traditional religions, might with ample justice rise to demand why the admission is not proclaimed anew at this juncture.

That the Sermon on the Mount is a derivative from ancient arcane religions is seen in the light of the fact that the Seventh Book of Hermes is entitled: “His Secret Sermon in the Mount of Regeneration and the Profession of Silence.” The Hermetic books are of great antiquity, perhaps the oldest in the world. Isaac Myer, the Kabalist scholar, so declared them.

Surely the witness of such a high Patristic as Clement of Alexandria is worthy of credence. He says that all who have treated of divine matters have always hid the principle of things and delivered the truth enigmatically by signs and symbols and allegories and metaphors, “yet this foundation of primitive fable has been converted into our basis of fact.” We have already noted Diodorus’ statement that the Egyptians regarded the Greeks as impostors because they reissued the ancient mythology as their own history.

Justin Martyr, second century Church Father, dashes the foundation stones from under many an arrant Christian claim when he tells the Romans that by “declaring the Logos, the first begotten Lord, our master Jesus Christ, to be born of a virgin mother, without any human mixture, and to be crucified and dead, and to have risen again and ascended into heaven, we say no more than what you say of those whom you style the sons of Jove.” This was written at the early date of the second century, when the new cult found it desirable to emphasize its kinship with paganism, which it did especially through the words of this same Justin Martyr. But only two centuries later the members of this new faith could afford to flout the pagan mythological foundations and brazenly proclaim the uniqueness of their doctrines and rituals. Zeal to transform allegory into history was not daunted even by the incredible difficulties of changing mythical personages into real human figures. Thus Sut-Typhon, or Sevekh, the crocodile-headed divinity, type of the power of nature buried in the atom, the energies of life submerged in water, the symbol of matter, was converted into Satan, the personal devil. In this line hardly anything could be more revelatory of modern mental ineptitude in the face of the myths than the assertions of such a learned scholar as the Egyptologist, Budge, who after reciting the details of the “life” of the Egyptian Father-God Osiris, that he suffered death and mutilation at the hands of his enemies, that the fourteen cut portions of his body were scattered about and buried over the land of Egypt, that his sister-wife Isis sought him sorrowing and at length found him, that she fanned him with her wings and gave him air, that she raised up his reconstituted body whole and living, united anew with him and brought forth his son Horus, and that Osiris then became God and King of the underworld,--Budge asks us to take this as the literal history of a man on earth! He says that his body was probably buried in the tomb at Abydos. An endless amount of similar fabulous material we have been asked to take as factual history. Is it to be wondered at that the counsels of sanity in a world dominated by such delusions now and again plunge the nations into a vast general wreckage?

Josephus argues that he is under the necessity, when recounting one of the Mosaic “miracles,” of “relating this history as it is described in the sacred books,” i.e., allegorically, or in

the style in which it was given in the writings which were considered divine because they did not relate to human events.

Drews, one of the writers who in the nineteenth century worked at the mythical interpretation of the Gospels, corroborates Massey's identification of Joseph with the Egyptian earth-god Seb, as the foster-father of the divine child:

"Joseph . . . was originally a god, and in reality the whole of the family and home life of the Messiah Jesus took place among the gods. It was only reduced to that of a human being in lowly circumstances by the fact that Paul described the descent of the Messiah upon earth as an assumption of poverty and a relinquishment of his heavenly splendor. Hence when the myth was turned into history, Christ was transformed into a poor man in the economic sense of the word, while Joseph, the divine artificer and father of the sun, became an ordinary carpenter."

In his famous *Life of Jesus* (1835, Vol. II, Sec. 48) D. F. Strauss states that in the ancient Church the most reflective among the Fathers considered that the celestial Voice of the Old Testament was not like an ordinary voice, produced by vibrations of the air and apparent to the organs of sense, but an internal impression which God produced in those with whom he designed to communicate; and it is in this way that Origen and Theodore of Mopsuete have maintained previously that the apparition at the time of the baptism of Jesus was a vision and not a natural reality. Simple people, says Origen, take lightly the great cosmic processes described in the book; but those who think more profoundly believe that in their dreams they have had evidence by their corporeal senses "when it has simply been a movement of their minds." Had the discriminating practical wisdom evidenced by Origen here been generally exercised throughout the run of the centuries by the simple and the wise alike, the annals of religion would not have contained the record of hallucination and fanatical credulity which they hold.

Drews and Graetz alike regard Josephus' mention of John the Baptist as "a shameless interpolation."

Is it an inconsequential thing that J. M. Robertson (*Christianity and Mythology*, p. 82 ff.) can write the following?

"That Joshua is a purely mythical personage was long ago decided by the historical criticism of the school of Colenso and Kuenen; that he was originally a solar deity can be established at least as satisfactorily as the solar character of Moses, if not as that of Samson."

He notes that in the Semitic tradition, wherein is preserved a variety of myths, which the Bible-makers, for obvious reasons, suppressed or transformed, Joshua is the son of the mythical Miriam, that is, he was probably an ancient Palestinian Sun-God. Dupuis (*L'Origine de Tous les Cultes*) places John the Baptist among purely mythical personages and in harmony with many other writers identifies his name with that of Oannes, the Babylonian fish-avatar of Berosus' account, the Ea (Hea) of the more ancient Sumerians. In his effort to refute the mythical interpretation T. J. Thorburn shows glaringly the bewilderment of scholars anent this theme when he affirms (p. 320) that in the case of the nature-cults the spring revival of the god is simply typical of the annual resurrection of life in nature. This is putting the cart before the horse surely. He goes on to prove the infinite "superiority" and greater "nobility" of Christianity over the pagan mythological idea by saying that in the Christian resurrection (as given by St. Paul in I Corinthians, 15) both Jesus himself and with him all believers rise to a new and more glorious life, in which a "spiritual body" replaces the material or "natural body." The death and revival of the cult-god is an annual matter; Jesus and the Christian die and are raised from the dead "once for all." How great the obtuseness which prevented the scholars from seeing that the pagan typism did not end with the sprouting grain and budding leaf of spring, but from that as type proceeded to the very thing that is claimed to have been the sole possession of Christianity! It is not easy to picture sixteen centuries of the best acumen of the western world floundering over the simple matter of recognizing that the ancient pagans set their cycle of religious expression to the time and tune of nature's solar hymn, as at once the most luminous and moving suggestion of the cyclical advance of man's divinity. Unless we deny to men of the stature of Plato any sagacity beyond childishness, it is naturally assumable that they did not, as Thorburn 115 thinks, lose the spiritual reality in the natural typism. The solar myth was not to celebrate the sprouting of the corn; the sprouting of the grain was called upon to help the mind frame a more realistic conception of the resurrection of the divine seed that had been, like the grain, buried in the earth of flesh and sense. The sages used nature to vivify spiritual processes. As most poets have done, they worshipped spirit through its reflection in nature. They saw that an approach to a lively apprehension of the deeper aspects of truth was vastly facilitated and enhanced by the contemplation of their counterpart in the physical world. How false to charge that the pagan world had only the physical fact and could not go beyond it! The evidence is mountainous in bulk that pagan eyes pierced through the phenomena of nature to the truth of higher levels. Pagan spiritual discernment was all the keener for its close beholding of the natural world. The assumption that in his primitive infantilism the pagan stopped at nature, while the Christian went on to God, is a rank heresy. It is defied by all the fact of antiquity. Rebuttal of this gratuitous depreciation of past civilization is firmly based upon the early

production of scriptures of the most exalted wisdom. The authors of these high revelations knew the realm of sublimer truth that lay beyond nature, and they also knew the mighty fact that nature was the outer visible analogue of this other world of truth. Then as now, esoteric genius grasped the distinction between outer and inner, but ancient sapiency recognized better than modern the essential kinship of the two. An interesting sidelight is cast on our discussion by G. R. S. Mead, already quoted, who in his *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (Gnosticism), says:

“With much sincerity our Gnostics found these numbers and processes in the prologue to Genesis and elsewhere in the Old Covenant Library; . . . But when we find that they treated the Gospel-legends also not as history but as allegory, and not only as allegory but as symbolical of the drama of initiation, the matter becomes of deep interest” to the student of religion. In his *The Story of Chaldea* Zenaïde A. Ragozin says that the tenth chapter of Genesis is the oldest and most important document in existence concerning the origins of races and nations, but in order properly to understand it and appreciate its value and bearing, “it must not be forgotten that each name in the list is that of a race, a people or a tribe, not that of a man.”

To substantiate his statement on this point Ragozin cites the authority of “many scientists and churchmen” and quotes no less a Church Father than St. Augustine, who pointedly says that the names in the tenth chapter of Genesis represent “nations not men.” (*De Civitate Dei*, XVII, 3.) So again we find racial entities or groups made to masquerade exoterically as “men.” Much data from various sources go to prove that the New Testament—as now known—was compiled from esoteric texts, which were themselves covered by a thick film of allegory and even veiled behind misleading “blinds,” the “dark sayings” of fiction and parable. It is unthinkable, impossible that any merely human brain could have concocted the alleged “life” of the Jewish Jesus, culminating in the awful tragedy of Calvary. How, then, came this “life” to be written? Esoteric comprehension answers that it came from the ignorant literalization of the story of the Christ-Aeon of the Gnostic and Essene books, and from the writings of the ancient Tanaim, who connected the kabalistic Jesus or Joshua with the Biblical personifications. The Gnostic records contained the epitome of the chief scenes enacted during the Mysteries of Initiation, from most remote times; although even that was given out invariably under the garb of semi-allegory whenever put on paper. The ancient Tanaim, sage authors of the Kabbalah (in its oral tradition) who handed on their wisdom to the later Talmudists, possessed the secrets of the Mystery language; and it is in this language, as has been said earlier, that the Gospels were written. It is possible for us to see, then, what it was that the ignorant literalizers of such material turned into “history.”

A fair parallel of the turning of the Christos into “Christ” is seen in the cycle of stories centering about the mythical hero Siegfried. The myths developed as popular tradition, their mythological significance was forgotten and in course of time historical personages were identified with the characters. (See *The Perfect Way*, Kingsford and Maitland.)

Massey emphasizes the significant fact that there is found no “fall of man” in mythology. The devastating conception, as popularly misunderstood, came in only through the misreading of religious allegory and dramatization. Theologians from the first were bitterly opposed to its antithesis, the ascent of man through evolution. The scientific view of man’s ascent clashed with their lugubrious obsession. They clung to the heavy weapon of the “fall” in the sense of sheer “sin” and not understood as the natural, normal, necessary and wholly salutary descent of soul into matter and body, because it gave them a useful psychological cudgel over the laity. From the distorted application of what should have been clear in the myth was hatched that brood of morbid doctrines such as the fall of man into carnal sin, man’s whimsical thwarting of God’s plan, the depravity of both man and matter, the filthy nature of the flesh, the glorification of asceticism and bodily mortification, original sin, the corruption of natural man, the evil of the world, and others whose only basis of existence at all was the stupid perversion of ancient typology and the literalization of Genesis. And Massey flings the irony of his pen at the fact that “such literalization of mythology is continued to be taught as God’s truth to the men and women of the future in their ignorant and confiding childhood.” Higgins (*Anacalypsis*, 514) likewise expostulates against the asinine failure to distinguish between “the real and the fabulous.” “It is allowed that Cristna is the sun, and yet they talk of him as a man.” He directly charges that “It is evidently almost the only employment of the idle priests to convert their historical account into a riddle and again to give their doctrines and riddles the appearance of history.” The temptation to give in full his indignant accusation on this score in his own words is difficult to resist:

“And the reason why all our learned men have totally failed in their endeavors to discover the meaning of the ancient mythologies is to be found in their obstinate perseverance in attempting to construe all the mythoses, meant for enigma, to the very letter. I have no doubt that anciently every kind of ingenuity which can be imagined was exerted from time to time to invent and compose new riddles, till all history became in fact a great enigma. In modern times as much ingenuity has been exercised to conceal the enigma and by explanation to show that it was meant for reality. . . . Before the time of Herodotus every ancient history is a mythical performance, in short, a gospel—a work written to enforce virtue and morality and to conceal the mythos—and every temple had one. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the plays of Aeschylus, the *Cyropaedia*, the *Aeneid*,

the early history of Rome, the Sagas of Scandinavia, the Sophis of Abraham, the secret Book of the Athenians, the Delphic verses of Olen, the 20,000 verses repeated by heart to the Druids, the Vedah or Bedahs.” What has not been understood in the declaration that Cristna is the sun, is that he is not venerated as the sun in the heavens, but as the sun or divine spark in man. It can at last be said positively that the ancients did not worship the sun in itself, but as the analogical cosmic counterpart in the solar system of the central divine fire in the human heart.

In a printed lecture entitled *Gnostic and Historic Christianity*, Massey makes the positive statement that the early Christians did convert esoteric material into history:

“The claim of Christianity to possess divine authority rests on the ignorant belief that the mystical Christ could and did become a Person, whereas the Gnosis proves the corporeal Christ to be only a counterfeit presentment of the trans-corporeal man; consequently a historical portraiture is and ever must be a fatal mode of falsifying and discrediting the Spiritual Reality.” The last lines of this excerpt carry the burden and gist of the effort here made to assert the psychological and spiritual disservice of the “historical Christ.” Massey goes on to enlarge upon the theme and says that Paul chides the “foolish Galatians” for beginning by believing in the spiritual Christos and ending by believing in the Jesus of the flesh; and Massey declares that Paul was himself a Gnostic, the founder of a new sect of Gnosis which recognized only a “Christ-spirit” for the divine Avatar. One must go to the Gnostic writings to discover the pristine teachings of the Jesus in the Mysteries. The literal falsifiers dragged the spiritual divinity of man into matter and the dust. And to cover their fatal work they burned—among other books—the twenty-four volumes of the Gnostic Basilides, by order of the Church. Clement described Basilides as “the philosopher devoted to the contemplation of divine things.” The books burned were his works on the Interpretations of the Gospels, and they would be of priceless value to the world today. Indications that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament must be something far other than historical record are found in the startling pronouncement made by the Alexandrian Clement (Stromateis, XVII):

“The Scriptures having perished in the captivity of Nabuchodonozar, Esdras the Levite, priest in the times of Artaxerxes, King of the Persians, having become inspired in the exercise of prophecy, restored again the whole of the ancient Scriptures.”

As this very claim has been made with Ezra as the inspired prophet instead of Esdras, there is at least the suggested possibility that Ezra and Esdras are two variants of the same name, which could even be the “Isra-“ of “Israel” with the divine “el” dropped. In the religious myth it was of course Israel that was to restore the lost substance of the divine revelation! However that may be, if

the whole body of scripture that covered the antiquity of the human family and all the particulars of the “race” “chosen” by God to exemplify his dealings with all humanity was lost, and what purports to be that scripture is in fact only the inner vision of a man divinely inspired, the most that can be said for it is that it is a very precarious foundation on which to base the moral and spiritual guidance of the human race.

What meager chance the scriptures ever had of being taken for history must be seen to be reduced to a vanishing minimum when we consider the words of the Egyptian God, Tem or Atum.

“I am Tem,” he says, “the dweller in his Disk, or Re in his rising in the eastern horizon of the sky. I am Yesterday; I know Today. I am the Bennu which is in Anu (Heliopolis) and I keep the register of the things which are created and of those which are not yet in existence.”

The recording of events that have not yet occurred is a proposal to make the modern scholar run from ghosts. It ought to be a consideration of sufficient force to open the obdurate minds of the deniers of the mythical structure of ancient scriptures to note that in those scriptures much of “history” recorded is still in the womb of time and yet unborn. This portion at any rate is not the record of that which has happened. The answer to this will of course be that it is the record of that which will, objectively happen. As to that, it may be interjected in passing, there is very substantial doubt. One of the largest blind-spots before the eyes of orthodox interpreters of scripture has ever been their fatuous belief in the literalness of so-called Bible prophecy. There is not room for a dissertation upon it here, but only enough space to say bluntly that, in the usual sense of forecast of future objective events, there is not and never was any historical prophecy in the Old Testament or the New. There is some delineation by the seers and sages of the general phases and aspects of later evolution of humanity in the cycle on earth; there is no specific foretelling of coming events on the plane of world history. Evolutionary typism and allegorical scenarios of the shape of things to come can without much difficulty often be made to look like historical description. Events do often match the frame of dramatism in which they are set. Deluded by these appearances, thousands of religious votaries have spilled rivers of printers’ ink in the tracing of the configuration of events in their time back to Bible “prophecy.” Philological scholarship should have corrected this dupery long ago by announcing the correct meaning of the words “prophecy” and “prophet.” From the Greek pro-, “forth” or “out,” and phemi, “to speak,” the prophet is simply a preacher, one who speaks out the truth, proclaims, gives forth. There is nothing in the word which has any reference to the forecasting of the future. A prophet is simply a preacher, utterer of truth. To this can be added the startling statement that the passages in the

Bible which have always been taken for objective prophecies are, like most other material in the scriptures, allegorical visions or poetical depictions of the cyclical processes. This fact should add impressiveness to the strong position here taken that an unbelievable quantity of literal rubbish has to be cleared out of the way before a sane approach to scriptural interpretation can even begin to be made.

There is much support for the fact that the supposed simple origin of the name “Christians,” its adoption by a sect that sprang up in the wake of the life of the Galilean preacher called the Christ, is by no means the truth of the matter at all. A passage from Mead’s work, *Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?* (p. 325) tells us a far different story, and indicates we are dealing with something other than history in these things:

“The followers of Jesus had apparently hitherto been ‘ashamed’ of being called ‘Christiani.’ . . . It is highly possible that the name Christiani was first used by the Pagans to signify Messianists of all kinds, and was only finally adopted by the followers of Jesus in their public dealings with the Pagans, presumably first in apologetic literature, where we find it is of frequent occurrence from about the second quarter of the second century.”

There is scarcely a single common or general belief about the chief items of the Christian faith that may be called orthodox which, on deeper scholastic inquiry, does not turn out to be a popular falsification of something utterly different in its pristine form.

Prof. J. H. Rose is driven to admit (*Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVI, 22) that “we have not yet an agreed and perfected technique” for distinguishing history from sagas. No wonder this is so, comments Lord Raglan (*The Hero*, 61), since there is but one way to mark the difference, and that is by checking alleged history with facts known from other sources. When this is done the sagas break down utterly—as history.

Another scholar, Prof. Nilsson, complains of that utter disregard for history and geography which is peculiar to epic poetry. But, says Raglan, history was not their concern, and geography was an inconsequential side issue. And Prof. Hooke (*Myth and Ritual*, 6) says that both the Minotaur and Perseus myths pictorialize human sacrifice and are a product of myth and ritual united. Raglan himself states that the true study of Homer has hardly yet begun and will not get us anywhere until students see that the poems have no historical foundation, but are to be taken as documents picturing the evolution of religious ideas, in which sense they become highly important. Again he says that all the difficulties of interpretation disappear when it is realized that these great

works are ritual narratives. He asserts that all the main incidents in the Trojan cycle take place in the first and tenth years of the siege and that in the mythological cycles, especially those of Troy and Thebes, all the main events are represented as taking place at intervals of about ten years. There are many resemblances: both cities were built where a cow lay down; both were unsuccessfully attacked, but ten years later stormed and razed to the ground;

Hector is a leading hero of both cities. Nearly every state desired to be founded by refugees from Troy or Thebes. There was a Troy in Egypt built by Semiramis (*Asiatic Researches*, Vol. III, 454), according to Higgins. Trojan refugees are found in Epirus, Threspotia, Cyprus, Crete, Venice, Rome, Daunia, Calabria, Sicily, Lisbon, Asturia, Pamphylia, Arabia, Macedonia, Holland, Auvergne, Paris, Sardinia, Alicia, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Libya. The Trojan story was a myth, a sacred history, and became a vast conglomeration of fable and truth.

The origin of the ten-year period so frequently occurring in all 122 these recitals is no doubt the fabulous legend that the Titans fought with the gods for ten years. The Titans represent of course the elementary forces of nature, and the gods stand for the intellectual and spiritual powers. Every traditional myth sought to depict the aspects of this universal conflict.

In *Quest* magazine of April 1912 a Dr. Anderson writes:

“The critic . . . will proceed to prove that the stories of the trial, arrest and crucifixion are quite understandable as scenes in a mystery play, but are quite inexplicable as facts of history. The trial is represented as lasting through one night when, as Renan points out, an Eastern city is wrapped in silence and darkness, quite natural as scenes in a mystery-play, but not as actual history.”

It represents at least some, and possibly great, difficulty to reconcile the fact that Jesus was a Jew with the other fact that the Gospels dealing with him were written in Greek.

“A professional Egyptologist (*Dictionary of the Bible*, Smith, V. 3, p. 1018) has written respecting the passage of the Red Sea: ‘It would be impious to attempt an explanation of what is manifestly miraculous.’ To such a depth of degradation can Bibliolatry reduce the human mind! Such is the spirit in which the subject has been crawled over.” (*Massey: Book of the Beginnings*, II, 176). The reference to the Red Sea brings up one of the most direct and astounding proofs that Old Testament “history” is not history, and can by no possibility be held as such. This has been briefly hinted at, but needs further emphasis. If the partisans of the historical view of archaic literature insist that the Exodus narrative is history, their insistence places them in the most ridiculous of

predicaments and in short makes simpletons of them. At the end of the debate they are left holding the bag, the gold brick vanished. For the Red Sea, whether that of the map or that of the myth, is no longer in the Bible! It is clean gone out of the story. The learned scholar, James Moffatt, of Glasgow University, has dropped it out of the correct translation, replacing it with the “Reed Sea,” drawn direct from Egypt’s mythicism! Assumably his reasons for this rendering, in view of the blasting consequences flowing from it, must have been quite decisive and certain. So if there was no Red Sea in the story, the Israelites could not have crossed it. With this change the whole story 123 falls. Practically, with the deletion from the Old Testament of the historicity of the descent into Egypt and the Exodus from it, the entire structure of “history” in the Bible is shot to pieces. At last the proper mythical translation of one word tears the mask of stupid literalism off the face of ancient esoteric wisdom, and leaves a long deluded and hypnotized world rudely shaken out of intellectual stupor, and with eyes torn suddenly open from its dream, gaping in stunned bewilderment at the wreckage of its illusion. Of all “rude awakenings” this is perhaps the most shocking, but also the most salutary. Likewise the physical “tabernacle” of the Old Testament, in and at the door of which the Eternal was wont to meet and confabulate with Moses, has vanished along with the Red Sea, and we find the mythical “trysting-tent” in its stead. Male soul and female body in the divine allegory meet and hold their tryst here in the flesh on earth. From it they go on to the marriage, out of which the Christos in man is born.

A word must be interposed here with regard to the bearing of the Jewish rejection of the Messianic Jesus on the debate. Since the wretched persecution of a whole race has gushed from the rejection, there is no lack of warrant for giving the matter full treatment. The work here undertaken is in the large the treatment; but a few conclusions of Massey on the subject can be advanced here with benefit. In his great work, *Ancient Egypt, The Light of the World* (p. 519) he speaks with great candor. Referring to the Jews who in their popular trends came close to literalizing the scriptural allegories, he says:

“They pursued their messianic phantom to the verge of the quagmire, but drew back in time to escape. They left it for the Christians to take the final fatal plunge into the bog in which they have wallowed, always sinking, ever since; and if the Jews did but know it, the writings called Jewish have wrought an appalling avengement upon their ignorant persecutors, who are still proving themselves to be Christians . . . by ignominiously mutilating and piteously massacring the Jews.”

Massey does not mean that the avengement of the Jewish scriptures on Christianity consists of the massacres, of course; he means that the adoption by Christianity of the body of Hebrew scriptures as their Old Testament has been the means of saddling on the back of Christianity the fatal incubus of a vast corpus of myth adopted because it was supposed to be history, and is now seen to be not that at all, but pagan mythology plucked from Egypt! There is no avengement equal to that of the irony of events. The logic of events is inexorable and merciless. Massey speaks in words momentous for the world today and for the time to come, when he writes:

“If the Jews had only held on to the sonship of Iu, the su or sif [the suffix su, sif, sef is Egyptian for son, heir, prince, and the name Jesus came from the combination of the divine Iu(Ju), the Christ, with su or sif, giving us the Egyptian Iusu, or Iusif, Jesus or Joseph] they might have spoiled the market for the spurious wares of the ‘historic’ Savior, and saved the world from wars innumerable, and from countless broken hearts and immeasurable mental misery. But they let go the sonship of @insert Hebrew [IE or JE] with the growth of their monolatry. They could not substitute the ‘historic’ sonship; they had lost touch with Egypt, and the wisdom that might have set them right was no longer available against the Christian misconstruction. They failed to fight the battle of the Gnostics and retired from the conflict dour and dumb; strong and firm enough to suffer the blind and brutal Juden-Hetze [baiting of Jews] of all these centuries, but powerless to bring forward their natural allies, the Egyptian reserves, and helpless to conclude a treaty or enforce a truce.” This was the catastrophe entailed for both Judaism and Christianity, as well as for the whole world, in the loss of Egypt’s august contribution. In the finale Massey pays this well-considered tribute to the refusal of Jewry to endorse the historization of mythology:

“And here the present writer would remark that, in his view, the Jewish rejection of Christianity constitutes one of the sanest and the bravest intellectual triumphs of all time. It is worth all that the race has suffered from the persecution of the Christian world.”

If there is the providential rulership of the universe that misses not even the fall of a sparrow, it is to be assumed that adjustment of a wrong so flagrant and enormous as the slaughter over sixteen hundred years of a people who merely refused to go along with a doltish substitution of history for allegory, will in due time be made.

Another item of most vivid significance is brought out by Massey (B. O. B. II, 188). He discloses the fact that at a date in the reign of 125 Tahtmes III, some two and a half centuries earlier than the “historical Exodus”—on the scholastic insistence that there was such an event—there were inscribed on a pylon at Thebes in a list of 1200 names of places conquered or

garrisoned by the Egyptians, the original names of the towns and districts of Canaan to the number of 115, which, says Massey, is “nothing less than the synoptical table of the Promised Land made 250 years before the Exodus.” This comes close to writing the geography and history of a nation before that history has taken place on the actual scene. As we shall find that the “life” of Jesus was in effect written before he “lived,” so here we see the geography of a nation charted before the places became the locale of the events which gave their names fame in history. All this points to the whole catalogue of such charts and lists and maps as being allegorical depictions and systematic typographs covering a structure of meaning of the most esoteric and cryptic sort. The Canaanitish names mentioned in the list are Astaroth-Karnaim, Avilah, Berytus, Bashan, Beth-Sappuah or Tebekim, Ephron (Hebron), Hishbon, Hamath, Judah, Kadesh, Kison, Megiddo, Sameshu (Damascus) and others. Among hundreds of passages to be culled out of early Patristic writing which throw doubt on the veracity of the historical side of Christianity we have a strange statement in Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho: “In the dialogue we find Trypho saying, ‘Ye follow an empty rumor and make a Christ for yourselves. . . . If he was born and lived somewhere, he is entirely unknown.’” A more straightforward report on the true situation in the second century, marked by the claims and denials of historians, is hardly to be had. It sounds as if the early Church Father, taking part in the original debate as to the historicity, argues on the side taken by the present work. It was as if he said: “The Christ of the Gospels is the mythical and ritualistic figure; if a historical Christ did live, you have no record of his existence.” The entire present debate might be summarized in the same words. His sentences might well be made the concluding ones of our last page. He, too, might have said: “Ye have reduced the cosmic majesty of the Logos to the mean stature of a Galilean peasant.”

Clement of Alexandria (Stromata VII, 7, 106) records the astounding fact that the doctrine of the Evangel was delivered to Basilides, the consecrated student of sacred things, by the Apostle Matthew and Glaucus, a disciple of Peter! And there is evidence that the Gospel then delivered must have differed widely from the present New Testament. Tertullian’s distorted accounts of this deposit left to posterity are no faithful guide to a true evaluation of it. Yet even the little this partisan fanatic gives shows the chief Gnostic doctrines to be identical with the broader and deeper esoteric wisdom of the East.

And another proof of the claim that the Gospel of Matthew in the usual Greek texts is not the original Gospel written in Hebrew is found with no less an authority than St. Jerome (Hieronymus) for support. The suspicion of a conscious and gradual euhemerization of the Christ principle from the beginning grows into decided conviction as one reads a certain confession

contained in Book II of the Comment of Matthew by Hieronymus. For we find in it the proof of a deliberate substitution of the whole Gospel, the one now in the canon having been evidently rewritten by the zealous Jerome. This is well authenticated as genuine history. How far the rewriting and editorial tampering with the primitive gnostic fragments which have now become the New Testament went, may be inferred from reading *Supernatural Religion*, which ran through some twenty-three editions. The authorities and documentary support cited by its author are overwhelming in quantity and impressiveness. Jerome says that he was sent toward the close of the fourth century by “their Felicities,” the Bishops Chromatius and Heliodorus, to Caesarea with the mission to compare the Greek text (the only one they ever had) with the Hebrew original version preserved by the Nazarenes in their library and to translate it. He translated it, but under protest; for, as he says, the Evangel “exhibited matter not for edification, but for destruction.” The destruction of what?—must be asked. Doubtless of the doctrine that Jesus the Nazarene and the Christos are one. Hence, for the “destruction” of the newly planned religion which separated the two. In this same letter the Saint—the same that advised his converts to kill their fathers and trample on the bosoms of their mothers if their parents stood between their sons and Christ—admits that Matthew did not wish his Gospel to be openly written, hence that the manuscript was a secret one. Yet while admitting also that this Gospel was “written in Hebrew characters and by the hand of himself [Matthew], in another place he contradicts this and assures posterity that as it was tampered with and rewritten by a disciple of Manichaeus named Seleucus . . . the ears of 127 the Church properly refused to listen to it.” (Hieronymus: *Commentary to Matthew*, Bk. II, Chap. XII, 13).

Gibbon, in a footnote on p. 432 of his great history, gives us material that ought to be granted consideration. He says:

“The modern critics are not disposed to believe what the Fathers almost unanimously assert, that St. Matthew composed a Hebrew Gospel, of which only the Greek translation is extant. It seems, however, dangerous to reject their testimony.”

A volume of comment might be made on data of this sort, which could be enlarged to great proportions. There is at any rate enough of it in the Patristic and early sectarian and polemic literature of the Christian movement to provide a sufficient deterrent to the open dissemination of this body of Church history among the general laity. So extensive a policy of concealment, amounting practically to a conspiracy of silence, argues a case difficult to defend. It may not be inappropriate to conclude this chapter with a reflection forced upon the mind of Gerald Massey

toward the later years of a life given to a searching study of the origins of Christianity. It is a tribute of no mean impressiveness to the power of religious influences even when the true inner import of the ritual expressing them is unknown. Dilating upon the Egyptian Mystery ritual, he says:

“In this divine drama the natural realities are represented with no perniciously destructive attempt to conceal the characters under a mask of history. Majestically moving in their own might, of pathetic appeal to human sympathies, they are simply represented for what they may be worth when rightly apprehended. But so tremendous was this tragedy in the Osirian Mysteries, so heart-melting the legend of divinest pity that lived on with its rootage in Amenta and its flowerage in the human mind, that an historic travesty has kept the stage and held the tearful gaze of generation after generation for nineteen hundred years.”

If the mere husk of religious truth has exerted so amazing an influence upon mortals, what might have been the transcendent exaltation of the mind and purgation of the life of the race if the golden corn itself had been preserved! But the corn was lost and the husk alone remained when the myths of truth were converted into the falsities of “history.”

Chapter VI CANONIZED ROMANTICISM

Doubtless, despite the evidence assembled, the blunt charge that so apparently impossible a transaction as the conversion of myth into history has really occurred will still remain incredible and unacceptable. The great cry will be raised as to how so amazing and stupendous a blunder could have occurred. With the universal presumption of so much honesty and integrity, and likewise high intelligence in a people divinely inspired as the devout early Christians are believed to have been, it becomes difficult for the general mind to comprehend how such flagrant error could have gained the day and consummated so gross a miscarriage. To what extent was the crime knowingly perpetrated? Was it motivated by sincerity working in ignorance, or by intelligence working in insincerity?

The answer to these queries is by no means simple or easy. It is involved in no end of difficulty arising mainly from the destruction of evidence and the biases and prejudices of the reviewers of what evidence is available. But if all the facts in the situation were truly known, it is pretty certain that the full solution would comprise a vast jumble and admixture of all the varying degrees of intelligence and ignorance, sincerity and insincerity, in one grand plot. Nearly all human and historical transactions are the resultant of a mixed group of forces actuated by every degree of intelligence and sincerity, or the want of them. It may perhaps be questioned whether any act or decision of people anywhere at any time is of downright deliberate insincerity. Some allegedly justifiable "reason" lurks behind or under every deed. People do evil things of deliberate intent, but they hardly do them with insincerity. Justification is found somewhere in the depth of feeling or thought. Generally it will be found that where apparent insincerity is operative, it is unintelligence that warps the action into evil direction. Granting inherent sincerity in human nature, its miscarriage into foul expression must be due to want of keen in-129 telligence. This is indeed the conclusion arrived at in the finale by Plato and Socrates in their dialectical inquiry into the nature of the good. The basic and ultimate evil is nothing but—in one or other of its manifold forms—ignorance. So declared Buddha, Orpheus, Hermes, Solomon and other sage teachers of early man. It is assumed legitimate to accuse a person if he does badly when he should know better. The acme of all evil charge is that a person does wrong knowingly. If in the conversion of myth into history there was this commission of knavery in spite of better knowledge, the verdict must be rendered accordingly. Again, if the wreckage of the myth resulted from ignorance and misguided motives, the judgment must be more lenient, although there is no sentiment in nature and she punishes ignorance as well as knavery.

Our glance at the possibility of insincerity in the motive behind the alteration is actuated by no mere truculent attitude, but is warranted by a more substantial reason. Any history of early Christianity must face and deal with the perpetration of an extensive series of what are known among the historians as “pious frauds” by the Fathers and partisan leaders in the first centuries and the Church’s connivance at them then and later. The charge is brought by many chroniclers of the period and confessed by most Christian apologists. The assembling of data substantiating it, while an invidious task, must be made in sufficient force to justify the introduction of it as a count in the case against the historicity of the Son of God. If the charge of fraudulent literary practice in the handling of religious data in the early day can be upheld, it strengthens by so much the likelihood that the transfer of meaning from the impersonal Christos to the man Jesus was made. The proof of fraud and deception greatly heightens the probability that the change occurred. If analysis of the whole situation extant at the time reveals that the transaction was of such a nature that knavery would be suspected of being a highly probable element in it, the discovery of such chicanery in the immediate wake of the suspicion certainly will tend to increase the validity of the non-historical claim. If, in point of fact, it would seem necessary to posit fraud as accessory to the great transformation in the character of the Christos, the disclosure of fraud in the actual situation amounts to strong *prima facie* evidence that the case was as suspected. It is surely to be agreed that

the proven presence and practice of religious fraud in the first centuries of Christian history must be weighed realistically in relation to every development of the ecclesiastical polity then and after. A superficial view would not fail to conclude that there must be a close and perhaps immediate link between such a transaction as the personalizing of the Messiah and the prevalent impostures in the field of religion. If fraud is known to have been a strong feature of the picture, it becomes necessary to determine what part it played in the historization of the Jesus character. To many it is certain that the revelation of such an unknown and unsuspected element in the case will serve as an all-sufficient clue to the solution of the whole complication. It will be seized upon readily as the missing key to the entire mystery. While this may be according too much importance to the item, the presence of fraud is nearly always presumptive testimony to a sinister motive or maneuver. To begin with, an initial suspicion and distrust is awakened in the mind of the student when he is confronted from the start with the presence and volume of documents, books, gospels and apocrypha bearing the prefix “Pseudo-“ to their title. There is the “Pseudo-Mark,” the “Pseudo-Acts,” the “Pseudo-Dionysus” and others in bewildering profusion. Nothing less than plagiarism and forgery are at once suggested by this phenomenon. Then the field of early Christianity is cluttered up with works controverting alleged “heresies” on all sides. Indeed most of the works that stand as the chief contemporary histories of the first centuries of Christianity bear the title

“Against Heresy.” This is notably the case with the books of Eusebius, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Epiphanius, a quintet of historians on whom the Church has relied mainly to buttress its egregious claims to unique authority and its defamations of the “pagan” religions. But it is time to gather the amazing data on this score. It may be generous to present the most favorable aspect of the evidence first. A passage of this sort is found in Mead’s *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (88):

“It must not be supposed, however, that the re-writers and editors of the old traditions were forgers and falsifiers in any ordinary sense of the word. Antiquity in general had no conception of literary morality in its modern meaning, and all writing of a religious character was the outcome 131 of an inner impulse. . . . It should also be remembered that the mythologizing of history and the historizing of mythology were not peculiar to the Jews, but common to the times; what was peculiar to them was their fanatical belief in divine favoritism and their egregious claims to the monopoly of God’s providence.”

Mead’s statement that antiquity did not possess our modern standards of literary morality adds strength to the general claim that the purpose of ancient writing was never strictly to record the facts of history, but rather to depict mystical realities and intellectual concepts. One is obviously privileged to use one’s fancy when the truth of objective occurrence is not the theme, and the experience of the inner life is. It may alleviate to a degree the weight of obloquy that may seem to fall upon the perpetrators of so much literary crime to remember Mead’s explanation of its religious background. In *The Hero Lord Raglan* briefly states that pious frauds of this (and every other conceivable) type were a commonplace of medieval ecclesiasticism. And the medieval was but a prolongation of ancient practice. In *The Anacalypsis* (522) Higgins, alleging that it was not uncommon for the priests to charge their opponents with absurd opinions they never held for the purpose of disgracing them, remarks that “this has always been considered by priests a mere allowable ruse in religious controversy. It is yet had recourse to every day.”

In Anthon’s *Classical Dictionary* (Fourth Ed. 929, Art. *Oraculum*) the text stands as follows:

“The only evil spirit which had an agency in the oracular responses of antiquity was that spirit of crafty imposture which finds so congenial a home among an artful and cunning priesthood.”

From a source within the fold of orthodoxy itself comes a confession that is singularly and creditably frank. If all Christian authors and apologists had been as candid as von Mosheim, the

faith of the Church would have presented a better defense than unfortunately can now be made. Speaking of the Gospel of Hermas in his celebrated history of the early Church (p. 91), he writes:

“At the time when he wrote it was an established maxim with many of the Christians that it was pardonable in an advocate for religion to avail himself of fraud and deception, if it were likely that they might conduce toward the attainment of any considerable good. Of the list of silly books and stories to which this erroneous notion gave rise, from the second to the fifteenth century, no one who is acquainted with Christian history can be ignorant.”

He says again (288) that “it is with the greatest grief that we find ourselves compelled to acknowledge” that some of the weaker brethren, in their zeal to assist God with all their might, resorted to such dishonest artifices as could not admit of any just excuse and were utterly unworthy of that sacred cause which they were unquestionably designed to support. One of the illegitimate devices resorted to, he charges, was the measure of composing eight books of Sibylline verses, designed to play upon the general ancient reverence and credulity of the populace respecting the pagan oracles and their pronouncements, in order to win approval of the Christian claims. Some Christian, or perhaps an association of Christians, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, “composed” the books with a view to persuade the ignorant and unsuspecting that even so far back as the time of Noah a Sibyl had foretold the coming of Christ and the rise and progress of his Church. The trick succeeded, says Mosheim, with not a few, nay even some of the principal Christian teachers themselves were imposed upon by it. But it eventually brought great scandal on the Christian cause; since the fraud was “too palpable to escape the searching penetration of those who gloried in displaying their hostility to the Christian name.”

Another group of zealots, he goes on, trafficking with the great name and authority of the Egyptian Hermes Trismegistus, concocted a work bearing the title of Poemander, and other books, replete with Christian principles and maxims, and sent them forth into the world. “Many other deceptions of this sort, to which custom has very improperly given the denomination of pious frauds, are known to have been practiced in this and the succeeding centuries.” The authors, he claims, were in all probability actuated by no ill intention, “but this is all that can be said in their favor, for their conduct in this respect was certainly most ill-advised and unwarrantable.” He shifts the major blame for “these forgeries on the public” to the Gnostics, but admits that he yet can not take upon himself “to acquit even the most strictly orthodox from all participation in this species of criminality: for it appears from evidence superior to all exception that a pernicious maxim, which was current in the schools not only of the Egyptians, the Platonists and the Pythagoreans, but also

of the Jews, was very early recognized by the Christians and soon found amongst them numerous patrons, namely, that those who made it their business to deceive with a view of promoting the cause of truth, were deserving rather of commendation than of censure.”

Is it possible that we are here standing at the very cradle of what the world has come to call “Jesuitry”? If so it can be seen that this bad excuse for allegedly good action had its remote birth in the methods of ancient sacred writing depicted in our second chapter, used originally with esoteric integrity of purpose, but twisted into fraudulent usage by later piety working with less intelligence and probity. It is another cardinal instance and proof of what is claimed, that all corruption of religion and theology came in through the decay and loss of the principles of genuine esoteric schematism. The case grows more solid with every additional observation that the major cause of all religious decadence and perversion was this early-century transmogrification of allegory into history. This will prove to be the mysterious key to the confusion and chaos in the entire religious domain. Mosheim’s honesty in refusing to wash away the knavery here recorded is commendable and will in the end serve the interests of true Christianity.

In Vol. II (p. 5) of his work he again admits he can not deny that pious fraud found a place in the propagation of Christianity in the third century. And again he says it is certain that in the earliest ages of the new faith it was “not uncommon for men to fill up the chasms of genuine history with fictitious conceits, the mere suggestion of their own imagination.” And candor could go no further than it does in another passage (Vol. I, 106), in which he admits that when once certain of the Christian writers had been unfortunately tempted to have recourse to fiction, “it was not long before the weakness of some and the arrogant presumption of others carried forgery and imposition to an extent of which it would be difficult to convey to the reader any adequate idea.” The eminent historian Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism* (I, 164) somewhat ironically records his conclusion:

“Making every allowance for the errors of the most extreme infallibility, the history of Catholicism would on this hypothesis represent an amount of imposture probably unequalled in the annals of the human race.” Bacon, of Yale Divinity School, tells us that an extraordinary license was accorded in John’s day to the preacher to employ allegory, myth, symbolism, legend, parable, whatever he would, in the interest of religious edification. He says we know there were others in John’s time who used the same liberty of expression.

In a work entitled *Discourse of Free Thinking* (p. 96) the author, Collins, remarks that “these frauds are very common in all books which are published by priests or priestly men. . . . For

it is certain that they may plead the authority of the Fathers for forgery, corruption and mangling of authors with more reason than for any other of their articles of faith.”

The Encyclopedia Britannica, dealing with the apocryphal books, says that “since these books were forgeries,” the epithet (apocryphal) in common parlance today denotes any story or document which is false or spurious, using the word in the disparaging sense. It adds the significant sentence that each of them at one time or another had been treated as canonical. This lines up a point of considerable importance, testifying to the fact that the books were originally among those esoterically apprehended and hence as genuine as any others, and that when the esoteric sense was lost, their unintelligibility got them rated as false. There is practically convincing evidence to show that the word “apocryphal,” like many another, did not have in its original usage any connotation of falsity or baseness. It referred to those books of the ancient wisdom which from the spiritual and mystical profundity of their contents were held as too esoteric for the masses. The etymology of the word apo, “from,” and kryptein, “to hide” or “conceal,” indicates this fully and categorically. The Apocrypha were the books of the recondite doctrine, hidden from the ignorant populace. This point holds much vital significance for study in this whole field.

Gibbon (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 502) states that

“the most extravagant legends, as they conduced to the honor of the Church, were applauded by the credulous multitude, countenanced by the power of the clergy and attested by the suspicious evidence of ecclesiastical history.”

Such a Christian authority as The Catholic Encyclopedia (VII, 645) says that “even the genuine Epistles were greatly interpolated to lend weight to the personal views of their author. For this reason they were incapable of bearing witness to the original form.”

In an enlightening lecture entitled Paul the Gnostic Opponent of Peter, Massey reveals that “as Irenaeus tells us, the Gnostics, of whom Marcion was one, charged the other apostles with hypocrisy, because they ‘framed their doctrine according to the capacity of their hearers, fabling blind things for the blind according to their blindness; for the dull according to their dulness; for those in error according to their errors.’”

A strong statement is made in the History of the Christian Religion to the Year 200, by Charles B. Waite, to the effect that a comprehensive review of the first one hundred and seventy years of Christianity discloses the ignorance and superstition of even the most enlightened and

best educated of the Fathers; with rare exceptions they were men who utterly despised learning, especially that of the pagans attempting to study the laws of the material universe. Construing in the narrowest sense the maxim that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, they construed the Jewish scriptures and sayings of Christ in the most fanciful and whimsical ways. Their credulity was unbounded and “they had a sublime disregard for truth. . . . Their unscrupulousness when seeking for arguments to enforce their positions is notorious, as well as the prevalence among them of what are known as pious frauds.”

Waite says of Eusebius, the Christian historian, that not only the most unblushing falsehoods but literary forgeries of the vilest character darken the pages of his apologetic and historical writings. In speaking of such and other irregularities, Miss Isabel B. Holbrook, a capable student of esoteric religions, writes in one of her brochures:

“Among the most notorious of these forgeries were gross liberties and interpolations concerning Christ into the writings of the historian Josephus, of Porphyry and other heathen and Church writers.” Waite further declares that Eusebius has contributed more to Christian history than any other and “no one is guilty of more mistakes.”

“Eusebius has a peculiar faculty for diverging from the truth. He was ready to supply by fabrication what was wanting in historical data.” Niebuhr terms Eusebius “a very dishonest writer.” The thirty-second chapter of the Twelfth Book of Anselm, *Evangelical Preparation*, bears for its title this scandalous proposition: “How it may be lawful and fitting to use falsehood as a medicine and for the benefit of those who want to be deceived.” (From Gibbon, *Vindication*, 76.)

Chrysostom is quoted (Comm. on I Cor., IX, 19; *Diegesis*, p. 309) as saying:

“Great is the force of deceit, provided it is not excited by a treacherous intention.”

Even Cardinal Newman appears to endorse subterfuge for the glory of the faith. In the *Apology for His Life* (Appendix, 345) he writes: “The Greek Fathers thought that when there was a *justa causa* an untruth need not be a lie.” What could be more explicit than this entry in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (XII, 768)?

“There was need for a revision, which is not yet complete, ranging over all that has been handed down from the Middle Ages, under the style and title of the Fathers, Councils, Roman and other official archives. In all these departments forgery and interpolation as well as ignorance had wrought mischief on a great scale.”

Lecky states that the Fathers laid down as a distinct proposition that pious frauds were justifiable and even laudable. As a consequence of the necessity of enforcing their egregious claims to exclusive salvation, says Lecky, the Fathers immediately filled all ecclesiastical literature with the taint of “the most unblushing mendacity.” Heathenism had to be combated, and therefore prophecies of Christ by Orpheus and the Sibyls were forged and lying wonders were multiplied. Heretics were to be convinced, and therefore interpolations and complete forgeries were made. Age after age it continued until it became universally common. “It continued till the very sense of truth and the very love of truth seemed blotted out from the minds of men.”

In *The Anacalypsis* Higgins avers that

“every ancient author without exception has come to us through the medium of Christian editors, who have, either from roguery or folly, corrupted them all. We know that in one batch all the Fathers of the Church 137 and all the Gospels were corrected, that is, corrupted by the united exertions of the Roman See, Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the monks of St. Maur.”

As to this serious charge he writes (*Anac.*, 697):

“Lanfranc, a Benedictine, was head of the monks of St. Maur about A.D. 1050, and it appears that this Society not only corrected the Gospel histories, but they also corrected the Fathers, in order that their Gospel corrections might not be discovered; and this was probably the reason for the publication by them of their version of the whole of the Fathers.”

It is not difficult to see why the labors of Higgins, Massey, Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, and others who were unsparing in their candid handling of obscure facts of history were relegated to oblivion as thoroughly as could be done. Higgins further says (*Anac.*, 522) that nothing which appears to be told by the orthodox Fathers in a regular and systematic manner against the heretics is credible. He berates Bishop Laurence of the English Church for his destructive translation of the Book of Enoch, and charges the iniquity of his having been made an archbishop, instead of being deservedly disgraced in return for so base an act.

Higgins confesses that his exertions to discover the truth are “in opposition to the frauds of the priests of all religions in their efforts to suppress evidence and to keep mankind in ignorance.” He charges that Enoch was quoted by Clement and Irenaeus like any other canonical scripture. The

Christians in opposition held it to be spurious, because it so clearly gave the prophecy of the coming of the pagan Avatars.

Lardner is quoted by Higgins as saying that Victor Tununensis, an African Bishop, of about the sixth century, wrote a chronicle ending at the year 566, in which it is recorded that in the year 506 at Constantinople, by order of the Emperor Anastasius, “the holy Gospels, being written by illiterate Evangelists, are censured and corrected.”

What must be thought of the declaration of Augustine, founder of Christian theology, when he writes (Civ. Dei, Lib. IV, Cap. XXXI)?:

“There are many things that are true which it is not useful for the vulgar crowd to know; and certain things which although they are false it is expedient for the people to believe otherwise.”

In his great work Gibbon asserts that Eusebius, “the gravest of the ecclesiastical historians” “indirectly confesses that he has related whatever might redound to the glory, and that he has suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace, of religion.”

Augustine wrote a treatise On Lying, in rebuke to the clergy. “This work,” says Bishop Wadsworth, “is a protest against the ‘pious frauds’ which have brought discredit and damage to the Gospel, and have created prejudice against it from the days of Augustine to our own times.” (A Church History, IV, 93-4.)

Massey says he will speak of certain things “when we begin to explore the monstrous deeds and fraudulent machinations of the evangelists.” From the Editorial Preface to The Lost Books of the Bible the following excerpt is culled. It is in reference to the Gospel of Nicodemus:

“Although this Gospel is by some among the learned supposed to have really been written by Nicodemus, who became a disciple of Jesus Christ and conversed with him, others conjecture that it was a forgery toward the close of the third century by some zealous believer who, observing that there had been appeals made by the Christians of the former age to the Acts of Pilate, but that such Acts could not be produced, imagined it would be of service to Christianity to fabricate and publish this Gospel; as it would both confirm the Christians under persecution and convince the Heathens of the truth of the Christian religion. The Rev. Jeremiah Jones says that such pious frauds were very common among the Christians even in the third century. . . . The same author, in noticing that Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History charges the Pagans with having forged and published a book called ‘The Acts of Pilate,’ takes occasion to observe that the internal evidence of

this Gospel shows it was not the work of any heathen . . . and Mr. Jones says he thinks so, more particularly as we have innumerable instances of forgeries by the faithful in the primitive days grounded on less plausible reasons.”

A note to page 99 of *The Lost Books of the Bible* states that Tertullian is authority for the allegation that the book called the Acts of Paul and Thecla was forged by a Presbyter of Asia, who, being convicted, “confessed that he did it out of respect of Paul.” Pope Gelasius included it in his decree against apocryphal books. Notwithstanding this a large part of the history was credited and looked upon as genuine among primitive Christians.

Another discredited work was named *The Death of Pilate*, and still another, *The Paradise of Pilate*, described by Lundy (*Monumental Christianity*, 243), would regale the reader with some conception of the highly “fanciful” nature of these forgeries, if there was space. We may be pardoned for outlining briefly the first of these two: Tiberius being grievously sick and having heard of the fame of Jesus as a healer of diseases, dispatched a messenger to Pilate to have him send Jesus to Rome to cure him. Pilate replied that he had crucified him as a malefactor. On his way back to Rome with the message, the messenger met Veronica—the woman who touched the hem of Christ’s garment—who gave him the cloth handkerchief with which the Lord had wiped his face on the way to crucifixion, and in so doing had impressed his features indelibly upon it. This cloth was brought to the Emperor and he was healed. Pilate was summoned to Rome and thrown into prison, where he killed himself with a knife. His body was thrown into the Tiber and such terrible storms of heat, thunder and lightning followed that the Romans took it up and sent it to Vienne where it was thrown into the Rhone(?). The same storms and tempests recurring, the body was sent again to Lake Lucerne, where it was sunk into the deep waters, said even yet to bubble and boil as if by some diabolical influence. We might ask in Jerome’s words: Would this be matter of edification or of destruction?

Lundy (*Monumental Christianity*, 245) expostulates against the rejection, as spurious, of two apocryphal Letters of Pilate found in Thilo’s and Tischendorf’s collections; one addressed to Claudius and the other to Tiberius, in both of which Jesus’s miracles, his divine sonship, his crucifixion and resurrection are referred to, and the supernatural signs which attended his coming are read as indicating the end of the world. Lundy then puts forth the question, “Are all these forgeries?” If they are only traditions they are certainly very early ones, and their various statements wonderfully agree, he argues. Taken in connection with early Christian monuments, as

to the whole story of our Lord's life, death, resurrection and ascension, they must relate facts of a then recent occurrence, which, he thinks, can not be doubted.

“Were three of four generations of men utterly deceived and mistaken? And is all Christian civilization built upon a lie?” Look at the monuments, he says, and see what pains have been taken to record the verities of early Christianity. “Had the things portrayed not been facts, how could art all at once forsake her fond mythologies and depict such wonderful inventions as these?” How indeed, millions will ask in concert with Lundy. The answer is—by the most incredible stupefaction of mortal mind that ever befell humanity; through the complete blinding of insight into the original nature of occult portrayals of the verities Lundy refers to, which are spiritual realities and not events of objective history. The monuments portrayed the dramatic enaction as the paintings did, and ignorance mistook them for pictures of factual occurrence. How indeed? By the unbelievable transfer of the hidden purport of scripture from the plane of mind to the plane of “history”; by the whole astonishing series of confusions which this work is written to reveal at last in their glaring falsity and blighting power.

A modern sleuth-hound on the trail of Christian imposture is Joseph Wheless, mainly in his work, *Forgery in Christianity*, an achievement of great value for its data, but perhaps marred by the Freethinker's irrational hatred of all Biblical religionism. It is a remarkable assemblage of material laying bare the falsity of Christian claims, and all drawn directly from Christian sources. It is a strong case which can be supported entirely upon the admissions of your opponents. On page 43 of the work he affirms that “no one can now doubt that Lecky, after voluminous review of Christian frauds and impostures, spoke the precise historical truth: ‘Christianity floated into the Roman Empire on the wave of credulity that brought with it this long train of Oriental superstitions and legends.’”

The Catholic Encyclopedia (IV, 498) admits it was the custom of the scribes to lengthen out here and there, to harmonize passages or to add their own explanatory material. It also maintains that “it is the public character of all divines to mold and bend the sacred oracles till they comply with their own fancy, spreading them . . . like a curtain, closing together or drawing them back as they pleased.”

A most curious item that comes to light is a supposed letter prefixed 141 to the Clementine Homilies, an epistle from Peter to James, in which Peter is made to write as follows:

“For some of the converts from the Gentiles have rejected the preaching through me in accordance with the law, having accepted a certain lawless and babbling doctrine of the enemy. And these same people have attempted while I am still alive by various interpolations to transform my words unto the overthrow of the law; as though I also thought thus but did not preach it openly: which be far from me. . . . But they professing somehow to know my mind, attempt to expound the words they heard from me more wisely than I who spoke them, telling those who are instructed by them that this is my meaning, which I never thought of. But if they venture such falsehoods while I am still alive, how much more when I am gone will those who come after me dare to do so!” The Encyclopedia Britannica presumes that the “enemy” whose lawless and babbling doctrine has exercised Peter is none other than Paul. Massey makes much of the Peter-Paul controversy, declaring that Paul’s advocacy of the esoteric spiritual interpretation of all scripture made him the target for the attacks of the Petrine faction that swung over to the exoteric view. The Encyclopedia ventures the theory that the character of Simon Magus mentioned in the Acts and in this letter is a cover for Paul himself, and descants on the identification. In the article “Midrash” the Encyclopedia testifies that “the tendency to reshape history for the edification of later generations was no novelty” in the fourth century B.C. Pragmatic historiography is exemplified in the earliest continuous sources, viz., the “Deuteronomic” writers, i.e., allied to Deuteronomy, and there are many relatively early narratives in which the details have been modified and the heroes of the past are the mouthpieces for the thought of a later writer or of his age. Numerous instructive examples of the active tendency to develop tradition may be observed in the relationship between Genesis and the Book of Jubilees, or in the embellishment of Old Testament history in the Antiquities of Josephus, or in the widening gaps in the diverse traditions of the famous figures of the Old Testament (Adam, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Ezra, etc.) as they appear in non-canonical writings. The Midrash of the Jews and most other ancient sacred literature represented just this tendency to exploit a romantic sense in the old material:

“The rigid line between fact and fiction in religious literature which readers often wish to draw, can not be consistently justified, and in studying old Oriental religious narratives, it is necessary to realize that the teaching was regarded as more essential than the method of presenting it. ‘Midrash,’ which may be quite useless for historical investigation may be appreciated for the light it throws upon the forms of thought. Historical criticism does not touch the reality of the ideas, and since they may be as worthy of study as the apparent facts they clothe, they thus indirectly contribute to the history of their period.”

This nears the statement of truth about the theme, but misses final agreement with it, in the last sentence, which makes the Midrashic style of dealing with truth a mere help in understanding the “history of a period.” As so often reiterated already, the ancients were not concerned with the tawdry day-to-day eventualities of history; their aim ever was to dramatize the genius, meaning and spirit of all history in systematic type-forms and personifications of aspects of verity.

It is perhaps impossible that the general public can ever be awakened to the enormity of the corruption of old texts. None but the few scholars who have had time and occasion to go over the immense detail of the inquiry are in position to appreciate the full import and truth of this matter. It is well, then, to ponder deeply the sincere words of a competent and conscientious student, G. R.

S. Mead, expressed in his *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (p. 18):

“The Received Text is proved to have suffered in its traditions so many misfortunes at the hands of ignorant scribes and dogmatic editors that the human reason stands amazed at the spectacle.”

On page 11 of the same work he says with reference to the Christian religion:

The student of Christianity “is amazed at the general ignorance of everything connected with its history and origins. He gradually works his way to a point whence he can obtain an unimpeded view of the remains of the first two centuries and gaze around on a world that he has never heard of at school and of which no word is ever breathed from the pulpit.”

And certainly the truth of his next statement (p. 14) must now be conceded:

“For upwards of one hundred years liberal Christendom has witnessed the most strenuous and courageous efforts to rescue the Bible from the hands of an ignorant obscurantism which had in many ways degraded it to the level of a literary fetish and deprived it of the light of reason.” It is profitable to dwell with Mead on Marcion’s view of the Gospels. In that great Gnostic’s understanding of theology the Christ had preached a universal doctrine, a new revelation of the Good God, the Father of all. They who tried to graft this on to Judaism, the imperfect creed of one small nation, were in grievous error and had totally misunderstood the teaching of Christ. The Christ was not the Messiah promised to the Jews. That Messiah was to be an earthly king, was intended for the Jews alone and had not yet come. Therefore the pseudo-historical “in order that it might be fulfilled” school had adulterated and garbled the original Sayings of the Lord, the

universal glad tidings, by the unintelligent and erroneous glosses they had woven into their collections of teachings. “It was the most terrific indictment of the cycle of New Testament ‘history’ that has ever been formulated.” Men were tired of all the contradictions and obscurities of the innumerable and mutually destructive variants of the traditions concerning the person of Jesus. (This surely points to the certainty that there were no real facts to go upon.) No man could say what was the truth, now that “history” had been so altered to suit the new Messiah-theory of the Jewish converts.

As to actual history, then, Marcion started with Paul; he was the first who had really understood the mission of the Christ, and had rescued the teaching from the obscurantism of Jewish narrow sectarianism. Of the manifold versions of the Gospel he would have the Pauline alone. He rejected every other recension including those now ascribed to Matthew, Mark and John! The Gospel according to Luke, “the follower of Paul,” which he might have been expected to embrace, he also rejected, regarding it as a recension to suit the views of the Judaizing party. His Gospel was presumably the collection of Sayings in use among the Pauline Churches of his day.

Mead says Marcion also rejected some of Paul’s Epistles because they had been tampered with by the “reconciliators of the Petro-Pauline controversy.” Mead calls Tertullian’s denunciation of Marcion’s party of intelligent people, a work called *Against Marcion*, “but a sorry piece of angry rhetoric.”

In his published lecture on *Paul Not an Apostle of Historic Christianity* (p. 9)

Massey says

“it becomes apparent how Paul’s writings were made orthodox by the men who preached another gospel than his; with whom he was at war during his lifetime and who took a bitter-sweet revenge on his writings by suppression and addition after he was dead and gone.”

Another great Gnostic teacher, Basilides, suffered at the hands of the ignorant party bent on literalizing all the Gospels of a spiritual Christos. Mead says that Basilides’ *Exegetica* were the first commentaries on the Gospel teachings written by a Christian philosopher, and in this, as in all other departments of theology, “the Gnostics led the way.” We can only regret, he says, that we have not the original text of the Gnostic doctor himself before us, instead of the very faulty copy of the text of the Church Fathers’ Refutation. Hippolytus muddles up his own glosses and criticisms with mutilated quotations, imperfectly summarizes important passages which treat of conceptions

requiring the greatest subtlety and nicety of language, and in other respects does scant justice to a thinker whose faith in Christianity was so great that, far from confining it to the narrow limits of a dogmatic theology, he would have it that the Gospel was also a universal philosophy explanatory of the whole world drama. In its proper interpretation such indeed it is.

Heracleon and Bardesanes were other splendid Gnostic Christians whose work was condemned by the bigotry of the ignorant. Bardesanes was the agent directly creditable with establishing the first Christian state, for he induced the Prince Abgar Bar-Manu to make Christianity his state religion. Caracalla dethroned Agbar in 216. In revulsion against this act Bardesanes made an extensive defense of the Christian faith. Even Epiphanius is compelled to call him “almost a confessor.” He wrote many Christian treatises in Syriac and Greek. Mead says that the Gnostics were still in the Christian ranks, were members of the general Christian body and desired to remain so; but bigotry finally drove them out “because they dared to say that the teaching of the Christ contained a wisdom which transcended the comprehension of the majority.” Mead cites the great Lepsius as saying (*Die Apocryphen Apostelgeschichte*, 1883) that “almost every fresh editor of such narratives, 145 using that freedom which all antiquity was wont to allow itself in dealing with literary monuments, would recast the materials which lay before him, excluding whatever might not suit his theological point of view,” and substituting “other formulae of his own composition, and further expanding and abridging after his own pleasure.”

There was a wide circulation of “religious romances,” Mead says, in the second century. Irenaeus himself says there was “a multitude of Gospels extant” in his day.

Considerable authority is back of the broad statement that the Pentateuch contained material other than that now found in it before it was re-composed by Esdras or Ezra. It is pretty certain that even after this re-writing it was still further corrupted by ambitious Rabbis of later times, and otherwise remodeled and tampered with. Sometimes, according to Horne, annals and genealogies were taken from other books and incorporated as additional matter. Such sources were used “with freedom and independence.” Indeed this author concludes with the sentence: “They can not be said to have corrupted the text of Scripture. They made the text.” This collection made in this free fashion, observes Kenealy, is what the Old Testament is in Horne’s view—excerpts from the writings of unknown persons put together by those who, he says, were divinely inspired. “No infidel has ever made so damaging a charge as this against the authenticity of the Old Testament.” As to both the Kabalah of the Jews and the Mosaic Bible, it is just about certain that the Western nations have not the original documents. Both internal and external evidence

demonstrates on the testimony of the best Hebraists and the confessions of the learned Jewish Rabbis themselves that an ancient document forms the essential basis of the Bible, and that it received very considerable insertions and supplements in the process of adaptation. The Chaldean Book of Numbers and the Book of the Nabothian Agriculture are mentioned as being very close to the contents of this basic archaic document.

Mead establishes the fact that Celsus categorically accuses the Christians (ii-27) of changing their Gospel story in many ways in order the better to answer the objections of their opponents; his accusation is that “some of them, as it were in a drunken state producing self-induced visions, remodel their Gospel from its first written form and reform it so that they may be able to refute the objections brought against it.”

Higgins sums up much data with the conclusion that “there is undoubted evidence that our Gospel histories underwent repeated revisions.” He adds that “those who would revise the Gospels would not scruple to revise the Sibyl.” This hint is in reference to well-founded charges that the Christians had even reached back into the Sibylline predictions of the pagan oracles and changed them to make them jibe with orthodox preachments.

An evidence of corruption of text is found in an editor’s note on page 295 of Josephus’ Antiquities, which admits that “Josephus’ copy considerably differs from ours.”

Joseph Wheless (Forgery in Christianity) is authority for the statement that eight Epistles and the Martyrium are confessed forgeries. “They are by common consent set aside as forgeries which were at various dates and to serve special purposes put forth under the name of the celebrated Bishop of Antioch.”

With reference to the Christian handling of the Sibylline Books and prophecies, one of the strongest indictments of Christian duplicity and insincerity is framed by the facts and the evidence. The Catholic Encyclopedia says that a letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, authenticating the Epistle to them, may itself be a forgery.

Says Higgins (Anac., 565):

“Among all nations of the Western parts of the world the prophetesses called Sibyls were anciently known. There were eight of them who were celebrated in a very peculiar manner, and a work is extant in eight books (published by Gallaeus) which purport to contain their prophecies. This work in several places is supposed to foretell the coming of Jesus Christ. They have been in all times admitted to be genuine by the Roman Church, and I believe also by that of the Greeks; in fact they have been literally a part of the religion; but in consequence of events in very late years not answering to the predictions, the Roman priesthood wishes to get quit of them, if it knew how; several of its learned men (Bellarmine, for instance) having called them forgeries.” “It is the renewed case of the ladder: being no longer useful, it is kicked down. The Protestant Churches deny them altogether, as Romish forgeries. These Sibyls were held in the highest esteem by the ancient Gentiles. And it appears from the unquestionable text of Virgil that they ¹⁴⁷ did certainly foretell a future Savior or something very like it. We find, on examination of the present copy of them, that they did actually foretell in an acrostic the person called Jesus Christ by name. The most early Fathers of the Greek and Roman Churches plead them as genuine, authentic and unanswerable proofs of the truth of their religion, against the Gentile philosophers who, in reply, say that they have been interpolated by the Christians. . . . I saw pictures of the supposed authoresses of these prophetic books in several places in Italy. Their figures are beautifully inlaid in the marble floor of the Cathedral Church at Sienna and their statues are placed in a fine church at Venice, formerly belonging to the barefooted Carmelites. They are also found placed round the famous Casa Santa at Loretto.” Higgins says that “Sibyl” means “cycle of the sun.” There was supposed to be a prophetess for each Sibyl or Cycle. A new prophetess presided over each Cycle as it passed. There were eight. At the time of Christ another was to come. Elsewhere it is said that the tenth was to mark the consummation of the age. The Anacalypsis says that The Apostolic Constitutions quote the Sibylline Oracles and say:

“When all things shall be reduced to dust and ashes and the immortal god, who kindles the fire, shall have quenched it, God shall form those bones and ashes into man again, and shall place mortal men as they were before, and then shall be the judgment, wherein God shall do justice.” Justin Martyr, about 160 A.D., says the Cumaean Sibyl prophesied the coming of Christ in express words. Justin tells the Greeks that they may find the true religion in the ancient Babylonian Sibyl, who came to Cuma and there gave her oracles, which Plato admired as divine. Clemens of Rome also quotes the Sibyls in his Epistle to the Corinthians. They are also quoted by Theophilus, Antiochus, Athenagoras, Firmianus, Lactantius, Eusebius, St. Augustine and others.

“Take the Greek books, learn the Sibyl, how she proclaims one God and those things which are to come.” Higgins says there are several works extant purporting to be the writings of Peter, Paul and other early Christians, in which the Sibylline oracles are quoted as authorities in support of Christianity.

Dr. Lardner admits (Higgins) that the old Fathers call the Sibyls 148 prophetesses in the strictest sense of the word. They were known as such to Plato, Aristotle, Diodorus, Strabo, Plutarch, Pausanias, Cicero, Varro, Virgil, Ovid, Tacitus, Juvenal and Pliny. What can they have foretold, Higgins asks—and claims he can answer: The same as Isaiah, as Enoch, as Zoroaster, as the Veddas, as the Irish Druid from Bocchara, and as the Sibyl of Virgil: a renewed cycle of the sun and its hero or divine incarnation, its presiding genius. They all admit of ten ages, yet they are not agreed as to the time when the ages commence; some making them begin with creation, some with the flood, but the Erythrean Sibyl is the only one who correctly states them to begin from Adam. He says that ten periods of 600 years each make up the ten ages, or one Great Age. Some of the testimony regarding the Sibyls is assembled by Wheless in his *Forgery in Christianity* (p. 142). He says that Justin in many chapters cites these oracles and points for Christian proofs to “the testimony of the Sibyl,” of Homer, of Sophocles, of Pythagoras, of Plato. From the Ante-Nicene Fathers he takes this:

“And you may in part learn the right religion from the ancient Sibyl, who by some kind of potent inspiration teaches you, through her oracular predictions, truths which seem to be much akin to the teachings of the prophets. . . . ‘Ye men of Greece . . . do ye henceforth give heed to the words of the Sibyl . . . predicting as she does in a clear and patient manner the advent of our Savior Jesus Christ,’” as Wheless adds—“quoting long verses of Christian-forged nonsense.” (A.N.F. i, 288-9).

“It is a fact that no critic can deny,” says Higgins, “that the Sibylline oracles have been greatly corrupted by the Christians.” Gibbon (D. and F., p. 443) says in re the Sibylline Oracles: “The adoption of fraud and sophistry in the defense of revelation” is apparent in their handling by the Christians.

There must be great significance attaching to Wheless’ declaration (*Forgery in Christianity*, p. 195) that Justin Martyr quotes no Gospels, except loose “Sayings of Jesus,” in his writings, but draws profusely from the Sibyls, Oracles, etc. Even Irenaeus makes no mention of the four Gospels (Wheless); and according to Higgins (574) Justin says that “the Sibyl not only expressly and clearly

foretells the future coming of our Savior Jesus Christ, but also all things that should be done by him.” (Cohort and Gr., p. 36; Lardner: Works, Chap. XXIX.)

The most succinct and telling statement concerning the Sibyls, however, is made by Higgins (576) when he says:

“Almost every particular in the life of Christ as detailed in our Gospels is to be found in the Sibyls, so that it can scarcely be doubted that the Sibyls were copied from the Gospel histories, or Gospel histories from them. It is also very certain that there was an Erythrean Sibyl before the time of Christ, whatever it might contain.”

It is hardly probable that any factual evidence can ever be produced at this remote date to substantiate the charges of copying on one side or the other. But it is not reasonable to suppose that a document vastly earlier copied from its successor, although to uphold claims of antecedence for some of their documents, doctrines and ceremonial rites, the Christians did actually resort to the plea of “plagiarism by anticipation” so naïvely put forth by some of the early Fathers. As the oracles of the pagans were adjuncts of all religion for many centuries B.C., the implications of plagiarism fall on the Christians. Whether copied or not, the material fact is that the contents of the oracles and those of the Christian Gospels correspond to such a degree that comparative religion study would rate them both as emanating from a common source and being elements of a common tradition. Practically all the tangled problems of the chronology of documents and priority of texts might be solved on the general terms of this hypothesis.

An early writer bearing testimony to much in Christian history is Papias. He emphatically declares that the Christian Gospels were founded on and originated in the Logia or Sayings. Massey derives “myth” from mutu (Egyptian), “utterance,” “saying,” and relates it to mati, “utterance of truth,” from which he derives, it is believed with good reason, the Gospel of Matthew (Egyptian: maatiu). There is an abundance of evidence to support the contention that the body of the great spiritual tradition handed on from remotest times was incorporated in collections of the most notable and vital utterances taken from the lines assigned to be spoken by the Christos or solar-god figure in the great astronomically-based cryptic ritual of the mighty Mysteries of the past. These collations of sacred utterances of the divine Son to mankind were circulated, but in secret, all over the ancient field under the name, in Greek at any rate, of “the Logia” or “Sayings of the Lord.” It is almost beyond question that they were the root documents from which the canonical Gospels were elaborated, or perhaps simply extracted, and to cover deterioration were emended, interpolated, edited by many scribes in turn. In general statement this is as near the true

history of the source, origin and nature of the Christian Gospels as can be determined. All the data bearing in any way on the matter can be focused with complete harmony and consistency on this thesis; and there are no data that are hostile to it. The hypothesis precisely fits and elucidates all the data and in turn the data support the thesis. It is the only thesis of which this happy situation can be predicated.

In this connection it seems warrantable that the name Mu, applied (by Churchward particularly) to a “lost continent” and age, is just a form of the word that means “utterance of truth.” In the primordial days of cosmic creation, the Lord “uttered his voice” and his utterance was the Logos, which prescribed the form of the universe that his voice called into being. The land of Mu was no more a local region on a globe than “the abyss of the waters” was the Pacific Ocean, or the Garden of the Hesperides was in Spain or that other garden, Eden, was in Mesopotamia, or “the kingdom of heaven” in Germany. Since the time of the existence of the Gospels some portions of texts have been found in Egypt, Syria and elsewhere called Sayings or Logia, of which whole passages agree almost verbatim with their counterparts in the Gospels. Why such a fact is not accorded its full weight is hard to see. Of course Christian defenders unanimously claim for these documents a date well posterior to the Christian writings and allege they are copies of Gospel material. Yet surely documents containing identical data were extant in very ancient pre-Christian times, and this fact would seem to be in the end conducive for the priority of the Logia to the Gospels.

Shirley Jackson Case, of Chicago University Theological School, in his work to support the historicity thesis, admits broadly that before Paul’s time pre-Christian Christianity was in existence not only in Palestine, but also in the Diaspora. A broad admission of this sort could include vast facts and data carrying a very definite refutation of many Christian claims, and in fact does so.

It must have taken much strongly evidential proof to bring Kenealy (The Book of God, p. 408) to say that “assuming that the copies or rather phonographs which had been made by Hulkiah and Esdras and the various anonymous editors were really true and genuine, they must have been wholly exterminated by Antiochus; and the versions of the Old Testament which now subsisted must have been made by Judas or by some unknown compilers, probably from the Greek of the seventy, long after the appearance and death of Jesus.”

One of the Church Fathers complains that his writings “had been falsified by the apostles of the devil; no wonder, he adds, ‘that the Scriptures were falsified by such persons.’” (Catholic Encyclopedia, V, p. 10.) This complainant was Bishop Dionysius.

According to Wheless, Erasmus and Sir Isaac Newton detected fraud in the translation of passages.

It is probably a record of truth which the Catholic Encyclopedia (VI, pp. 655-6) makes as to the authentic authorship of the four canonical Gospels. "The first four historical books of the New Testament are supplied with titles (Gospel according to [Greek kata] Matthew, etc.) which, however ancient, do not go back to the respective authors of these sacred writings. . . . That they do not go back to the first century of the Christian era, or at least that they are not original, is a position generally held at the present day. . . . It thus appears that the titles of the Gospels are not traceable to the Evangelists themselves."

While this may not point directly to fraudulent practice, it indicates some manipulation that could possibly hide covert intent. On the general score of the authenticity of the Gospels Wheless writes as follows:

"The possibility of the pretence that the precious Four Gospels, circulated nondescript and anonymous in the churches for a century and a half, is patently belied by the specific instance of the 'Gospel according to Mark,' of which Gospel we have the precise 'history' recorded three centuries after the alleged notorious event. Bishop Eusebius is our witness in his celebrated Church History. He relates that Peter preached orally in Rome, Mark being his 'disciple' and companion. The people wanted a written record of Peter's preachments, and (probably because Peter could not write) they importuned Mark to write down 'that history which is called the Gospel according to Mark.' Mark having done so, 'the Apostle (Peter) having ascertained what was done by revelation of the Spirit, was delighted' . . . and 152 that history obtained his authority for the purpose of being read in the churches." (H. E., Bk. II, Ch. 15.)

Wheless gives other data indicating that Peter was dead at the time alleged. But he cites Eusebius from a later passage in his Ecclesiastical History, in which this "historian" gives another version: the people who heard Peter "requested Mark, who remembered well what he (Peter) had said, to reduce these things to writing . . . which when Peter understood, he directly neither hindered nor encouraged it." (H. E., Bk. VI, Ch. 14.) "Peter thus was alive but wholly indifferent about his alleged Gospel" (Wheless). It evidently was not "inspired" if Mark only "remembered well."

It is claimed that Peter was "martyred in Rome" 64-67 A.D. The earliest date claimed for "Mark" is some years after the fall of Jerusalem, 70 A.D. The great Pope Clement I (died 97 A.D.?)

first to fourth successor of Pope Peter, knew nothing of his great predecessor's "Gospel according to Mark," for, says the Catholic Encyclopedia (IV, p. 14):

"The New Testament he never quotes verbally. Sayings of Christ are now and then given, but not in the words of the Gospels. It can not be proved, therefore, that he used any one of the Synoptic Gospels."

Wheless comments on this, that of course he did not and could not; they were not yet written. And no other Pope, Bishop or Father (except Papias and until Irenaeus) for nearly a century after "Pope Clement" ever mentions or quotes a Gospel, or names Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

"So for a century and a half—until the books bobbed up in the hands of Bishop St. Irenaeus and were tagged as 'Gospels according to' this or that Apostle, there exists not a word of them in all the tiresome tomes of the Fathers. It is humanly and divinely impossible that the 'Apostolic authorship' and hence 'canonicity' or divine inspiration of these Sacred Four should have remained for a century and a half unknown and unsuspected by every Church Father, Pope and Bishop of Christendom—if existent. Even had they been somewhat earlier in existence, never an inspired hint or human suspicion was there, that they were 'Divine' or 'Apostolic' or any different from the scores of 'Apocryphal or pseudo-Biblical writings with which the East had been flooded'—that they were indeed 'Holy Scripture.' Hear this notable admission: 'It was not until about the middle of the second century that under the rubric of Scripture the New Testament writings were assimilated to the Old' (C. E., III, 275)—that is, became regarded as Apostolic, sacred, inspired and canonical—or 'Scriptures.'" Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were all Jews; their Gospels were written in Greek. Also they speak of the Jews in the style and spirit of a non-Jew. Luke adds (I, 1) that there were many other like Gospels afloat. The Cath. Ency. confesses that no one knows why out of many such Gospels the Sacred Four were chosen. Wheless says that Matthew was used by the Ebionites, Mark by "those who separate Jesus from Christ," Luke by the Marcionites, and John by the Valentinians. Wheless will probably be disputed when he says that it is "proven that no written Gospels existed until shortly before 185 A.D., when Irenaeus wrote; they are first mentioned in Chapter XXI of his Book II." The "heretics" were making use of many Gospels, the orthodox claimed only four for their own. It is claimed and likely with justice that the "gospel" up to the middle of the second century was entirely oral and traditional, or with few written texts, and those held in more or less secrecy by the esotericists of the day. This would quite well accord with the thesis of the existence of Logia or Sayings of divine authorship. The Gnostics or other "heretics" were likely the ones who began to

reduce the “gospel” to writing and to bring it out to general use, like the “occultists” of our own age. The orthodox, in self-defense, in all probability did likewise, selecting four and editing them to uphold conceived positions on doctrinal matters. It is confessed in several places that the “heretical spurious gospels” prepared the way and doubtless furnished the incentive for the canonized four. “The Gospels are thus anti-heretical documents of the second century after Gnosticism first appeared.” This fact makes them far other in spirit and no doubt in contents than what the Christian populace has always innocently believed them to be—pure historical records of factual occurrence.

Pope Papias—who said that Jesus died at home in bed of old age!--is among the first, about 145 A.D., to name a written Gospel. Quoting the old presbyters (whose memory must have gone pretty far back to the first century), he says that Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatever he remembered. It is not in exact order that he relates the sayings or deeds of Christ. “For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied him.” Matthew, he says, put the Oracles (of the Lord) in the Hebrew language, “and each one interpreted them as best he could.” Papias did not have in his important church any other Gospels and had only heard of such writings from the elders at second hand. There has been much question of the genuineness of Mark (XVI, pp. 9-20. On this the Encyclopedia Britannica (II, p. 1880) says: “The conclusion of Mark (XVI, 9-20) is admittedly not genuine. Still less can the shorter conclusion lay claim to genuineness.” Of the 15th and 16th verses of this chapter the “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel” and the “saved” and “damned” clauses, etc., are obvious interpolations. Reinach (Orpheus, p. 221) says that it is a “late addition” and “is not found in the best MSS.” The New Standard Bible Dictionary (p. 551) states that the longer form has against it the testimony of the two oldest Uncial MSS. (Siniatic and Vatican) and of one of the two earliest of the Syriac versions, all of which close the chapter at verse 8. In addition to this is the very significant silence of Patristic literature as to anything following verse 8. Eusebius says that the portion after verse 8 was not contained in all the MSS. Jerome also says it was wanting in nearly all. But Jerome put it into the Vulgate (Cath. Ency.). The latter authority says:

“Whatever the fact be, it is not at all certain that Mark did not write the disputed verses. It may be that he did not; that they are from the pen of some other inspired writer and were appended to the Gospel in the first century or the beginning of the second.”

But the Council of Trent decreed they were part of the inspired gospel “and must be received as such by every Catholic.” (C. E., IX, pp. 677-8-9.) The New Commentary on the Holy Scripture (Part III, pp. 122-3) comments:

“It is as certain as anything can be in the domain of criticism that the Longer Ending did not come from the pen of the Evangelist Mark. . . . We conclude that it is certain that the Longer Ending is not part of the Gospel.”

Massey says we learn from Origen that during the third century there were various different versions of Matthew’s Gospel in circulation. Jerome, at the end of the fourth century, asserts the same thing; and of the Latin version he says that there were as many different texts as there were manuscripts!

Reinach contends that the episode of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery, which was inserted in John’s Gospel in the fourth century, was originally in the (apocryphal) Gospel according to the Hebrews. (Orpheus, p. 235.) As to John XXI the Ency. Brit. has it that, as XX, 30-31 constitute a formal and solemn conclusion, Chap. XXI is beyond question a later appendix. “We may go on to add that it does not come from the same author with the rest of the book.” (E. B., ii, p. 2543.)

Even the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer (“For thine is the glory,” etc.) is omitted as spurious by the Revised Version. It is not in the Catholic “True” Version. As to that Wheless comments: “It may be remarked that the whole of the so-called Lord’s Prayer is not the Lord’s at all; it is a late patchwork of pieces out of the Old Testament, as is readily shown by the marginal cross references.”

Reinach, citing the Ency. Brit., under various titles, says of the Peter, John, Jude and James Epistles—the “Catholic Epistles”—“not one of them is authentic.”

A bit shattering is the word of the same Encyclopedia (I, p. 199):

“John . . . is not the author of the Fourth Gospel; so, in like manner, in the Apocalypse we may have here and there a passage that may be traced to him, but the book as a whole is not from his pen. Gospel, Epistles and Apocalypse all come from the same school.”

This was the school of the Mysteries, the Essene Brotherhoods, the Associations of Therapeutae, from which all the oldest documents of a sacred character emanated, and the

traditions of which the Gnostics essayed to carry on into the new formulations of Christianity. This is a very important datum. Reinach holds that John—or whoever poses as “John”—is a forger. Eusebius says that II Peter “was controverted and not admitted into the canon.” The Ency. Brit. endorses the view and says its tardy recognition in the early Church supports the judgment of the critical school as to its unapostolic origin.

Tertullian (Cath. Ency., XIV, p. 525) cites the Book of Enoch as in-156 spired, and also recognizes the IV Esdras and the Sibyl, but does not know James and II Peter. He attributes Hebrews to St. Barnabas. The Apostolic Constitutions, supposed to have been compiled by Clement of Rome and held in high esteem, were until 1563 claimed to be the genuine work of the Apostles. They were composed about 400, and were a collection of ancient ecclesiastical decrees concerning the government and discipline of the Church, in a word, a handy summary of the statutory legislation of the Apostles themselves, promulgated by their own great disciple Clement. Their claim of apostolic origin is manifestly quite false and untenable, Wheless insists. The Catholic Encyclopedia has recognized them as the work of the Apostles and confirmed them as ecclesiastical law.

Likewise the Liber Pontificalis or Book of the Popes, a purported history of the Popes beginning with Peter and continued down to the fifteenth century, Wheless claims is full of spurious correspondence, liturgical and disciplinary regulations, biographies, etc., which certainly must be held under suspicion. And so the list of tamperings and forgeries runs on down into the Middle Ages, a revelation of duplicity enough to shake the faith of the earnest souls confiding in holy leadership, if it was all known. Lorenzo Valla in 1440 first revealed the forgery of the Donation of Constantine. The Symmachian Forgeries are confessed by the Catholic Encyclopedia. Voltaire pronounced the “False Decretals” of Isidore “the boldest and most magnificent forgery which has deceived the world for centuries.” They appeared suddenly in the ninth century, and in them the Popes of the first three centuries are made to quote documents that did not appear until the fourth or fifth century. They are full of anachronisms.

Then comes the sorry recital of lists of deceptions concerning sacred relics, starting with those of the person of Jesus, his bones, his garments, utensils used by him, the cross, nails, bottles of his blood and also of Mary’s nursing milk, etc., etc., which are so obviously fraudulent that one would think the ecclesiastical system which either forged them or winked at their exploitation would blush at the record. The Catholic Encyclopedia does confess the policy of tolerance of “the pious beliefs” which have helped to further Christianity and a general indulgence toward all the

fatuous superstitions connected with relics, saints, healing and the rest. As no church was to be built without dead 157 men's bones under the altar, so it would seem as if indeed no church system can be historically promulgated without the skeleton of the dead past buried deep in the core of its heart and in its holy of holies. The Catholic Encyclopedia announces (III, p. 105) that Chosroes (Khosra) II, King of Persia, in 614 took Jerusalem, massacred 90,000 good Christians, captured the cross of Christ and carried it off whole in triumph to Persia. Yet the same authority says that we learn from St. Cyril of Jerusalem (before 350) that the wood of the cross, discovered about 318, was already distributed throughout the world, to show up in enough pieces to have built a colony of summer cottages. This is indeed a miracle of multiplication surpassing Jesus' legerdemain with the five loaves and two fishes. Wheless cites authority for the statement that more than seven hundred relics of the thorns pressed on Jesus' brow have been enumerated. For fuller detail reference should be had to Wheless' book, *Forgery in Christianity*. Draper in his *The Intellectual Development of Europe* tells of the shock which the revelation of such unblushing imposture gave to all Europe at different times and which prepared the way for the Reformation. The vast fraud of his Church is said to have burst upon Luther as he ascended the twenty-eight steps of white marble leading up to the porch of the palace of Pilate allegedly trodden by Christ, which were brought to Rome from Jerusalem by St. Helena. It must be remembered that the great surge of the Reformation came from the natural revolt of the human conscience against duplicity and hypocrisy. It will be admitted that the amount of such deception necessary to cause a revulsion sufficiently strong to overthrow a pious system consecrated and venerated by centuries of sacred indoctrination and loyalty must have been of terrific proportions.

Higgins alleges that even the Koran was forged twenty years after Mohammed's death. For priestcraft it may indeed be recognized that necessity is the mother of invention.

Among the writings of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury in the eleventh century, has been found a verbal description of Jesus in Latin attributed to one Lentulus, a friend of Pontius Pilate and his predecessor in the government of Judea. The letter purports to have been addressed to the Roman Senate by Lentulus. It has been taken to be fictitious. No such person as Lentulus is known of in Judea.

Much of the alleged "historical testimony" supporting Jesus' human existence is material of this sort.

Origen writes that the difference between the copies of the Gospels is considerable, partly from the carelessness of individual scribes, partly from the impious audacity of some in correcting

what was written, as well as from “those who added or removed what seemed good to them in the work of correction.” (Origen, M. Matt., XV, p. 14.) Wheless asserts that as far as the Gospel of John was concerned, it was not identified with the Christian Church until Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote about it A.D. 185, when the Gnostic Gospel was brought forward. This was founded on the Egyptian Mysteries, John being the Egyptian Taht-Aan. Massey endorses this etymology.

Grethenbach (A Secular View of the Bible) refers to the text of Jesus’ agonized cry of heroic spirituality from the cross—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”—and says it is omitted from the earlier copies of the Book of Luke, and is probably an interpolation from the similar expression of Stephen (Acts, 7:60), and is missing from the other Gospels. This author likewise points out that all the details of the crucifixion given in the four Gospels are wholly left in silence by the epistolary authors, an extraordinarily singular fact, since, he says, Paul himself must have been in Jerusalem at the time it occurred, and John and Peter are known to have been there likewise. Mead cites evidence (F. F. F., p. 166) to authenticate his statement that in the “romantic” cycle of “Gospel” writing connected with Simon Magus, the legend of Peter’s being in Rome in later versions is belied by data in the earlier ones, in which Peter does not travel beyond the East. We have already noted Jerome’s admission that the present Matthew was not the original Gospel of that name, and that the earlier text was “re-written” by a certain Seleucus. Another work of Mead’s—Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?—adduces the datum that the authorized translation of “almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” is not correct, and that the “imperfect original of it is untranslatable.”

This may be the appropriate place to introduce the evidence that is extant as to the mishandling and juggling of the Greek adjective chrestos, meaning “good,” “just,” “righteous,” and the substitution of “Christos,” “the anointed one,” for it by the Christian writers. It is doubtful, however, if much can be made for or against the historicity from the data available. It is at any rate a matter of considerable importance that the early prevalence of this spelling, or this word, should be known, as such things have apparently been designedly kept from general knowledge. The etymology of Christos has already been outlined as meaning the “Anointed One,” and its evident derivation from the Egyptian KaRaST, the name of the mummy-babe in the coffin, with the significance of divinity buried in flesh, has been indicated. KaRaST has been translated as “fleshed,” and it may be of cognate origin with the Greek word for “flesh,” kreas. Christos and Messiah are equated in the similar meaning of “Anointed.” Oddly enough, the Egyptian mes and the Sanskrit kri both mean “to pour,” “to anoint.” It seems that Chrestos is by no means a mere variant of Christos, with the same meaning. The Greek dictionary gives the word as meaning

“good-natured,” “kind,” as applied to men, and “propitious,” “favorable,” as applied to the gods. The distinguished German savant Lepsius gives the Egyptian *nofre* (more generally spelled by Egyptologists *nefer*) as meaning “good,” “beautiful,” “noble,” and says it is equivalent to the Greek *Chrestos*. He says that one of the titles of Osiris, *On-nofre* (*Un-nefer*) must be translated “the goodness of God made manifest,” which is probably correct.

Chrestos appears in a number of places throughout the Bible text. In I Peter 2:3 it occurs with the translation of “gracious.” In Psalm 34:8 it is rendered “good.” W. B. Smith, in *Der Vorchristliche Jesus*, holds that *chrestos* as found in the latter passage is equatable with *Christos*. Clement of Alexandria in the second century founded a serious argument on his *paronomasia* (juggling of the spelling, or punning), by which he makes the assertion that all who believed in *Chrest* (i.e., “a good man”) both are and are called *Chrestians*, that is, “good men.” And Lactantius sets forth that it is only through ignorance that people call themselves Christians instead of *Chrestians*: “who through the mistake of the ignorant (people) are accustomed to say Christ with the letter unchanged.” (Lib. IV, Chap. VII.) It is thus apparent that the Greeks were accustomed to call Christ by the name *Chrestus*, not *Christus*.

In his *The Early Days of Christianity* Canon Farrar has a footnote on the word *Chrestian* occurring in I Peter 4:16, where in the revised later MSS. the word was changed into *Christian*. The eminent churchman remarks here that “perhaps we should read the ignorant brethren’s distortion, *Chrestian*.” Most certainly we should, as the name *Christus* was not distorted into *Chrestus*, but it was the adjective and noun *Chrestus* which became distorted into *Christus* and applied to Jesus. There is much evidence that the terms *Christ* and *Christians*, spelled originally *Chrest* and *Chrestians* (*Chrestianoï* in Greek) by such writers as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius, Clement and others, were directly borrowed from the temple terminology of the pagans and meant the same thing, viz., “good,” “honest,” “gracious,” and the noun forms from the adjective. Philo uses the adjective-combination *theochrestos* (God declared), which was worked over into *theochristos* (anointed of God). There may be something in the suggestion that while *Christos* means “to live” and “to be born into a new life” (the basic meaning of “anointed”), *Chrestos* signified in the Mystery phraseology the death of the lower or personal nature in man, that part of us which must die daily, as St. Paul sees it. An interesting clue that points in the direction of a cryptic theological meaning of the sort is given by the fact, brought to our notice by chance, that the zodiacal sign of Scorpio was known in esoteric studies as *Chrestos-Meshiac*, while Leo was called *Christos-Messiah*, and that this nomenclature antedated by far the Christian era, as a representation or dramatization in the rites of Initiation in the Mysteries. It is clearly evident here that Scorpio stood

as symbol of the sinking sun of deity in its autumnal descent into matter, Leo standing for the glorified sun risen to the zenith. This is further attested by a writer of penetrating discernment of ancient structures, Ralston Skinner, who in his profound study, *Sources and Measures*, brings out a parallel to the Scorpio-Leo, Chrestos-Christos analysis. He writes:

“One (Chrestos), causing himself to go down into the pit (of Scorpio, or incarnation in the womb) for the salvation of the world; this was the sun, shorn of his golden rays and crowned with blackened ones (symbolizing this loss) as of thorns; the other was the triumphant Messiah, mounted up to the summit of the arch of heaven, personated as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.”

It is more than a shrewd guess that we have in this zodiacal characterization, which allocates Chrestos to Scorpio and Christos to Leo symbolism, the true basis of a distinctive use of the two words or spellings. We know well that the vowels in ancient Egyptian, Hebrew and other languages were of quite indifferent rating and value. There seem to have been almost no vowels in the hieroglyphics, and up to the sixth century no vowels were written in the pre-Masoretic texts of the Hebrew scriptures. It is not likely that there was any essentially marked or significant difference between Chrestos and Christos. They may have been used more or less interchangeably. But the insatiable tendency of the ancient mind to devise constructions that would graphically pictorialize basic principles, laws and truths, took form seemingly in this instance in seizing upon the two names, Chrestos and Christos, as descriptive of the two stages of incarnating and resurrected Messianic deity. This is the one inescapable theme of ancient religious writing. It would match the many other twofold designations, such as Sut-Horus, Horus the Elder-Horus the Younger, Osiris-Horus, Cain-Abel, Jacob-Esau, John-Jesus, Judas-Jesus and other pairs that represent the two opposite phases of deity, the God in matter, the Karast, and the God restored to heaven, as the Christ. Much Christian thought even makes the distinction between Jesus the man and Christ the God. It was in all probability the case that the religionists referred to Jesus as the Chrestos, or “good man” who was to be through and after his initiations and transfigurations reborn into the true Christos. The reason, then, for the indicated tendency of the Christians to change the term Chrestos over to Christos is plainly seen. It was their obvious purpose to establish the claim that their divinely prophesied and celestially born Messiah had indeed become the fully deified Savior. This should be a notable clarification and it has the subtle agreement of the zodiacal symbolism to support it.

Incidentally we have in Skinner’s data the probably true significance of the symbolic “crown of thorns” so tragically pressed down upon the brow of Jesus in the Gospels.

But it is of no little weight to establish the datum that the term Chrestoi, meaning “good people,” full of sweetness and light, was pre-extant to Christianity. This is in part certified by the statement of Canon Farrar in *The Early Days of Christianity* that “there can be little doubt that the . . . name Christian . . . was a nickname due to the wit of the Antiochians. . . . It is clear that the sacred writers avoided the name (Christians) because it was employed by their enemies (Tacitus:

Annals XV:44). It only became familiar when the virtues of Christians had shed lustre upon it. . . .”

It is quite more likely that the Christians chose the name Christian (rather than Chrestian) for the luster that the high name would shed on them than that their virtues shed luster upon the name. The name needed no extraneous illumination; the Christians (as has been seen) doubtless did. However that may be, the fundamental and crucial fact of the whole matter seems to center in Massey’s findings with reference to the derivation of the stem KRST, with whatever vowelings, from the mummy KaRaST of Egypt. In the *Agnostic Annual* he says:

“In a fifth century representation of the Madonna and child from the cemetery of St. Valentinus the new-born babe lying in a box or crib is also the Karest, or mummy-type, further identified as the divine babe of the solar mythos by the disk of the sun and the cross of the equinox at the back of the infant’s head. This doubles the proof that the Christ of the Christian catacombs was a survival of the Karest of Egypt.”

Justin Martyr uses the word Chrestotatoi, meaning “most excellent.” Thirlby alludes to the vulgar custom of the early time of calling the Christians Chrestians. Higgins ventures the supposition that “Christianoi” was likely a corruption of the more common Chrestianoï.

Lucian in a book called *Philopatris* makes a person named Triephon answer the question whether the affairs of the Christians were recorded in heaven: “All nations are there recorded, since Chrestos exists even among the Gentiles.” The Greek is here given as Chresos.

Dr. John Jones (*Lex. in voce.*) observes that this word is found in *Romans 16:18*.

Higgins comments:

“And in truth the composition of it is Chrestos logia, i.e., *Logia peri tou Chrestos*, oracles concerning Chrestus, that is, oracles which certain impostors in the Church at Rome propagated

concerning Christ, Chrisos being changed by them into Chresos, the usual name given them by the Gnostics and even by unbelievers.”

Paul in this Romans passage calls the doctrine Chresologia, and Higgins says Jesus was called Chresos by St. Peter as well as by St. Paul.

Bishop Marsh says of the passage in I Peter 2:3 that some editors give Chrestos, others Christos, “where the preceding verb *egeusas* determines the former (Chrestos) to be the true reading.” (Marsh’s *Various Readings of the New Testament*, Vol. I, p. 278.) Higgins asserts that “anointed” covers everything meant to be described by Chrestos.

In *Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?* Mead states in a footnote that the most ancient dated Christian inscription (October 1, 318, A.D.) runs: “The Lord and Savior, Jesus the Good”-- (Chrestos, not Christos). This, he says, was the legend over the door of a Marcionite Church. And the Marcionites were anti-Jewish Gnostics and did not confound their Chrestos with the Jewish Christos (Messiah). Mead says elsewhere that Chrestos was a universal term of the Mysteries for the perfected “saint,” and that Christos was more especially limited to the Jewish Messiah idea.

Mackenzie writes that

“the worship of Christ was universal at this early date . . . but the worship of Chrestos—the Good Principle—had preceded it by many centuries, and even survived the general adoption of Christianity, as shown on monuments still in existence.”

He cites examples of the occurrence of the word Chreste from the catacombs. It is notable indeed that Justin Martyr, the earliest Christian author, in his first Apology, called his co-religionists Chrestians, not Christians.

In a lecture entitled *The Name and Nature of the Christ*, Massey writes:

“In Bockh’s *Christian Inscriptions*, numbering 1,287, there is not a single instance of an earlier date than the third century wherein the name is not written Chrest or Chreist.”

There is no manifest reason why a fact as significant as this should not be widely recognized and publicized both for the sake of truth and for the sake of the principle now being so strenuously defended, that the citizens of a democracy are entitled to correct information on matters of any importance. It is also definitely worth noting that in the excerpt from Suetonius’ *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, one of the four alleged extra-Gospel his-164 torical references to Jesus, the name

claimed to be an allusion to Jesus is the word Chrestus. Commenting on this, Harry Elmer Barnes, in *The Twilight of Christianity*, justly ventures the suggestion that the word in this form gives us no assurance that the historical Jesus is the person hinted at, or indeed that it refers to a person at all.

It is frankly in the line of philological speculation, but with the apparent identity of root derivation of two words to suggest its plausibility, to point to a possible relation of the words Chrestos, Christos, with the Greek impersonal verb [chre@insert](#) flat line over the e, “it is necessary,” “it is fitting,” “it is right,” “it is good.” There is a dialectical or philosophical connection that is by no means far-fetched. All religion is concerned primarily with the relation of the soul to body in its cycles of descent and return. It is to be recalled that these cycles were known in the Greek Orphic and Platonic systems as kuklos (cyclos) anagkes, “the cycle of necessity.” Chre[@see above] is kindred to the stem of the word “cross,” and the Christ on the cross was the Christ-soul undergoing the experience of the cycle of necessity. Also the whole evolution of the Christos is, in a very real philosophical sense, under the impulsion of what may be, and often has been, called divine necessity. The soul advances to divinity, stage by stage and cycle by cycle, under the necessity of its own nature. The fact that chre@ means “it is good” as well as “it is necessary” points to the practical certitude that it is cosmically good for the soul to make the pilgrimage round the circle of the cosmos, through the gamut of all values.

The final fact of basic import in the item is that the KRS stem is cognate with the same root that yields the word “cross.” The Karest in the mummy-case was a variant figure for the Christ on the cross, the deity in the kreas or flesh. It occurred to some symbologists some time and somewhere to adopt a variant spelling to set over the descending phase of divinity in the cyclical round against the reascending phase, in which the pilgrim soul was called the Christ. The term Chrest was adopted to designate the divine soul going down into the tomb of the mortal body; the Christ was that same soul emerging out of it, “on the eastern side of heaven, like a star.” As the Book of Ecclesiastes phrases it, this is almost certainly “the conclusion of the whole matter.” In his *History of the Christian Religion to the Year 200*, Waite considers certain very old texts to have been basic for the three Synoptic 165 Gospels, and says that these source books contain no evidence as to such matters as the miraculous conception, the physical resurrection, or the miracles. He points out also that the early Apostolic Fathers, Clement of Rome, Ignatius and Polycarp make no mention of the miracles or the material resurrection. Indeed they make no reference to the Gospels or the Acts and produce no quotations from them save such as may have been picked up from extant collections of Logia. He comments on the account of Mary’s life given

in the Protevangelium, her being given by the priests to the widower Joseph, then about eighty years old, with six children by a former wife.

As to the Vulgate the Catholic Encyclopedia (XII, p. 769) states that under Popes Sixtus V and Clement VIII the Latin Vulgate, after years of revision, attained its present shape. And says Wheless, this translation, which was fiercely denounced as fearfully corrupt, was only given sanction of divine inspiration by the Council of Trent in 1546, under the curse of God against any who questioned it. The tinkering with the text came after the Council, but the latter's decree was not altered to conform to the amended rendering. Irenaeus either misquotes Mark or the text has been made to differ from his wording in one place, for he says that Mark commences with a reference to the prophetic spirit, and that his is the Gospel of Jesus Christ "as it is written in Esaias the prophet." Eusebius admits "fraud and dissimulation" in the handling of scripts.

Wheless says the proudest boast of the Church today with reference to its ex-Pagan Saint Augustine is that whenever a contradiction between his philosophy and the prescribed orthodox faith arose, "he never hesitates to subordinate his philosophy to religion, reason to faith." (Cath. Ency., II, p. 86.) Augustine himself flaunts his mental servitude when he says: "I would not believe the Gospels to be true unless the authority of the Catholic Church constrained me." Gibbon adduces much reliable authority to indicate that even in such a matter of historical record as the number of their sectaries martyred in the persecutions under the several Roman Emperors, the Christians have outrageously falsified the figures. Gibbon's pages should be read more generally, so that a saner view might be taken of this item of Christian claims, which have been grossly overstated to win the sympathy which martyrdom arouses.

Miss Holbrook asserts that "Of the 150,000 various readings which Griesbach found in the manuscripts of the New Testament, probably 149,500 were additions and interpolations. One of the Greek manuscripts called 'Codex Beza' or 'Cambridge Manuscript,' is chiefly remarkable for its bold and extensive interpolations, amounting to some six hundred in the Acts alone."

Gibbon has testified to the "vulgar forgery" of the insertion of the two admittedly spurious passages regarding Christos in the text of Josephus.

Alexander Wilder (Article on Evolution) says that

"such men as Irenaeus, Epiphanius and Eusebius have transmitted to posterity a reputation for such untruth and dishonest practices that the heart sickens at the story of the crimes of that period." A commentator adds: "the more so, since the whole Christian

scheme rests upon their sayings.” It is quite possible—and lamentably so—that Massey’s bitter words are entirely sane and true, that the “Christian scheme (as it is aptly called) in the New Testament is a fraud, founded on a fable in the Old.” There is a letter written by one of the most respected Fathers of the Church, St. Gregory of Nazianzen to Jerome, which reveals in pretty clear light the early Church’s policy of deception. Gregory wrote to his friend and confidant, Jerome, as follows:

“Nothing can impose better on the people than verbiage; the less they understand, the more they admire. Our Fathers and Doctors have often said, not what they thought, but what circumstances and necessity forced them to.” Ominous indeed is Massey’s serious indictment of Christianity’s early duplicity in one of his lectures:

“And when Eusebius recorded his memorable boast that he had virtually made ‘all square’ for the Christians, it was an ominous announcement of what had been done to keep out of sight the mythical and mystical rootage of historic Christianity.

The Gnostics had been muzzled and their extant evidence as far as possible masked. He and his co-conspirators had done their worst in destroying documents and effacing the tell-tale records of the past, to prevent the future from learning what the bygone ages could have said directly for themselves. They made dumb all Pagan voices that would have cried aloud their testimony against the

unparalleled imposture then being perfected in Rome. They had almost reduced the first four centuries to silence on all matters of the most vital importance for any proper understanding of the true origins of the Christian superstition. The mythos having been at last published as a human history, everything else was suppressed or forced to support the fraud.”

A particularly sharp critic and accuser of Christianity is Alan Upward in *The Divine Mystery*. He states that in the interests of God and heaven “the theologians have laid their ban on all the sciences in turn, on the lore of the stars, of the rocks, of the atoms, of the frame of man, of his mind, of the Hebrew language and history, of Eastern history, of the history of life.” It must be confessed there is much gravamen in this indictment. A religion claiming to be the supremely true one should assuredly have possessed the basic data and correct knowledge which would have enabled it to pronounce unerringly upon every department of truth, in every branch of science. Yet

no organic system has ever been found to be so atrociously in error in every arena of knowledge. Outside its own chamber-room of hypnotized faith it has stood for long periods as the enemy of truth in every empirical realm. Truth has had to batter its way through the serried array of ecclesiastical fanaticism, ignorance and stubborn bigotry over long centuries. Truth has never been its chief and primary concern or objective. Instead, it has aimed at psychologization and regimentation of the masses, and to this end it has ruthlessly swept aside all the formulations of intelligence which would have hindered the easy achievement of its goal. Besides fighting every science it has wrecked the splendid temple of ancient mythology and closed the doors of the schools of esoteric truth, and kept them closed to this day. It is with regret that one has to agree with Upward in his stinging accusation against the religion of one's childhood: "Falsehood is found in every religion, but only in the Catholic Christianity is it the foundation of religion." And Upward points to the fact that since with each fresh discovery of truth in scientific fields the cry goes up all over Christendom that science has uprooted the bases of religion, this is sure evidence that a religion resting so far off the center of verihood that every new factual discovery shakes it to its fall, can not be a true or safe religion. A faith that hangs constantly so precariously that the snapping of a single strand in the rope will send it crashing, can not be stabilized in truth.

Chapter VII THROES OF A BAD CONSCIENCE

It is accounted an evil cause that must support itself by violence and destruction. Unhappily this is the case with Christianity after the third century. Repressed and harassed for about three centuries by popular disapproval and the regnant power, when at last it came into favor and security and a measure of power of its own, the Church of Christ at once let loose the fury of its own virulent passion against every group that would not bend to its narrow and fanatical orthodoxy. It then began its long and almost uninterrupted career of persecution, to its eternal infamy. Because they have been forgotten and largely denied, the interests of truth call for a brief restatement of the facts of ecclesiastical vandalism. It is an integral part of the case here advocated, along with the literary forgeries, tampering with sacred texts and the vitiation of the ancient wisdom on every hand.

Massey well outlines the drift of things from the time that ignorance overwhelmed the Christian movement, cast out the uncomprehended Gnosis, and then resorted to measures of violence to cut all links of connection between their doctrines and antecedent pagan religions. Innocent at first of any knowledge of the derivation of their doctrines from reviled sources in heathenism, great was the surprise and resentment of the Christian devotees when little by little evidence leaked out of the startling and complete identities of their ideas and forms with the material of despised former cults. Hotly indignant, the astonished and desperate votaries of the new faith had to find some way to blot out the tell-tale evidences. So the orgy of destruction set in. There are instances close at hand in our own day to enforce upon our minds the futility and the despicableness of the gesture of burning hated books and exiling their authors. Some of this ignominy can be passed back upon the Christian partisans of the early centuries, when the hot fury of fanatical zeal set fire to libraries of the most precious and irreplaceable books in the world. A fact so well known in history as the burning of the Alexandrian library by Christian mobs need not be dilated upon here. It has not, however, been deeply enough stamped upon general intelligence that this vandal deed was probably the enabling cause of the incidence of fifteen centuries of the Dark Ages, and the postponement of the Renaissance to the latter half of that period. The destruction of a library then meant infinitely more than it would mean today, printing not being extant at the time. It is surely not an unfounded claim to say that the flames of those burning books threw not a light but a murky lurid smoke and smudge over the mind of medieval Europe. The evil consequences are still running their course. The destruction of the Alexandrian library is the main indictment in the bill of vandalism, but there are others not so well known. The severe charge is

made by Higgins (Anac., p. 564) that many of the early Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries in their “fanatical excitement” became Carmelite monks and founded a secret corresponding society, meeting mostly at night. (Night meetings violated Roman law and were in large measure the reason for the persecutions.) The heads of this order, says Higgins, had enough power to correct or destroy at pleasure any Gospel in the world not preserved by the “heretics.” This, he avers, is the reason why we have no MSS. older than those of the sixth century. This order’s detestation of the “heathen” books was of the deepest virulence, and the fires of their hatred turned into physical flames first at Antioch, as described in Acts, and, says Higgins, were repeatedly rekindled by a succession of councils up to the last canon of the Council of Trent against heathen learning. They sequestered many books for their later destruction. “Here we have the cause, and almost the sole cause, which effected the darkness of the world for many generations.” Higgins relates (p. 565) that St. Gregory is said by John of Salisbury to have burnt the imperial library of the Apollo. (Forsythe’s Travels, p. 134.) The Victor Tunensis, already mentioned, was, according to Higgins and Lardner, the agent of considerable destruction of Gospels about the sixth century, and probably by order of the Emperor Anastasius at Constantinople. Some twenty-four volumes of the works of the great Gnostic philosopher Basilides,--extolled so highly by Clement of Alexandria--his splendid Interpretations Upon the Gospels, were all burned by order of the Church, Eusebius tells us. These works alone might have 170 changed the course of Western history into pleasanter channels than those of bigotry and slaughter. Several writers affirm that, what with generations of the most active Church Fathers working assiduously at the destruction of old documents and the preparation of new passages to be interpolated in those which happened to survive, there remains of the noble Gnostic literature, the legitimate offspring of the genuine archaic wisdom, nothing but the Pistis Sophia and some few scattered fragments, precious, however, for the hints they give of the mighty treasure lost.

Mead is authority for the reported burning of the manuscripts of French Rabbis by the Inquisition. He says that for one thousand years the Christian authorities hurled all kinds of bulls, anathemas and edicts of confiscation and conflagration against the Talmud. He cites, too, the vandal acts of the fanatical Crusaders, who left smoldering piles of Hebrew scrolls behind them in their path of blood and fire. Official burnings of Hebrew books began at Montpellier in 1233, where a Jew, an Anti-Maimonist, persuaded the Dominicans and Franciscans of the Inquisition, likely unaware of the purely internal conflict between exotericism and esotericism in Jewry, to commit to the flames all the works of Maimonides. In the same year at Paris some twelve thousand volumes of the Talmud were burned, and in 1244 eighteen thousand various works were fed to the flames.

The story of the destruction, not only of books, but of cities, monasteries and temples, of the early pre-Christian Gaelic civilization in Britain, Ireland, Brittany and Gaul, is a sorry narrative of Christian fury. A Christian mob destroyed the city of Bibractis in 389 in Gaul, and Alesia was destroyed before that. Bibractis had a sacred college of the Druids with forty thousand students, giving courses in philosophy, literature, grammar, jurisprudence, medicine, astrology, architecture and esoteric religion. Arles, founded 2000 years before Christ, was sacked in 270 A.D.

A statement in Westrop and Wake's *Phallism in Ancient Religions* charges Cardinal Ximenes with having burned the old Arabic manuscripts. And Draper shows that the same Ximenes "delivered to the flames in the squares of Granada eighty thousand Arabic manuscripts, among them translations of the classical authors." Wilder states that thirty-six volumes written by Porphyry were destroyed by the Fathers.

A candid and unbiased witness is Edward Carpenter, English philosopher, who, in *Pagan and Christian Creeds* (p. 204), speaks bluntly of Christian practices:

"The Christian writers, as time went on, not only introduced new doctrines, legends, miracles and so forth—most of which we can trace to antecedent pagan sources—but they took pains to destroy the pagan records and so obliterate the evidence of their own dishonesty."

J.M. Robertson (*Pagan Christs*, p. 325) writes that of certain books mentioned "every one of these has been destroyed by the care of the Church." The treatise of Firmicus has been mutilated at a passage where he has accused the Christians of following Mithraic usages.

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The invidious task of mustering a large body of such evidence as this would seem to have been well enough performed with what has been given. But another sizable segment of data remains to be put on record, not at all with the mere aim of heaping disrepute on the dominant religion of the West, but for the purpose of adding convincing reality to the claims here advanced that the Christian system early suffered such deterioration as to make both possible and understandable the catastrophic changes alleged herein. The first reaction on the part of non-studious folks in the Christian faith will undoubtedly be the feeling that a group of people so sanctified by piety and holy faith as the early Christians are commonly reputed to have been, could not have perpetrated the crimes against intelligence and righteousness which this work lays at their door. It remains to be shown, then, that the picture of elevated holiness traditionally painted of the primitive Christians has been colored with unduly bright hues. On the side of philosophy

and religion as an intellectual enterprise Mead has most accurately and faithfully, as well as without undue bias, presented the true picture of the situation in primitive Christianity. In his *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* he analyzes the effect of the sudden “throwing open” of the secret esoteric wisdom to the untutored populace, and describes the effect of the blinding new light on the masses. He asserts that the adherents of the new religion professed to “throw open everything” to common view, and the procedure left the unprepared rabble dazed by a sudden flashing of light they could not comprehend. The upshot was that they were thrown into a fever of excitement and emotional frenzy, similar in kind, though greater in degree, to the ferment created by every other marked preaching of new and sensational doctrines in religion. The sage custodians of deep spiritual truth were well instructed and supported by astute knowledge of human nature in their policy of esoteric secrecy. They had been well counseled to this posture by witnessing the inordinate emotional upheaval set in ferment by every untimely release of the dynamic psychological potency of great truths imperfectly comprehended and unsteadied by knowledge. The phenomenon is so glaringly exemplified before our eyes in this day that Mead’s words should strike us with singular force:

“The ‘many’ had begun to play with psychic and spiritual forces let loose from the Mysteries, and the ‘many’ went mad for a time and have not yet regained their sanity.”

The bold affirmation is here made that this comes closer to being the true analysis of the motivation and expression of the forces that made Christianity the religion it was and gave it its distinctive character and direction than any other estimate advanced over the centuries. We have before us at this present so exactly similar a situation in the ferment of extreme and fanatical ideologies exhibited by a host of modern “spiritual” cults of many varieties that there should be little difficulty in our seeing the obvious correctness of Mead’s analysis. It is the very charge resounding from hundreds of pulpits today, that thousands of semi-intelligent people are playing with psychic, “spiritual” and “occult” forces which, if coaxed into untimely function without competent philosophical acumen, can prove most perilous to sanity and balance. This can be seen and possibly readily admitted by the clergy. What the clergy will not so readily admit, however, is that its own primitive Christianity (after the fatal third century, at any rate) was as errant, wild and misguided a fanaticism as that of the contemporary cults. It was not so as long as it held on to the philosophy and the esoteric Gnosis of the precedent Mysteries. It became such the moment it destroyed the Mysteries, let down the disciplinary safeguards and “threw open everything” sacred and profound to the impious hands of the gullible masses. The idiotic fervor of piety unbalanced by the intelligence requisite to hold it in line with restraint, swept Christianity out of the channels of

sanity into the maelstrom of one of the most rabid of all religious ferments in history, and from that into currents that have borne it forward along courses of violence, bigotry and inhumanity almost beyond belief.

In the same work Mead portrays the situation that ensues when a strong ferment brews among the populace, and a new order is instituted following the sweeping away of old barriers. This, too, can have direct relevance and instruction for the world today. He says the new order gives rise at the same time to a wild intolerance, a glorification of ignorance, a wholesale condemnation of intelligent conservatism, and generally causes a social upheaval which is taken to be the divine expression of a new freedom. Always the peculiar mark of this new freedom is that it shortly becomes as dogmatic as the old oppression. Every one of these stages was manifest in the popular revolt against the conservative aristocracy of intellect in religion which from the third century swept Christianity into the role and spirit of an anti-cultural faith. Such would inevitably be the case when the predominantly mystical and emotional types of religion gain the field against the predominantly intellectual and philosophical strains. Early Gnostic and Pauline Greek Christianity were of the latter strain; orthodox Christianity, mostly Petrine after the third century, was of the former type. This is primarily all that is required as datum to qualify a perfectly clear and correct evaluation of the genius of the movement that founded Christianity. With this view as guide and gauge, there should now be made a thorough re-study of the genesis of Christianity. It would be a most illuminating revelation of what perils are generated the moment reason yields the ground to faith in religion, when piety is not balanced by rational elements, or, in broad sense, when philosophy gives place to religion. Mead ends his treatment of the point with the epigrammatic threnody, "Greek rationalism was lost; symbolism was lost." Indicating the truth of both the fact and its significance may be cited Tertullian's brief announcement that "when one has once believed, search should cease."

On the State of the Church is the title of a treatise written by St. Cyprian just before the Decian persecution. He admits in it that "there was no true devotion in the priests" . . . that the simple were deluded and the brethren circumvented by craft and fraud. Also he declares that great numbers of the Bishops were eager only to heap up money, to seize people's lands by treachery and fraud and to increase their stock by exorbitant usury. (Quoted by Middleton, Free Inquiry.)

The Catholic Encyclopedia (I, p. 555) may be cited to the effect that even in the fourth century St. John Chrysostom testifies to the decline in fervor in the Christian family and contends that it was no longer possible for children to obtain proper religious and moral training in their

own homes. The Encyclopedia adds at another place (VIII, p. 426): “The Lateran was spoken of as a brothel and the moral corruption of Rome became the subject of general odium.” Practically in every century nearly every large city in Christendom has been charged with harboring vice and moral and political corruption till the odium mounted to scandal. Yet alongside of this record and its own admissions of rottenness in Christian lands and even in the Church itself, this authority (III, p. 34) boasts that “the wonderful efficacy displayed by the religion of Christ in purifying the morals of Europe has no parallel.” Vaunting that “the Church was the guide of the western nations from the close of the seventh century to the beginning of the sixteenth,” it can be quoted with a string of admissions such as that on VII, p. 387:--“At the beginning of the Reformation the condition of the clergy and consequently of the people was a very sad one . . . the unfortunate state of the clergy . . . their corrupt morals”—that openly belie the validity of the claim. It itself pronounces the Middle Ages, “of all human epochs, an age of terrible corruption and social decadence.” “From the fourth century onward . . . the Agapae gave rise to flagrant and intolerable abuses.” It describes the Agapetae as virgins who consecrated themselves to God with a vow of chastity and associated with laymen who like themselves had taken a vow of chastity. “It resulted in abuses and scandals.” Jerome arraigns Syrian monks for living in cities with Christian virgins. These Agapetae are sometimes confounded with the Subintroductae or women who lived with clerics without marriage, says the Encyclopedia (I, p. 202).

Even Eusebius refuses to record the dissensions and follies which were rife among the many factions before the Diocletian persecution (Eccl. Hist., Bk. 8, Ch. 2). He delineates the unshepherdly character of the shepherds of flocks, “condemned by divine justice as unworthy of such a charge,” their ambitious aspirations for office and the injudicious and unlawful ordinations that take place, the divisions among the confessors themselves, the great schisms industriously fomented by factions, heaping affliction upon affliction,--“all these I have resolved to pass by.”

Catholic Encyclopedia says (VI, p. 793) that at the time of Gregory VII’s elevation to the papacy “the Christian world was in a deplorable condition.” Doctrinal controversy waxed bitter to the point at times of physical combat, especially, says the Encyclopedia (I, p. 191), in North Africa. “One act of violence followed another and begot new conflicts. . . . Crimes of all kinds made Africa one of the most wretched provinces in the world.” Lundy says that the Arian and orthodox factions fought in the streets and in the churches with such fierce animosity that on one occasion one hundred and thirty-seven dead bodies were found in one of the basilicas (Animianus Marcellinus, lib. XXVII, iii, p. 392). Doctrinal controversy waxed so fierce that it gave rise to the phrase “Odium Theologicum” expressed by one writer in the sentence, “Hell hath no fury like an offended saint.”

This had been previously matched by the Emperor Julian's characterization: "There is no wild beast like an angry theologian."

The Encyclopedia portrays elaborately the "general debasement" which the Church shared with the times. It was worst in the tenth century. Simony and clerical incontinence were the two great evils descanted upon. "Many had lost all sense of Christian ideals." Says the Encyclopedia, with more truth than it suspected, no doubt, "the accumulated wisdom of the past was in danger of perishing." In controversion of the general claim of the Church that in the night of the Dark Ages it was the monasteries and cloisters of Christianity that preserved the ancient classics, we may cite Wheless' sentence: "We shall see that every scrap of Greek and Latin learning which, after twelve centuries, slowly filtered into Christendom, came from the hated Arabs, through the more hated Jews, after Christian contact with civilization through the Crusades." And the Encyclopedia testifies to the fact of sinister force in admitting that even when the development of Scholasticism brought the revival of Greek philosophy, particularly that of Aristotle, "it also meant that philosophy was now to serve the cause of Christian truth." The same force of obscurantism that ten or twelve centuries earlier had blotted out the world's accumulated spiritual light was now upon its return ready to diffract the pure rays of that light into colors of its own composition by passing them through the medium of that dark glass of perpetuated dogmatism and entrenched ignorance that had extinguished it in the first instance. The same obfuscation of intellect that had put out the light a thousand years before was still at hand to distort its pure gleam when it shone again. The Encyclopedia speaks (XII, p. 765) of "a revival of learning as soon as the West was capable of it"—after being under Christian tutelage for a thousand years.

At a moment when the conscience of cultured people everywhere is horrified at the savage atrocities of a nation diabolically committed to violence, it might be well to remind those on the side of Christian resentment against "pagan" barbarity, that when the Christian Crusaders entered Jerusalem from all sides on July 15, 1099, they slew its inhabitants regardless of age or sex, while Saladin committed no act of outrage.

J. E. Ellam, in his *Buddhism and Modern Thought* (p. 140), puts in brief compass and strong terms the degradation of Europe under Christianity:

"Yet the moral level of Europe was lower than that of any savages of whom we have record. Its barbarities and cruelties, its vices and brutality, would have scandalized even Dahomey and Benin. Cyril of Alexandria has a lurid description of the vices even of his own followers. Augustine says much the same of 'the faithful' in Roman Africa. Silvianus, a priest of the fifth century, writes:

‘Besides a very few who avoid evil, what is almost the whole body of Christians but a sink of iniquity? How many in the Church will you find that are not drunkards, or adulterers, or fornicators, or gamblers, or robbers, or murderers,--or all together?’” (Silvanus: On the Providence of God, III, 9.) Lundy (Monumental Christianity, p. 353) speaks of the licentiousness in connection with the Agapae or “love-feasts” held in the Christian congregations—

“When in the fourth century . . . the Church, from the necessity of the case, substituted these Agapae for some of the pagan festivities the abuse became so great that the Council of Laodicea forbade their celebration altogether in the churches.” Its Canon XXVIII enacts that “it is not permitted to hold love-feasts, as they are called, in the Lord’s houses, or in church assemblies, nor to eat and to spread couches in the house of the Lord.” Lundy states, however, that they were such a scandal to the Christian name by reason of the drunkenness and licentiousness practiced that entire suppression was the final resort.

“But so popular were these festivals among the poor and ignorant classes of the Christian community, such a strong hold had they obtained in their hearts and lives that it was an exceeding difficult matter to suppress them.” They could still be held in private homes and in cemeteries “and were so held for three centuries longer.” They were not suppressed until the seventh century, when the Trullian or Quinisext Council took them in hand. Paulinus, the good Bishop of Nola, laments that these festivities were carried on during the entire night.

“How I wish,” he says in the Ninth Hymn to Felix, “that their joys would assume a more sober character; that they would not mix their cups on holy ground. Yet I think we must not be too severe on the pleasures of their little feasts: for error creeps into unlearned minds; and their simplicity, unconscious of the great fault they commit, verges on piety, supposing that the saints are gratified by the wine poured upon their tombs.” The good Bishop’s sad confession that error creeps into unlearned minds is one of the bluntest massive truths confronting humanity. It is also one of the most vital factors involved in the entire history of the Christian religion. Admitted by everybody, it would seem as if, therefore, the very first article in the constitution of a great religion would be to spread honest learning as widely and as deeply as possible.

Lundy sententiously summarizes the situation in the Church, saying (p. 107) that “Christian doctrine, Christian morals and Christian art degenerated together, and it is called development!” So he can say: “All this is but a repetition of the degeneracy and the debasement of the old Patriarchal faith into Pagan idolatry: of simple truths, as taught by symbols perverted into falsehood by images and idols.”

It is hardly necessary to inject the correction of his last statement, that it was not the images and idols that perverted truth, but the failure to go behind those symbols to the sublime meaning now known to be covered by them.

Mead assembles evidence to indicate that the lasciviousness of the Agapae can not be charged against people of such refinement and philosophical acumen as the Gnostics, though Clement does bring the charge against them; but thinks it probable that some cults calling themselves Christians did confuse the Agapae and love-feasts of the times with the orgies and feasts of the ignorant populace. "The Pagans brought these accusations against the Christians, and the Christian sects against one another." The volume of accusation and supporting data could be heaped up to hundreds of pages. The modest quantity, gathered in desultory reading, here presented is sufficient to carry home the point that flagrant deterioration had taken hold of the Christian movement on a vast scale, and, since things have their causes, something must have occurred in the movement that for two and a half to three centuries manifested high intelligence and moral purity to reduce it so suddenly to corruption and barbarity. This cause, it is contended, as far as it was an influence detached from exterior economic, political and social conditions, was the loss of the esoteric wisdom, philosophical culture and the whole intellectual side of religion, induced by and further inducing the popular submergence of minority intelligence by majority ignorance. The direct relevance to our theme of this fateful shift from philosophical rationalism to massive irrational pietism is found in the reflection that such a vast transformation in outward life and thought was the evidence of another equally drastic change in basic understanding. The larger and more manifest changes in outward life must spring from significant changes in inner consciousness. That inner change was in major part just that shift from symbolic and allegorical esotericism over to historical literalism, the chief item of which was the mistaking of the Christos for a man of flesh.

As this work is not an attack on Christianity, it must be emphasized that the data here presented reflecting adversely on the name and record of that religion have been given purely for the sake of buttressing the leading argument with the support it gains from its setting in a true, instead of a warped, view of past history. The argument would lose some of its legitimate force if permitted to stand in the poorer light of a history that has been, at any rate to common intelligence, grossly distorted by pious misinterpretation, suppression of honest facts, vandalism and juggling of every sort. The aim has been a purely academic or dialectic one, to show that the loss of high knowledge, the historization of myths and dramas, the literalization of the Gospels, the conversion of the personae of the great universal 179 ritual into living persons, the lethal sweep of

ignorance and the ensuing degradation and debasement of the whole movement from the interior heat of theological doctrine clear out to the periphery of moral social conduct, were all wholly necessary and consistent elements of the one completed picture. If history can not be brought into court to support a thesis, point a moral or furnish evidence in straightforward truth-seeking, it is studied to little good purpose. We therefore cite the portions of history that bear with very direct cogency upon the great question under investigation.

Chapter VIII **SUBLIME MYTH MAKES GROTESQUE HISTORY**

No single volume could undertake the full task of establishing the fact of the conversion of allegory, myth and drama into "history," but the case has been presented in outline with enough evidence to render it a substantial claim. The stage is now ready for the introduction of the main evidence to validate the further claim that the events taken for the alleged historical narrative of Old and New Testament literature are not and never were occurrences on the plane of objective reality. The case now proceeds directly to the submission of the testimony which proves that the whole web of Gospel history was woven by ignorant assumption out of the traditional material of the rite and the myth. It is quite possible that with so much of the evidence destroyed, full and final "proof" of the actual change of meaning can never be presented, or that material will never be found that will pin the offense on the actual culprits or show them in the actual work of making the change. There were no lie-detectors, wall-recorders or hidden cameras available to catch the manipulators at work. The change came first in the minds of the theologians and the people and only later carried out its implications in the alteration of texts and the "correction" of manuscripts. But in the pages ahead so much of the evidence that may be considered as "proof" of the general change on this score will be adduced as the scope of the volume will permit. Again a great quantity is available, and that from rather haphazard reading. A systematic search would uncover whole volumes more. Again much of the data is furnished by Massey and Higgins. It may be claimed that too much reliance is being placed upon the findings of these two delvers into the past, and that their views are prejudiced. We demur to the objection. Both gave their lives to extensive research in the field of ancient religion, both were honest in appraising the value of material and both were to the highest degree sincere in their single aim of finding what was the truth. If they were eventually disposed to a sharply critical 181 view of Christianity, it came directly as the result of what they discovered in the history of that religion. Their hostility was engendered by the force of repellent facts brought to light in their studies, and was not the operation of a merely sectarian prejudice. No more than the present writer did they begin their investigations with a preconceived enmity to Christianity. They probably held no positive enmity against it at any time; they simply wished the world to know the actual truth about it and its history. At any rate they align their judgments and conclusions with the facts and the evidence, and their work must be judged on the basis of its agreement with the data and its competence to meet the demands of exegetical proof, as that of any other scholars. Their testimony is presented here because they saw with clearest vision and described with singular lucidity the pertinent truth in scores of situations in which a clear view has never been had before. A subsidiary aim of this study is to vindicate in the main their

important findings in their field. This aim would include also Thomas Taylor in the field of Greek translation and exegesis. It seems best to begin with what might be generally called circumstantial evidence, and then proceed to more redoubtable testimony. Every item submitted will bear more or less directly upon the case for the non-historicity of the Gospels and their characters.

It is not necessarily true that the workability of a thesis proves its correctness. But if the thesis for the historicity of Jesus piles up great difficulties and obstacles in the way of its acceptance, and that for the non-historicity clears them away, it is a major presumptive evidence that the successful and consistently workable thesis is the correct one. This broad observation will serve to introduce a series of depositions from our scholar Gerald Massey, which, at the risk of some prolixity, it seems eminently desirable to array here. They are of themselves matter of intrinsic value and bear down on our case with most pointed appositeness. Almost alone of Egyptologists this student discerned the chief elements in the great significance of Egypt's lore of wisdom, and therefore had at his service a key by which he could penetrate more deeply into the heart of the Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew systems of religion. His pronouncements and judgments are deemed of especial value because they publish vital truths missed by all the other investigators of the literature of old.

Massey portrays the Egyptian origin and background of the Christian theology and finds it non-historical (*The Natural Genesis*, I, p. 479):

“Egypt labored at the portrait [of the Christ] for thousands of years before the Greeks added their finishing touches to the type of the ever-youthful solar god. It was Egypt that first made the statue live with her own life and humanized her ideal of the divine. Here was the legend of supreme pity and self-sacrifice so often told of the canonical Christ. She related how the god did leave the courts of heaven and come down as a little child, the infant Horus, born of the Virgin, through whom he took flesh, or descended into matter, ‘crossed the earth as a substitute’ (*Ritual*, Ch. xlviii), descended into Hades as vivifier of the dead, their vicarious justifier and redeemer, the first fruits and leader of the resurrection into eternal life. The Christian legends were first related of Horus or Osiris, who was the embodiment of divine goodness, wisdom, truth and purity; who personated ideal perfection in each sphere of manifestation and every phase of power. This was the greatest hero that ever lived in the mind of man—not in the flesh—to influence with transforming force; the only hero to whom the miracles were natural because he was not human. “The so-called miracles of Jesus were not only impossible on human grounds; they are historically impossible because they were pre-extant as mythical representations which were made on grounds that were

entirely non-human, in the drama of the Mysteries that was as non-historical as the Christmas pantomime. The miracles ascribed to Jesus on earth had been previously assigned to Iusa, the divine healer, who was non-historical in the pre-Christian religion. Horus, whose other name is Jesus, is the performer of ‘miracles’ which are repeated in the Gospels, and which were first performed as mysteries in the divine nether world. But if Horus or Iusa be made human on earth, as a Jew in Judea, we are suddenly hemmed in by the miraculous at the center of a maze with nothing antecedent for a clue; no path that leads to the heart of the mystery and no visible means of exit therefrom. With the introduction of the human personage on mundane ground, the mythical inevitably becomes the miraculous; you cannot have history without it; thus the history was founded on the miracles, which were perversions of the mythology that was provably pre-extant.”

This is a clear and succinct picture of the truth on the point—except, as has been indicated in our previous work, *The Lost Light*, that Massey erred in the matter of the mislocation of the nether world, or underworld, of mythology, the Amenta of Egyptian texts. He thought that the Christians erred in mistaking the “earth” of Amenta for this mundane realm and in transplanting the spiritual Christos from this celestial “earth” to the real earth, thereby euhemerizing and falsely historicizing him. In aiming to correct their arrant blunder, he keeps the Christos entirely away from earth, and applies the Christly legend to the “other earth” of Amenta, located somewhere in spiritual spheres. Thus, while Massey retains the Christos as a spiritual entity only, or an element of consciousness, which is assuredly his true character, he in turn errs by keeping him away from earth and the life of man in his supposititious “other earth” of Amenta. The Christos is a real entity and he is spiritual in nature, but he is on earth and in man, yet neither a man on earth (the Christian mistake), nor a spirit in any other earth than this only one we know (Massey’s error). *The Lost Light* has at great length established the truth that Amenta, the underworld of mythology, Hades, is this good earth, where the Christos, a principle and not a man, but at the same time the god in man, performs all the miracles that, as Massey truly represents, were typical allegories in the myth, but were made into miracles in the Gospels when ignorance dragged symbology over into “history.” To sum up, the Christians said the Christ was a man on earth in history. Massey says that the Christ was not a man at all, nor was he on earth or in history. He was, instead, the Christ in man, who after death descended into the gloomy Amenta as a shade, and there worked the miracles of healing and implemented the judgment and the resurrection. Massey’s mistake was in saying he was not on earth. He was on earth, operating during the life, not after the death, of men, only not as a man, but as a principle of righteousness, in man. The previous work has demonstrated that the ancient theologists called this life “death” (the death of the soul, buried in

sense), called mortals “the dead,” and by their name Amenta they designated no other region than this nether world which we know as earth. The reorientation of the meanings of these three or four names is pretty nearly the whole clue to the proper interpretation of the scriptures of antiquity. It will be necessary to keep this correction in mind in reading further cullings from Massey’s works. It vitiates his main conclusions, but does not destroy the value of his findings with regard to the conversion of myth into history. A great enlightenment floods the mind from the vast truth couched in the following brief passage from his great work, *Ancient Egypt, The Light of the World* (p. 77):

“When it is conclusively proved that the Christian miracles are nothing more than the pagan mode of symbolical representation literalized, there is no longer any question of contravening, or breaking, or even challenging any well-known laws of nature. The discussion as to the probability or possibility of miracle on the old grounds of belief and doubt it closed forever.” This indeed is a welcome closure of debate, for few things have so sorely perplexed the reasoning mind and taxed the religious faith of mankind as the alleged “miracles” of Jesus in the Gospels. Whatever militates to break man’s utter faith in and reliance upon the invariability of natural law, by so much disintegrates his position of stability in the world, undermines his bases of constancy in conduct and corrodes his entire ground of moral conscience. It tends to reduce his cosmos to a chaos, if the laws of life can be abrogated at any time by a fiat of arbitrary whimsicality, however “good.” The philosopher David Hume has written a treatise that lays forever the ghost of “miracles” with impregnable logic: if an event occurs it does so by and through the operation of law and not in contravention of it. There can be no such thing as a “miracle” of the kind believed in by common uncritical religious faith.” The mind of man will be doubly safeguarded against invasion from the side of irrationalism if Massey’s golden theological discovery is correct,—that the miracles are only literalized spiritual myths, and never objectively happened. It is the natural law that works no end of miracles, that is, things to make man wonder, such as the rain, the snow, the dew, fire, water, green leaf, bud, flower, seed, death and life from death ever renewed. The Christian introduction of the cult of the “supernatural” into current untutored thought has come closer to unsettling the normal sanity of the world mind and making gullible fools out of millions than any other influence known to history. What the “miracles”—before they were historicized—meant to ancient sapiency was just the truly wonder-working power of the Christ in man to transfigure mortal life and the very bodies of mortals on earth with divine health and beauty. And this knowledge and this conception is worth infinitely more than the physical “healing” by a touch from outside having nothing to do with the beneficiary’s own deserts or his own inner divinity, and therefore meaningless. The “healing” of five thousand men and women on any hillside or lakeside in

Palestine two thousand years ago is an event of no significance compared with the universal understanding of the immanent Christ's power to heal all men by his divine ferment. Religion badly needs a totally new orientation to this reputed matter of "healing." If people can for long periods violate the laws of life, particularly those connected with food and diet, become gravely ill and then run to a healer or a healing philosophy and be "made whole" by alleged divine power without reference to their demerit or their deserts under the law of life and in contravention of evolutionary justice, chaos will be introduced into the counsels of creation. In fact, the popular religious notions that have made "healing" almost the prime credential of the authenticity of any religious movement, is itself almost wholly grounded on a contempt for natural law. This has gone so far in modern "spiritual" cultism that one strong group has flaunted as one of its banners the outright shibboleth that "the laws of nature are the vaporings of mortal mind." It must basically be assumed that if "spiritual law" in some measure transcends natural law, it does so by fulfilling and consummating it, not by negating it. It is unquestionable that spiritual law bends natural forces to its purposes, as man uses a machine or soul uses body; but it does not disregard the natural energies which it uses any more than the user can disregard the laws of his machine or his body. In this field the vogue of "miracles" has wrought havoc with general sanity. Massey's fine discernment that saw first and clearly in modern times that the "miracles" of "Jesus" were Egyptian mythical rescripts falsely turned into "history," at one stroke robs the Gospel "wonders" of their fictitious value, while restoring to us their real value as dramatic mysteries, and his work in this item puts us under vast obligation to him and to the integrity of his mind and motive. It is this obligation that urges the inclusion of so much of his material in this work. He writes that no Egyptologist has ever dreamed that the Ritual—the Book of the Dead—still exists in Christian formulations, under the disguise of both the Gnostic and the canonical Gospels, or that it was the fountain-head of all the books of wisdom claimed to be divine. But no initiate in the Osirian Mysteries could possibly have rested his hope of salvation "on the Galilean line of glory," which made individual in one "man" what was spiritually attainable by all. Egypt possessed the knowledge that a kingly power of consciousness had become a voluntary immolation on the altar of sense and fleshly body, in a passion of divinest pity became incarnate, put itself "under the law" of sin and "death" for the salvation of the world; but this knowledge did not run out in futile nonsense in the belief that God had manifested once for all as a historic personality. The same legend of divine sons sacrificing their heavenly birthright for humankind was repeated in many lands with a change of name for the empyreal sufferer, but none of those initiated in the esoteric wisdom ever looked upon Iusa, or Horus, Jesus, Tammuz, Krishna, Buddha, Witoba, Marduk, Mithra, Sabazius, Adonis or any other

of the many Saviors as historical in personality, “for the simple reason that they had been more truly taught.” (Massey.)

The first “gospel” of the Christians “began with a collection of Sayings of Jesus, fatuously supposed to have been a historical teacher of that name,” Massey avers. In some “New Sayings of Jesus” found at Oxyrhynchus, utterances of “Jesus” paralleling those found in the Ritual of remote Egyptian times are to be read.

In a lecture entitled *The Logia of the Lord, or Prehistoric Sayings Ascribed to Jesus the Christ*, Massey sets forth many vital data. Never, he says, were mortals more perplexed, bewildered and taken aback than were the Christians of the second, third and fourth centuries, who had started their own new beginning, warranted to be solely historic, and then found that an apparition of their faith was following them one way and meeting them in another. This “double” of their faith was obviously not founded on their alleged facts which stood as the base of their original religion, but were ages earlier in the world. It was a shadow that threatened to steal away the body of their substance, mocking them with its factual unreality—a hollow ghost of the same truths they had embraced as a solid possession. It was horrible, devilish. Nothing but the work of the devil could explain the haunting phantom. The Gnostic Ante-Christ had to be made their Anti-Christ. The pre-Christian Gnostics and some of the primitive Christian sects had a Christ who was not based on the person of the living Jesus! One and all had as their divine figure the mystical Christ of the Gnosis and the mythical Messiah, the Ever-Coming One, the type of divine selfhood, manifesting collectively and spiritually in the evolution of the race. Historic Christianity can furnish no explanation why the “biography” of its personal founder should have been held back for several centuries (and strangely the same nearly two centuries elapsed before the books on Buddha’s life were circulated); why the facts of its own origin should have been kept (and still are kept) in obscurity; why there should have been no authorized record made known earlier. The conversion of the myths and the Docetic (mystical) doctrines of the Gnosis into human history will alone account for these facts. The singular thing is, points out Massey, that the earliest Gospels are the farthest removed from the supposed human history! That came last and, he affirms, only when the spiritual Christ of the Gnosis had been rendered concrete in the density of Christian miscalculation! Christianity began as Gnosticism, and continued by means of a conversion and perversion that were opposed in vain by Paul. The Mysteries of Gnosticism were perpetuated as Christian, but with a difference, a complete change of character and identity, as interpretation shifted from the mystical to the historical plane. The first Christians based their cult system on secret doctrines whose inner sense was only explained to Initiates during a long course of

discipline and study. (Mosheim and other historians testify abundantly to the existence of the Greater and the Lesser Mysteries in the primitive Christian Church.) These secret teachings were never to be divulged or promulgated, and they were not publicized until the ignorant belief in historical Christianity had taken permanent root. We are told how it was held by some that the Apocrypha might only be read by those who were “perfected” in the deeper Mysteries, and that these writings were reserved exclusively for Christian adepts. It must be obvious that the doctrine or knowledge that was forced to be kept so sacredly secret could have had no reference to personal human history that was broadcast to all, or to the teachings of that literal Christianity that boasted so simple an origin. The Greater and even the Lesser Mysteries of Christianity must have dealt with subjects that lay far over in the realm of esoteric truth, having little connection with the outer story in the Gospels. There is bluntly nothing to be esoteric or mysterious about in the direct narrative of Gospel Christianity. If the early Church had its higher Mysteries it is certain that they were of the same general nature as those of pagan Greece and Egypt. Nobody, says Justin Martyr, is permitted to partake of the Eucharist “unless he has accepted as true that which is taught by us,” and unless he received the bread and wine as the very flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. In this we can see the “sarkolatras” or worshippers of a Christ of the flesh fighting against the spiritual Christ of the Gnostics. There were many sects of so-called 188 Christians and various versions of the nature of the Christ, Kronian or astronomical, mythical and mystical. But the Church of Rome could not escape the evidences that its foundations and ceremonies were drawn from Egypt; the Virgin Mother, the Son, the gods of Egypt were sealed up in the very corner-stone of the Church; the haunting ghost was in the Church itself. And according to the unquestioned tradition of the Christian Fathers, which has always been accepted by the Church, the primary nucleus of the canonical Gospels was not a life of Jesus at all, but a collection of Logia or Sayings, the Logia Kuriaka, which were written down in Hebrew or Aramaic by one Matthew, as the scribe of the Lord. We have already glanced at the suggested derivation of Matthew from the Egyptian Mattiu, meaning “the word of truth,” or “true sayings.” Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Irenaeus agree that Matthew’s was the primary Gospel, disputing Eusebius’ story of Mark’s primacy. This tradition rests upon the testimony of Papias, Bishop of Hieropolis and friend of Polycarp. Papias is named with Pantaenus, Clement and Ammonius as one of the ancient interpreters who agreed to accept the Logia as referring to a historical Christ. He was a literalizer of mythology. He believed the Sayings to have been actually spoken by a historical Jesus, written down in Hebrew by a follower named Matthew. He wrote a work entitled Logion Kuriakon, a commentary on the Sayings. Thus the basis of the first Gospel was in no way a biography, record or history of Jesus. It was only the “Sayings of the Lord.” Now there is plenty of evidence to show

that these Sayings, the admitted foundations of the canonical Gospels, were not first uttered by a personal founder of Christianity, nor invented afterwards by any of his followers. Many of them were pre-existent, pre-historic and pre-Christian! And if it can be proved that these oracles of God and Logia of the Lord are not original after the year thirty A.D., and that they can be identified as a collection of Egyptian, Hebrew and Gnostic sayings, they would be deprived of any competence to stand as evidence that the Jesus of the Gospels ever lived as a man or teacher. To begin with, says Massey, two of the Sayings assigned by Matthew to Jesus are these: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," and "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." These Sayings had already been uttered by the feminine Logos 189 called Wisdom (Sophia) in the Apocrypha. Wisdom was the Sayer personified long anterior to Christianity. (Let it be noted that the oracular voice in the Biblical Book of Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, is translated more recently as "the Speaker." This precisely matches the character that is the utterer of truth in the Egyptian Ritual (Book of the Dead), called "the Speaker.") It might indeed with full truth be said, as Massey has just done, that the preacher of the divine words of truth in the world's arcane scripts of old is simply, in Greek terms, Athena, the goddess of wisdom, that is, wisdom personified as feminine. It is sheer imbecility of mind that would attempt to convert the personification into a living man.

More Gospel passages are shown to have been already in the Egyptian Ritual, in Enoch, in 2 Esdras, in the Haggada of the Jews and other pre-Christian documents.

The nature of the Sayings is acknowledged by Irenaeus when he says:

"According to no one Saying of the heretics is the word of God made flesh." The Christ, the utterer of the Sermons and Sayings, assuredly is not a person preaching on earth.

The "Sayings" were oral teachings in all the Mysteries ages before they were written down. Several of them are so ancient as to be the common property of widely separated nations. Prescott gives a few Mexican Sayings; one of these, also found in the Talmud and the New Testament, is called the "old proverb." "As the old proverb says—'whoso regards a woman with curiosity commits adultery with his eyes.'" And the third commandment according to Buddha is: "Commit no adultery; the law is broken by even looking at the wife of another man with lust in the mind." Among the sayings assigned to the Buddha is found the one dealing with the wheat and the tares. Another is the parable of the sower. Buddha likewise told of the hidden treasure which may be laid up securely where a thief can not break in and steal. Similarly the story of the rich young man who was commanded to sell all he had and give to the poor is told by Buddha. It is reported that he also

said: "You may remove from their base the snowy mountains, you may exhaust the waters of the ocean, the firmament may fall to earth, but my words in the end will be accomplished." These are samples of scores and hundreds of similarities and identities between Christian Biblical material and passages from many pre-Christian books. No one can make the search and discover these numberless resemblances without forming the conviction that the Bible writings are rescripts, garbled and corrupted, of antecedent wisdom literature. To the student who delves into the study and makes the discoveries for himself, the evidence is startling enough to settle the matter beyond all possibility of mistake. For him the argument is closed.

The Buddha, in making his departure, promises to send the Paraclete, even the spirit of truth which shall lead his followers into all truth. The Gnostic Horus says the same thing in the same character. The sayings of Krishna are frequently identical with those of Buddha and of the Gospel Christ. "I am the letter A," cries the one. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," exclaims the other. "I am the beginning and the end," says Krishna. "I am the Light, I am the Life, I am the Sacrifice." Speaking to his disciples, he affirms that they will dwell in him as he dwells in them.

Buddha has his transfiguration when he ascended the mountain in Ceylon called Pandava or Yellow-white. There the heavens opened and a great light came in full flood around him and the glory of his person shone forth with "double power." He "shone as the brightness of the Sun and Moon," identical with that of Christ; and both these are the same as that of Osiris in his ascent of the Mount of the Moon. The same scene was previously portrayed in the Persian account of the devil tempting Zarathustra and inviting him to curse the Good Belief. But these several forms of the one character did not originate and do not meet in any human history that was lived in Egypt, India, Persia or Judea. They meet only in one place—the mythos, says Massey, with indisputable truth. The mythos arose from Egypt and there alone can we delve down to the root of the origins. The myths of Christianity and Buddhism had a common origin and branched from the same root, whether in Egypt, as Massey claims it did, or elsewhere, as others may insist.

Pronounced in Greek, the Logia or Sayings are the mythoi of Egypt. They are utterances assigned to the personified Sayers in the mythology, which preceded and accounted for our theology and Christology. They existed before writing and were not allowed to be written. They still bear witness, however mangled and mutilated, against historical Christianity. "Myth" and "mouth" are identical at the root. In the main, the drama of the Lord's death and the scenes of the Christian last judgment are represented in the Egyptian great Hall of Justice, where a person is separated from his sins, and those who have sided with Sut against Horus are transformed into goats. (This

doubtless means that they are sent back into incarnation for further experience, and life in the body is typed by the sign of the winter solstice, Capricorn, the Goat, occupying the place of the nadir of descent into matter on the symbolic zodiacal chart. To separate the sheep from the goats is naturally to set off those still needing incarnation in Capricorn position and significance from those who, as sheep in Aries (the Ram, the Lamb) at the spring equinox, are by position and significance out of the area of incarnate life, having made the passover of the line separating physical from spiritual existence when they entered Aries.) Massey points it out as notable that of the four Gospels Matthew alone represents this drama of the Egyptian Ritual. In the Ritual every hair is weighed; in the Gospel every hair is numbered. Many chapter titles of the Ritual are “sayings” of the deceased. Horus is the divine Sayer and the souls repeat his sayings. The original Sayings were declared to have been written by Hermes, or Taht, the scribe of the gods, and they constituted the primordial Hermaean or inspired Scriptures, which the Book of the Dead declares were written in Hieroglyphics by the finger of Hermes himself.

The data of Matthew were put in largely with the motive of fulfilling Old Testament “prophecy.” But the compiler was doubtless too uninstructed to know that the “prophecies” belonged to astronomical allegory and that they never could or did refer to human history and were not supposed to be fulfilled on the plane of objective event, except in the minds of the ignorant, who could believe that the zodiacal Virgin Mother would bring forth her aeonial child on earth in a Judean stable or cave. Massey writes an impressive sentence when he pens these momentous words: “Those who did know better, whether Jews, Samaritans, Essenes, or Gnostics, entirely repudiated the historical interpretation and did not become Christians.” They were in much the same relative case as those more intelligent persons today who repudiate the bald literal interpretations made by such sects as Jehovah’s Witnesses, and just as correct in doing so. “They could no more join the ignorant fanatical Salvation Army in the first century than we can in the nineteenth.” The so-called “prophecies” not only supply a *raison d’être* for the “history” in the Gospels; the events and attendant circumstances themselves are manufactured one after the other from the “prophecies” and sayings, i.e., from the mythos, which was already then of great antiquity. All this was done in the course of the process of literalization of the drama into a human life and its localization in Judea, under the pretext or in the blind belief that the impossible had come to pass. The events of the Gospels were not only thrust forth out of the mythos onto the stage of alleged history, but were mysteriously romanticized with the halo of prophetic fulfillment of Old Testament prediction. Of course the coming Messiah should be foretold to be born in Bethlehem (the house of bread), for the zodiacal allegory had his celestial birthplace long prepared in the sign of Pisces, the house of bread and fishes. He who was to feed the earthly multitude with the

miraculously multiplied divinity symbolized by bread and fish, would have to be born in the house of the fishes and of the bread which cometh down out of heaven. The Christian scriptures carried forward the salient features of the astronomical allegory, but their ignorant idolaters thought they were purveying sacred history.

Again, the child's being taken to Nazareth was only in order that the sayings might be fulfilled that he should be called a Nazarene. And yet, says Massey, his connection with Nazareth (which, incidentally, has never received any geographical authenticity at any time and perhaps never existed at all) would no more make him a Nazarene than his being born in a stable would make him a horse. Also Jesus came to dwell in Capernaum—"his own city"—on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, that a saying of Isaiah might be fulfilled. He cast out devils and healed the sick, for fulfillment of the same prophet's forecast. He taught the multitude in parables, for the same reason. In spite of his miracles and many wonderful works among the populace the people believed not in him, because Isaiah had hinted that the Lord would not be believed. Massey asks why they could be expected to believe when it was prophesied they would not. Jesus sent only two disciples to steal the ass and colt because Zechariah had spoken it so. Judas was on the spot to betray his Lord because the Psalmist had said 193 that the Messiah's trusted and familiar friend "hath lifted up his heel against me." The Speaker in another Psalm had cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and the crucified Messiah came in flesh would have to repeat the cry from the cross. "They parted my garments among them and cast lots for my vesture"; "They gave me also gall for meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," had also to be re-enacted to match pre-existent similar passages.

Massey earns our deep gratitude once more for dissipating another of those most fatuous delusions resulting from ignorant misconstruction of ancient mythical material. It is with reference to the so-called "prophecies." It has already been shown that the words "prophet" and "prophecy" by etymology have nothing to do, directly, with forecasting future events in the objective sphere. The prophet meant simply a preacher, or utterer of truth, and his prophecies were simply preachments. The Biblical prophets were not clairvoyant prognosticators, but sages and expounders of lofty wisdom. The prophet was just another variant of the title of "Speaker" given, as just set forth, to the character in the ritual dramas whose part it was, personating divine Wisdom, to utter or preach the sayings of divine knowledge to mankind. The ascription to the word of the meaning attached to it later in common understanding was most unfortunate. It has been responsible for the precipitation into western history of a whole enormous chapter of delusion and lunacy. The amount of insane drivel, excited emotionalism, fear and folly, that the belief in Bible

(and more recently “pyramid”) “prophecy” has generated in uncritical minds comes to tragic proportions. If the ancient sages, as we now more clearly see, had little concern for factual history of their past or their own present, they must have had even less concern for the equally trivial happenings of the future. What people did at any time was of little value in their eyes, or formed no part of the books of spiritual wisdom. The one thing of prime interest to them was the structure, pattern, form and meaning of all action. Their approach to history was more the Hegelian than the mere chronicler’s. And it has to be confessed after mature reflection that in the end that is the only thing about history that matters vitally. No mind can notice or remember a billionth part of the occurrences that constitute history in the factual sense. Therefore its pursuit can have only the final value of instructing the mind 194 on the principles that have determined events, or of admonishing the moral sense or of teaching wisdom. The only worth-while deposit from events acted or studied as history is their “moral lesson.” “What does history teach us?” is the only pertinent question to be asked regarding the value of the record of sheer deed. And this consummate recognition will help to dispel at last the perpetual hue and cry of the babbling religionists about Old Testament “prophecy.” For it reveals that if events themselves were held of little value, the foreknowledge of them would be even less esteemed. It would assuredly be difficult to locate a single item of practical advantage or service that has ever accrued to the Christians of Europe through many centuries from their having in their possession the sheaf of Old Testament “prophecies.” The net effect of their supposed reference was to throw millions of people into wonder, bewilderment and apprehension in every century. Who is ever known to have acted on the warnings and predictions to his clear and obvious profit? And yet the sad story comes to us that the people of Europe in every century since the tenth, at least, have loudly proclaimed that the burden of the “prophecies” fell directly upon their times. The same phenomenon is being repeated in the twentieth as it was previously in the nineteenth, and every one before it. At the best it has always taken a monstrous amount of imagination and stretching to make the prophetic words match the present run of events. But the Procrustean skill of the prophecy-mongers is never less than prodigious, and the gigantic frame of the present history can always be fitted into the small compass of “Bible prophecy.” Perhaps this is the place to express the hope that a baleful misconception which has already reduced itself ad nauseam, may now be further reduced ad absurdum ad infinitum.

Massey again adjures us that we have only to turn to the 2 Esdras (written long B.C.) to learn that Jesus the Christ of our canonical books was both pre-historic and pre-Christian. This is one of the books that have been rejected and set apart as Apocrypha, considered to be spurious because they are supposed to contain the secret Gnosis or keys to the true meanings. In this book it

is said “My son Jesus shall be revealed to those that are with him . . . and they that remain shall rejoice within four hundred years; and after these years shall my son Christ die and all men shall have life.”

Massey’s vigorous comment can be given once more “The true Christ, whether mythical or mystical, astronomical or spiritual, never could become a historical personage and never did originate in any human history. The types themselves suffice to prove that the Christ was, and could only be, typical and never could have taken form in human personality. For one thing, the mystical Christ of the Gnosis and of the pre-Christian types was a being of both sexes, as was the Egyptian Horus and other of the Messiahs, because the mystical Christ typified the spirit or soul, which belongs to the female as well as to the male, and represents that which could only be a human reality in the spiritual domain or the Pleroma of the Gnostics. This is the Christ who appears as both male and female in the Book of Revelation [a reference to the fact that Jesus in Revelation is described as wearing a golden girdle about the paps]. And the same biune type was continued in the Christian portraits of the Christ. In Didron’s Iconography, you will see that Jesus Christ is portrayed as a female with the beard of a male, and is called Jesus Christ as St. Sophia—i.e., the wisdom or spirit of both sexes. The early Christians were ignorant of this typology; but the types still remain, to be interpreted by the Gnostics and bear witness against the history. Both the type and doctrine combine to show there could be no one personal Christ in this world or in any other. However the written word may lie, the truth is visibly engraved upon the stones, and still survives in the Icons, symbols and doctrines of the Gnostics, which remain to prove that they preserved the truer tradition of the origines. And so this particular pre-Christian type was continued as a portrait of the historic Christ. It can be proved that the earliest Christians known were Gnostics—the men who knew, and who never did or could accept Historic Christianity. The Essenes were Christians in the Gnostic sense, and according to Pliny the Elder they were a Hermetic Society that had existed for ages on ages of time. Their name is best explained as Egyptian. They were known as Eshai, the healers or Therapeutae, the physicians, in Egypt; and Esha or Usha means to doctor, or heal, in Egyptian. The Sutites, the Mandaites, the Nazarites, as well as the Docetae and Elkesites, were all Gnostic Christians; they all preceded and were all opposed to the cult of the carnalized Christ. The followers of Simon the Samaritan were Gnostic Christians; and they were of the church at Antioch, where it is said the name of Christian was primarily applied. Cerinthus was a Gnostic Christian, who according to Epiphanius, denied that Christ had come in the flesh. The same writer informs us that at the end of the fourth century there were Ebionite Christians, whose Christ was the mythical fulfiller of the time-cycles, not a historic

Jesus. Even Clement of Alex-196 andria confesses that his Christ was of a nature that did not require the nourishment of corporeal food.”

Mead fortifies Massey’s statement regarding the Essenes, saying they “refused to believe in the resurrection of the physical body,” either of Christ or of men. The Gnostics, Mead agrees, were the first Christian theologians, and if it is a cause for reprehension that the real historical side of the new movement was obscured in order to suit the necessities of a religion that aspired to universality, then the Gnostics are the chief culprits, he says. To lend some authority to the claim that the Gnostics were not at all rabid “heretics” or fanatical religionists, a Dr. Carl Schmidt may be cited as saying that “we are amazed . . . dazzled by the richness of thought, touched by the depth of soul” of the Gnostic authors, and he speaks of “the period when Gnostic genius like a mighty eagle left the world below it and soared in wide and ever wider circles towards the pure light, the pure knowledge, in which it lost itself in ecstasy.” The alleged heresy of the Gnostics, writes Massey (*The Natural Genesis*, II, p. 484), which is supposed and assumed to have originated in the second century, the first being carefully avoided, only proves that the A-gnostics, who had literally adopted the pre-Christian types and believed they had been historically fulfilled, were then for the first time becoming conscious of the cult that preceded theirs, and coming face to face with those who held them to be heretics. Gnosticism was not a birth of the second century; it was not a perverter or corrupter of Christian doctrines divinely revealed, but the voice of an older cult growing more audible in its protest against a superstition as degrading now as when it was denounced by men like Tacitus, Pliny, Julian, Marcus Aurelius and Porphyry. For what, asks Massey, could be more shocking to any real religious sense than the belief that the very God himself had descended on earth as an embryo in a virgin’s womb, to undergo the precarious ordeal of the pre-natal period, of birth, infancy, the risks of physical embodiment and the suffering of cruelty and persecution, climaxed by an ignominious death on a cross of torture, to save his own created world, or a few in it who might “believe” on him, from eternal perdition? The opponents of the latest superstition were too intelligent to accept so shallow and repulsive a story and a dying deity. Porphyry terms the Christian religion “a blasphemy barbarously 197 bold” (*barbaron tolmema*). “A monstrous superstition,” exclaims Pliny. “A pestilence,” cries Suetonius. “Exitiabilis superstitio” (ruinous superstition), says Tacitus. “Certain most impious errors are committed by them,” says Celsus, “due to their extreme ignorance, in which they have wandered from the meaning of the divine enigmas.” (Origen: *Contra Celsum*, VI, Ch. XIII.) All of which is as true as it is temperate, avers Massey. The “primitive Christians were men whose ardor was fierce in proportion to their ignorance,” as is ever the case. Massey states that when Peter, Philip and John, as preachers of the new creed, were summoned before the Jewish hierarchs to be examined, the Council decided that

they were only ignorant men, unlearned in the oral law, unskilled in the tradition of interpretation, believers who did not know the true meaning of that which they taught. They were not punished, but dismissed with warnings, as rude anthropoi agrammatoi kai idiotai (men uneducated and narrow-minded). Idiotai is of course the root of our word “idiots.” In the Greek, however, it carries the meaning of being bound up in one’s own ideas so closely as not to be able to see beyond one’s own small horizon.

Near the end of his greatest work, *Ancient Egypt, The Light of the World* (p. 905), Massey sums up the data that impelled him toward his momentous conclusions. He says that from the comparative process we learn that the literalizers of the legend and the carnalizers of the Egypto-Gnostic Christ have but gathered up the empty husks of Pagan tradition, minus the kernel of the Gnosis; so that when we have taken away from their collection all that pertains to Horus, the Egypto-Gnostic Jesus, all that remains to base a Judean history upon is nothing more than the accretion of blindly ignorant belief. And therefore of all the Gospels and collections of Sayings derived from the Ritual of the resurrection in the names of Mattiu, or Matthew, Aan or John, Thomas or Tammuz or Tum, Hermes, Iu-em-hetep, Iusa or Jesus, those that were canonized at last as Christian are the most exoteric, and therefore the furthest away from the underlying, hidden and buried, but imperishable truth. With these fateful words he ends his great work.

We have both Philo’s and Irenaeus’ expressed belief that the Word (Logos) could not become incarnate, Massey testifies. Philo no more knows a Christ that could be made flesh than he knew of a Jesus in human form—and he lived at almost the identical time of the alleged historical Jesus! So it was with the Gnostics. They declared it was not possible that he should suffer who was both incomprehensible and invisible (Irenaeus, b. I, ch. VII, p. 2). According to the Gnostics, says Irenaeus, “neither the Word, nor the Christ, nor the Savior, was made flesh. They maintain that the Word was neither born nor did he become incarnate” (b. 3, XI, p.3). It was impossible that the Gnostics could accept the doctrine of a masculine Logos being made flesh or incarnated in human form. Their Logos was the spiritual antithesis and eternal opposite of matter, not a redeemer of the flesh by wearing it. The advent of the Gnostic Christ could only be in the mind or the spirit. It could only be manifested by an illumination of the mind, a purification of the life, a change of heart in the religious sense. (It is worth pausing to comment that the “true” orthodox Christianity of Irenaeus’ day rejected illumination of the mind, purification of the life and change of heart as heresy!) To them the advent was one that could dawn only about a Christ that came from within. The type-form of divine Logos could no more apply to an external history or a personal Savior than the spirit of giving could become Santa Klaus in person. Yet, Massey points out, the Christ of this

conception was identical with the Christ of Philo and of Paul. Philo, he says, has defined the incarnation as Archangelos Polyonomos, “the many-named archangel.” The power or spirit that incarnated had many names and many forms of manifestation. But this incarnation was not of a nature to be embodied in one man or as one man, either past, present or future. The earliest of the Christian Fathers, Justin Martyr in particular, had given voice to expressions of the multiformity of the Christly manifestation. The central force of Massey’s courageous assault on the ramparts of orthodox Christianity is in his categorical averment that the bulk of the material entering into the formulation of Christian doctrine and practice was long in existence before the Christian era. Let us hear his forthright declaration to this effect in his lecture on The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ (p. 22):

“Whether you believe it or not does not matter, the fatal fact remains that every trait and feature which goes to make up the Christ as Divinity, 199 and every event or circumstance taken to establish the human personality, were pre-extant and pre-applied to the Egyptian and Gnostic Christ, who never could become flesh. The Jesus Christ with female paps, who is the Alpha and Omega of Revelation, was the IU of Egypt and the IAO of the Chaldeans. Jesus as the Lamb of God and Ichthys the Fish was Egyptian. Jesus as the Coming One; Jesus born of a Virgin Mother who was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost; Jesus born of two mothers, both of whose names were Mary; Jesus born in the manger at Christmas and again at Easter; Jesus saluted by the three kings or Magi; Jesus of the Transfiguration on the Mount; Jesus whose symbol in the catacombs is the eight-rayed star—the star of the East; Jesus as the eternal child; Jesus as God the Father, reborn as his own Son; Jesus as the child of twelve years; Jesus as the anointed one of thirty years; Jesus in his baptism; Jesus walking on the water or working his miracles; Jesus as the caster-out of demons; Jesus as a Substitute, who suffered in a vicarious atonement for sinful men; Jesus whose followers are the two brethren, the four fishers, the seven fishers, the twelve apostles, the seventy (or seventy-two, as in some texts) whose names were written in heaven; Jesus who was administered to by seven women; Jesus in his bloody sweat; Jesus betrayed by Judas; Jesus as conqueror of the grave; Jesus the resurrection and the life; Jesus before Herod; in the Hades and in his reappearance to the women and the seven fishers; Jesus who was crucified both on the fourteenth and the fifteenth of the month Nisan; Jesus who was also crucified in Egypt, as it is written in Revelation (11:8); Jesus as judge of the dead, with the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left, is Egyptian from first to last, in every phase, from the beginning to the end.”

If the revelation of these identities comes with surprising or shocking force to many readers, the wonder should mount to still greater height when it is stated, as it can be, that Massey

has traced out and enumerated some one hundred and eighty of these items of similarity or identity between Horus of Egypt and the Gospel Jesus! And Horus was centuries antecedent to Jesus, and was never pictured as a living person! To the scholarly mind this astonishing fact becomes conclusive of the whole argument. The forced acceptance of the fact that when the only-begotten Son of the Eternal came to earth in all his regal splendor to redeem the fallen race of mortal men, the best he could manage to get in the books that were to establish his mission and perpetuate his influence was a garbled melange of data and symbols already associated with a score or more of previous non-existent typical characters, will bring at last a realistic recognition of the weakness of the case for the historicity. Even were the bald claim for the existence of the man Jesus to be conceded, the victory for orthodoxy and fundamentalism would be almost if not quite as damaging to that side as the refutation. It would indeed be a Pyrrhic triumph, leaving the cause of Christian theology so badly weakened and wounded by obvious inexplicability of many points, as to have forfeited the further support of thinking people everywhere. How could it be explained with rational consistency or with the salvation of respect and prestige, that the historical biography of the one and only Son of God fell into the lines of the merely dramatized “careers” of Horus of Egypt, Krishna of India, Tammuz or Marduk of Assyria, Mithra of Persia, Bacchus of Greece, Zagreus or Sabazius of Phrygia, and a list of others in various lands? The Rosetta Stone has at last brought to an end the centuries-long pretense and hypocrisy of the orthodox Christian party in the study of comparative religion.

One can understand the mental vehemence back of Massey’s fling at his critics:

“It is not I that deny the divinity of Jesus the Christ; I assert it! He was and never could be any other than a divinity; that is, a character non-human and entirely mythical, who had been the divinity of various pagan myths that had been pagan during thousands of years before our Era.” He continues with the asseveration that the Christian scheme is founded on a fable misinterpreted, and that the Coming One as the Christ was but a metaphorical figure, a type of immanent spiritual growth consummated in time, who could not take form in human personality any more than Time in person could come out of the clock-case when the hour strikes, like the cuckoo! The “history” in our Gospels is from beginning to end the identifiable story of the Sun-God and the Gnostic Christ who was not “after the flesh.” The false belief, he concludes, becomes impossible when we know the true one. But the false one has ever stood in the way of our knowing the true one. The mythical Messiah was Horus in the Osirian mythos; Har-Khuti in the Sut-Typhonian; Khunsu in that of Amen-Ra; and the Christ of the Gospels is an amalgam of all these characters, and, one may add, of others. Jesus is he that should come; and Iu, the root of the name in Egyptian, means “to come.”

Iu-em-hetep, the Messianic name in Egypt for thousands of years, signifies “he who comes with peace.” And this is the very character in which Jesus is announced by the angels at midnight of December twenty-fourth, a date set by the Egyptian astronomical symbology. A sententious summation of the whole matter is given in Massey’s words: “From beginning to end the canonical Gospels contain the Drama of the Mysteries of the Luni-solar God, narrated as human history.” The mythos is the magic key that alone will fit the lock of the Bible material and open the door to the explanation of its otherwise unfathomable obscurities. “All that is non-natural and impossible as human history, is possible, natural and explicable as mythos.” This is indeed the eventful truth, and the application of it is the only measure that will ever put an end to the farcical irrationality of Christian theology and redeem the body of doctrine from ostensible nonsense to comprehensible sublimity, after centuries of befuddlement.

The catacombs of Rome, says Massey again, “are crowded with the Egypto-Gnostic types which had served the Roman, Persian, Greek and Jew as evidence for the non-historic origins of Christianity.” The child-Horus of Egypt reappears in Christian iconography as the mummy-babe in the catacombs, wearing even the tell-tale sign of origin from Egypt, the solar disk! Also the resurrection of Osiris comes into Christian scriptures as the raising of Lazarus, the identification of whom with Osiris makes one of the most thrilling chapters of comparative religion revelation ever to be brought to light. Among the numerous types of Horus repeated in Roman symbols of the alleged historic Jesus are “Horus on his papyrus” as Messianic shoot or natzer (from which root in Hebrew Massey traces the word “Nazarene”); Horus the branch resprouting each cycle for endless ages from the parent vine; Horus as Ichthys the Fish; Horus as bennu or phoenix; Horus as the dove; Horus as the eight-rayed star of the Pleroma; Horus as scarabaeus; Horus as child-mummy with the head of Ra; Horus as the little black child or Bambino; Horus of the reversed triangle.

Massey shows with sufficient clearness the origin of the cross in the Tat-cross of Egypt, or the Ankh-cross, the symbol of Life as resulting from the crossing or union of the two poles of being, spirit and matter. The Tat or cross of stability, symbol of the power that sustains the worlds and all things, was the figure of the pole, thought of as the backbone of the world, the axis of all durability. It united in one the “five supports” or the five-fold tree of the Egypto-Gnostic mystery, the four corner supports and the central axis. This power was personified in Ptah as well as figured in the Tat. The light that the clearer representation of Egypt throws on this symbol is great, for it shows that the cross figure is the insignium of the same power that is personified in the Christ himself and that true depiction should not so much portray the Christ on the cross as that the Christ is the cross. The god in matter and the cross are really one. This personified power in the Egyptian Ritual

says, “I am Tat, the Son of Tat” (Rit., Ch. I), or son of the Eternal, who establishes the soul for eternity in the mystery of Tattu (Rit., Ch. 17). Hence we find the figure of the god, as the cross, extended crosswise as sustainer of the universe in Egyptian vignettes. This construction is undoubtedly back of the Gospel legend of Jesus as bearer of his own cross on which he was to “die.” In the Christian corruption of the grand conception into impossible “history,” the doctrine of the crucifixion, with its human victim raised aloft as a sin-offering for all the world, “is but a ghastly simulacrum of the primitive meaning, or shadowy phantom of the original substance.” In what respect are the Flagellantes or Penitentes of New Mexico, lashed on by the fanatic frenzy of Christian doctrine literalized, better than barbarian tribes of the forest or of the South Seas, who are pointed at by the Christians for their inhuman degeneracy in offering living humans in some of the former rites? For they even today come close to actual immolation of a man on the cross on the Good Friday of Passion Week, which Christian miscomprehension and muddled mentality has indeed made into the Black Friday of the year. The ox and the ass, ever present with Jesus in his stable nativity in the Gospels, were with the Egyptian Coming One, Iusa, ages antecedently. These two animals, which Christians ignorantly assume are pictured in the birth-scenario because they “were there,” are evidently typically connected with the birth of divinity because of the exceptional and peculiar type of their breeding. They owe their existence to cross-breeding, and so stood as the type of perfected Christhood, which is raised above sex, or represents sex polarity crossed and unified in one, as before the breaking of cosmic unity apart into biunity. The ox and the ass are present when the Christ comes to indicate to the initiated that the development of the Christ power returns the soul from its state of dual life on the cross to its pristine unity. It is the symbol of 203 the divine androgyny, or of spirit detached from matter, released from the cross, one again and not two.

A further light is thrown on this by Massey (Book of the Beginnings, I, p. 516), when he speaks of the bifurcation of the child, that is then still without sex (in manifestation), at puberty into the distinctly male or female individual. The calf represented both sexes in the non-pubescent stage, or the mother and the child only, in the phase of nature that did not yet include the father, or the developed creative mind. The bull was the type of the Father or generative force of creative thought. But even the bull, says Massey, was made to conform to the type of spirit-matter in union and neutralizing each other, in the ox. According to Varro, Massey says, there was a vulgar Latin name for ox, viz., Trio. The ox being of a third sex, neither male nor female productively, return was thus made to the primitive Nu-ter or Neuter of the beginning. And as all things are ultimately the A and the O, and begin and end in the same sexless state (in heaven there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage), the ox—and similarly the ass—was the type of fully Christified humanity.

Therefore would the Christ be fitly represented as riding into the gates of the Holy City or heavenly Jerusalem on the back of the lowly ass. But why the two beasts, the ass and her foal? The ass was the symbol of the Egyptian God Atum, and ancient typism always depicted the god as creating and procreating, in the two characters of Father and Son. Life was made continuous by the creation in cycles, and the Son typified the new generation as the progeny of the old, ever repeating and recurring. It was the eternal repetition of the projection of new life from old in the time cycles, the previous old cycle being father to the succeeding one, which carried the soul onward in its long journey from the hinterland of matter up to the gates of the Aarru-Hetep of Egypt, which is the Aarru-Salem, or Jerusalem, of the Hebrew version. Iusa is pictured with the ears of an ass, and Iu is both ass and god under one name, Massey states.

A pretty solid support is seen for Massey's general claims as to the association of pagan usages with early Christian worship in that letter of the Emperor Hadrian to Servianus, in which he writes that "those who worship Serapis are likewise Christians; even those who style themselves the Bishops of Christ are devoted to Serapis." The most prominent early Egyptian Christians were at the same time members of the Mysteries of Serapis, as many leading Greek Christians were, like Origen, Clement, Pantaenus and Ammonius, students of the Neo-platonic philosophy. The Gnostic Jesus in the Pistis Sophia says that he found Mary, who is called his mother after the material body, that he implanted in her the first power which he had received from the hands of his Father, called Barbelo and also the good Sabaoth. Here is the prototype of the great legend in ancient mythical systems of the son impregnating his own mother, as Horus fecundated his mother Isis in Egypt. Christians can spare their spurious indignation at "heathen" sexualism in religious worship, since the meaning carried by the representation is simply that the soul, or son, in man implants in the physical body that gives him his birth the power of spirit that transfigures her also into the likeness of divinity. The soul, as primordial intelligence, is the Father ever; in each new generation it is its own son; and the physical body is the mother. The son, therefore, eternally in each generation impregnates his own mother. Evil minds may see evil in this typing; beautiful minds will see both truth and beauty in it.

Carrying on the train of similarities between Gospel and Egyptian depictions Massey points to the dove symbol. The hawk is a male emblem, the dove the female, he shows. Horus rises again in the form of a hawk in the Egyptian resurrection. As matter is ever feminine, the soul or son descending into physical body would be entering what the ancients called its "feminine phase," its incarnation. Hence at its baptism, or entering the sea of matter, again always typed as water, it would swing to the dove as symbol. The dove made its appearance to attest Jesus' baptism in the

Jordan, the Eridanus of the planisphere, the Iaru-tana of the Egyptian myth, and the “river of life” in any system. Horus rises also in the form of a dove, as well as that of a hawk. He is the dove in his first phase, and the hawk in his second or perfected stage. Elsewhere, swinging the metaphor a grade higher, he says that he came as a hawk and transformed into the phoenix. “I am the Dove; I am the Dove,” he exclaims as he rises up from Amenta where the egg of his future being was hatched in the divine incubator, in the An-ar-ef, the hidden land, “the abode of occultation,” the house of the blind,--our earth.

Hence in the iconography of early Christianity the child-Jesus is depicted in the Virgin’s arms or in her womb, surrounded by seven doves 205 as symbols of the Holy Spirit (Didron: Iconography, fig. 124). For the Holy Spirit, or divine working efficacy of spirit in matter, must fall into the sevenfold segmentation which force ever undergoes when it energizes matter. This had been brought out not only in ancient cosmology and esotericism, but has been in large measure demonstrated by modern physical science, and is corroborated by nature herself in the sevenfold division of light, the octave (septave) of sound, the periodic table of weights in chemistry and the seven-day table of periodicities in the gestation process in all animal life. A fact that must loom large in the debate as an item of great significance is that mentioned by a number of writers, that neither in the case of Horus nor in those of other “world-saviors,” is there any date or history falling in the gap between the ages of twelve and thirty, matching the similar lacuna in the “life” of Jesus! This datum alone points with great cogency to the non-historicity of the Sun-Gods, Christs, Messiahs. Any student of ancient literature knows the esoteric significance of numbers in arcane systematism. The numbers one, two, three, four, seven, ten, twelve, twenty-four, thirty, forty, seventy, three hundred and others are so profusely injected throughout the Bible that it could long ago have been assumed that they carried the deepest recondite meaning. Three, four, seven, twelve and forty are indeed among the most sharply revelatory keys to the entire system of scriptural interpretation. It is ridiculous that Christian exegesis of its own book has for sixteen centuries labored at the interpretation with practically no regard for the meaning of these numbers. It will later be seen as a clear evidence of esoteric incompetence. It has remained for students outside the pale of Christian apologetics to interpret the Bible most capably and profoundly. The age of twelve in Egyptian myth was one of the indices of transformation from the natural or unregenerate state of humanity into the spiritual kingdom, on the symbolic basis of puberty, change of voice and development of mind. And thirty was the index of completed perfection, type of the spiritual heyday in evolution. The fact that at twelve Jesus left his mother (type of matter and body) to attend to the things of his Father (type of spirit) has never once been discerned as the allegory of the natural man’s conversion into the spiritual man, the attainment of

his spiritual “thirty years.” And a hundred such failures to read their own scriptures aright attest the blindness of exoteric vision on the part of orthodox expounders of scripture. It is out of the question to transcribe any considerable portion of Massey’s (and other) comparative religion data, but some salient items must be introduced. There is a perfect match between the flight of the parents of Jesus into Egypt for the safety of the divine child from the Herod menace and a similar protection for Horus. The god Taht says to Isis, the mother: “Come, thou goddess Isis, hide thyself with the child,” and the place of concealment indicated was in the marshes of Lower Egypt—bringing the Moses analogy to mind at once! This is pure evolutionary symbology and not personal history. That there is any vital significance in the fact that Jesus fled to Egypt to escape the Herod menace, while Horus had to be saved from the Herut menace in Lower Egypt will probably be shouted down by hostile critics. The Herut reptile was another name for the Apap serpent, the water monster that was the Egyptian type of the lower nature in man waiting to devour the child of higher divinity when he incarnated. But the substitution of the tetrarch’s name for the reptile’s designation is in the highest probability one of the tricks resorted to in the conversion of myth into history. Massey openly charges it. Then there is the matter of the twelve disciples and their historicity. Massey affirms categorically and likely with full truth, that they “are no more human than was their teacher.” But when the Word was made flesh in physical literalism his dramatic supporting cast had to be converted along with him.

What were the twelve disciples, if not men? In the esoteric understanding they were the same in twelve aspects as the three Kings or Wise Men were in a threefold division. Or they were the same three powers of spirit further subdivided into twelve aspects. They were just the spiritual power and intelligence which is the Christ itself, manifesting its wholeness in a twelve-part segmentation. In the same way in which the atomic force of the universe manifests in a seven-part differentiation, so the spiritual nucleus of life manifests in a twelve-part unfoldment. Nature sounds a seven-key octave and Divine Mind sounds a twelve-key diapason. Each in its unfoldment sounds but one key at a time, until the succession covers the gamut. As soul advances through the scale of evolution she passes through twelve grades of being one at a time, adding unto her equipment the quality gained from experience at each level, till her absorption of the essence of all nature is complete finally in a twelvefold unity. These twelve qualities of perfected spiritual cognition are what are represented by the twelve signs of the zodiac, the sun’s passing successively through each sign and acquiring the special powers of each, typing the soul’s round of the elements and the acquisition of the twelve intelligences. In the Ritual of Egypt the soul had to pass successively through twelve dungeons, each guarded by a god, in each of which it was captive until the door was opened by the god, who held the key and would not use it until the mortal could

pronounce his Name. Obviously man is a prisoner to a faculty until he opens up his ability to utilize and command its powers.

Ignorance is ever the gaoler and knowledge is the only release. Inasmuch as light produced by suns is the highest aspect of creative energy, the dark dungeon was the appropriate symbol of the benighted condition of the soul when imprisoned in matter. The creative command—Let there be light!--was the divine fiat that ordered the suns to shine and the galaxies to glisten. And light in the physical area was the perfect analogue and symbol of the light of intelligence that was to glow in the domain of ignorance as solar light was to irradiate the universe of space. Twelve lights would therefore be the most apt symbol of the twelve basic powers of divine intelligence, and this brings us back to the primal true designation of the twelve rays of genius in man—the Twelve Saviors of the Treasure of Light! In various other symbolic typings they were also the Twelve Reapers of the Golden Grain, the Twelve Harvesters in the Field of Amenta, the Twelve Builders, Twelve Carpenters, Twelve Masons, Twelve Potters, Twelve Weavers of the Pattern, Twelve Fishermen, Twelve Rowers of the Boat with Horus, Twelve Sailors in the Ship of Ra, the Sun. They are the twelve powers of Sun-God intelligence. And as ancient philosophy brings out the astounding facts that sunlight is the eventual product of divine mentation—"the light of the sun is the pure energy of intellect," says Proclus in one of the most illuminating sentences ever uttered—the twelve "rays" of the solar Logos become at last in men and gods the twelve faculties of spiritual intelligence the evolution of which makes each man in his aeonial career a Christ, instructing and training his "twelve disciples" within the confines of his own individuality. They were the fourfold differentiation, under the symbolism of fire, air, water and earth, of each of the three Kings, or kingly powers of divine intellect into which primordial unity of Mind breaks up in its necessary fragmentation as it descends into matter. As water falling from a height breaks up into fragments owing to the resistance of the air, and the blood-stream divides from the heart, and a tree trunk from its lower stem, so unitary intellect descending from on high breaks up into first a threefold partition and finally into a twelvefold division. In reduction to simplest form, all this means that as in physical matter and its manifestation on earth there are four basic differentiations of expressions as fire, air, water and earth, so in mind there are the four analogous subdifferentiations, again in soul the same four and again in spirit the same four. So the twelve great qualities that are to divinize us are the spirit's fire, air, water and earth, the soul's fire, air, water and earth, and the mind's fire, air, water and earth, all combined in one grand synthesis, the Christ consciousness. All this is represented by the structure of the pyramid, which has the four bases as groundwork, and four three-sided upper faces as the superstructure, with the golden triangle crowning all, and glinting ever with Egyptian sunlight. In the great ancient divine-human

drama the twelve facets of solar deity were of course personified in and by twelve characters, and the dark-minded Christian spoliators of sage wisdom had to make twelve uneducated fishermen out of them. There was no escape from their becoming fishermen in the Christian rendition because the Jesus who was the astronomical Avatar coming roughly around 255 B.C., came under the precessional sign of Pisces and so came as Ichthys, the Fish-Avatar. He came as Joshua (Jesus) son of Nun, and Nun is the fish in Hebrew! Can Massey be gainsaid or laughed down, then, when he says the twelve disciples were no more human than their teacher? It is Massey's turn to laugh at the stupidity of his critics.

Jesus himself says in Gnostic literature: "When I first came into the world I brought with me twelve powers. I took them from the hands of the twelve saviors of the treasure of light," that is, from the twelve who are called the aeons in the Gnostic astronomy. And he adds that he took these twelve powers and "cast them into the sphere of the rulers," and "bound them into the bodies of your mothers." By this he means that he has in evolution incorporated them in organic creational systems and finally into the bodies of men, the fleshly body being the mother of the individual soul. Jesus is to reign as king over these 209 twelve powers, the "nine guardians and the three amens," "the five supporters and the seven amens," and all the other characters which were "light emanations," and which would have had no meaning if Jesus had not likewise been an astronomical figure. He unifies them all in himself as he gathers them to himself in passing through the twelve phases of creative manifestation. Beside the twelve "disciples of Jesus" there are found in the Bible the twelve sons of Jacob, the twelve of Judah, the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve stones Joshua was ordered to set up in the dry bed of the Jordan River, the twelve pieces of the concubine's body cut up (in the nineteenth chapter of Judges), the twelve tables of stone, the twelve commandments, the twelve Urim and Thummim on the breastplate of the High Priest, and others. Moreover we find striking identity in the Christ's proclamations, the one in the Gospels, the other in the Gnostic texts, of an esoteric doctrine which he will propound openly to his disciples, though he must speak in parable to the multitude. In the Gnostic Gospel Jesus says:

"Rejoice and be glad for this hour. From this day will I speak with you freely, from the beginning of the truth unto the completion thereof; and I will speak to you face to face, without parable. From this hour will I hide nothing from you of the things which pertain to the height."

Matching this with the statement of the Gospel Jesus to his disciples that to them that are without it is given to be taught in parables, but to them in the inner circle it is given to be instructed in the mysteries, there is presented an interesting parallel indeed. More light is thrown

on this mystery of esotericism when in the Gnostic scriptures Jesus says, “I will tell unto you the mystery of the one and only ineffable, and all its types, all its configurations, all its regulations . . . for this mystery is the support of them all.” Again he says: “I tore myself asunder and brought unto them the mysteries of light to purify them . . . otherwise no soul in the whole of humankind should have been saved.” And another excerpt from his Gnostic sayings is of great value, as it clears up a point of meaning which has been sadly misconceived heretofore. When Jesus in the Gospels says that the believer must leave father, mother and kin to follow after him, it has been a “hard saying,” too hard to be accepted in literal sense. It therefore should come with great relief to the perplexed faithful to learn at last what the passage actually means in the light of the same unmutilated and unhistoricized text of the Gnostic Gospel:

“For this cause have I said unto you aforetime, ‘He who shall not leave father and mother to follow after me is not worthy of me.’ What I said then was, ye shall leave your parents the rulers, that ye may all be children of the first, everlasting mystery.” (Bk. 2, 341.)

Earlier the parents or “rulers” that were to be left for the Christ ministry were described as the seven elementary or natural powers, the mother powers of nature, giving birth to the first Adam, or natural man, who must be left in the seeking after the higher spiritual genius of divinity! Again it is seen how the literalizing process has reduced high cosmic splendor of meaning to the tawdriness of a family desertion and a flouting of the dearest bonds of mortal kinship.

Jesus gave his disciples power to raise the “dead.” In the Pyramid Texts of Teta it is said: “Horus hath given his children power to raise thee up” from the funeral couch.

Massey calls attention to a discrepancy in the version of the miraculous draught of fishes in two Gospels, John and Luke. In John, when Jesus reappears to the seven fishers on board the boat to cause the miraculous haul, it is after his resurrection from the dead. Consequently the transaction, Massey thinks, took place in a region beyond the tomb and not in the life on earth. Whereas in Luke’s version his reappearance was in the earth-life and not a reappearance after death. Orthodox idea of course holds that Jesus was resurrected on earth and that Massey’s conclusion therefore is not sound. What is true, of course, is that there was no physical or bodily resurrection at all, but only the re-arising out of the grave or tomb of the earthly body of that living nucleus of soul that had descended into the body for incarnation. When the soul from elevated spheres descends and links its refined energies with the coarse life of body, the ancient seers pictured its durance in flesh as its death and burial. Just as naturally, then, its release from body at the end of a life cycle was its resurrection from “the dead.” There was no place at all for the

historical episode of one man's bursting the bars of a hillside rocky tomb at any time. The resurrection, Paul tells us, was in a spiritual body, dissociating its tenuous substance from the meshes of the fleshly vehicle.

Again that which was a spiritual mystery in Egypt became a "miracle" in Christianity. In the Ritual of Egypt (Ch. 113) Sebek catches the fish in his marvelous net, and it is proclaimed by Ra to be a mystery. Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes in the Gospels, and this incident binds wonderfully in with one of the greatest bits of comparative religion data ever to be formulated. When one has grasped from Greek rational theology the significance of the great doctrine of God's deific multiplication of his own life by dividing primeval unity into endless multiplicity, sharing his oneness with the infinity of his creatures, and then applies to it the elucidation of the Christ's multiplying that same divinity under the two zodiacal types of bread and fish (Virgo and Pisces), and then will turn to the Egyptian symbolic writing, he will come upon the amazing discovery that the city of Annu (Anu), (Any in English)--which with the Beth, "house," of the Hebrew gives us Beth-any of the Gospels--was described in the Ritual as "the place of multiplying bread!" From John we learn that "this is that bread which came down from heaven," the divine immortal soul which came here to multiply itself, as an oak multiplies its life in its acorns, in the house of bread, which is the human body. When will the religious mind break through the obfuscations of deadening literalism to see at last that the human body, the soul's tenement on earth, is that Bethlehem, that house of bread, wherein the divine bread comes to be multiplied? Here at last is incontrovertible and irrefutable proof that the Christian has to go back to ancient Egypt's wisdom to discover the keys to the interpretation of his own Bible. If ever the Christian doctrines are to shed any real light on human understanding of the problems of life and immortality, it will be only with the help of Egypt's restored mysteries. As Massey so clearly demonstrated, Christian truth has been sealed up in a fatal obscurantism and Egypt holds the keys to release it.

In the Gospels it is the women who announce the resurrection. "The goddesses and the women proclaim me when they see me," shouts Horus as he rises from the tomb on "the horizon of the resurrection."

Horus was not only the "bread of life" derived from heaven; he also gave his flesh for food and his blood for drink, as did Jesus. He says he has bread in heaven with Ra, and bread on earth with Seb, the earth-god. Dealing further with the cross as symbol, the arresting fact is ²¹² brought to light that this emblem in the Egyptian was never the symbol of death—in the sense of the demise of the body—but of life! It was the symbol of "death" only in the transferred sense of the word

“death” as the circumscribed life of the soul in the tomb of the body on earth. The cross is the “tree,” and the “tree” is the “tree of life which is in the garden” of this world. This chain of identity has not been seen or worked upon. In one form of the symbolism Jesus is nailed on the tree in its form of the cross of wood; but to suit another form of metaphorical approach he IS the tree of life. He is the branch, the shoot (Hebrew natzer, whence probably “Nazarene”), of his Father, the eternal Tree whose branches ramify into all the universe. But for us in turn Christ is the tree, the vine, and we are the branches. A number of allusions in this relation from ancient non-Biblical sources would have kept in better understanding the connection between the tree of Genesis and the cross, or tree, of Calvary. Ancient mythic tradition had it that various typical Christ characters, Noah, Seth, Enoch, Moses, Joshua, plucked a shoot from the tree of life in the garden and planted it on the mount of Golgotha, where it burgeoned anew to become the tree of the crucifixion. And if, in its deepest sense, the cross of crucifixion is only the metaphor for this incarnation in body, which gives ever more abundant life to the soul by multiplying its potentialities through the ordeal of suffering, then the tree of life and knowledge in Genesis remains still the tree or cross of life and salvation, and not the gruesome cross of death. But clearly in the first instance it is the tree of the Father in his original generation of life; in the second it is the tree of the Son, in regeneration, or eternal renewal of life. The legends—some even carried on into Christian exploitation—that the wood of the cross of Jesus became alive and put forth green shoots, solidly substantiate this figurism. It is matched also by the burgeoning of Aaron’s rod when cast to earth! Divine life flowers anew from the old stem each time it is planted afresh in the soil of earthly body! The Christmas legend spoke of the rose blooming from the Glastonbury thorn in the winter solstice, and we prate in profound stupidity of the Christ as being a fresh shoot from the rod of Jesse. The mighty truth is in our midst, but goes all unrecognized.

The purely allegorical implications of the cross symbol should have been seen from the Platonic and Gnostic representations of the form of the cross called the Stauros. It was the four-armed structure of the 213 Christ-aeon or emanation extended out over the field of creation, and represented spirit as being “crucified in space,” and, Einstein would add, in time. The fourfold division of primary life energy out into space in the creation of universes is, as clearly as could be done, set forth in Genesis, where the river of life split off into four streams, named there Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates. All this is to tell us that life invariably in manifestation “quadrates” itself, or comes to expression in four differentiated aspects, which, be it proclaimed with ultimate clarity at last, are typified in all ancient literature by the four elements of earth, water, air and fire. This partition of primordial life force into the four forms of its manifestation is all that can possibly be meant by the symbol of the four-armed cross in the cosmic range. For the

individual its meaning is the quadrature of the one energy of consciousness in his life in the four aspects of sense, emotion, thought and soul.

If the Christ was in most real truth crucified in space, the physical timber on Golgotha's ghastly height, hewn and sawed and nailed, might be accepted with enlightenment as pure symbol of cosmic process. But as it stands in common thought among Christian people it is the gruesome sign of the most abject stultification of the godlike principle of intelligence known to history. Lundy says that Plato must have learned his theology in Egypt and the East, and doubtless knew, from the stories of Krishna, Buddha and Mithra, that other religions had their mythical crucified victims long antecedent to Christianity. Witoba, one of the incarnations of Vishnu, is pictured with holes in his feet.

The nails of the cross have received considerable emphasis in the Gospel story. The nail, Massey shows, was a type of male virility or of the deeper power of nature that binds male (spirit) and female (matter) together for all effective procreation. The nailing of the body of the Christ on the cross would be the dramatization of the incarnational union of the two ends of the life polarity. Spirit must be nailed to matter to give it its quadrature, for free from matter it remains in uncreative unity.

Drawing his data largely from Didron's Iconography, Massey brings forth from those recesses of buried ancient secrets which he explored so capably, the fact that must startle all Christian readers with its pertinence to the general theme here elaborated, viz., that with the whole foundation of Christianity resting upon the physical cross and the man nailed on it, the religion that claims to have had its very origin from that cross and man has given no evidence of awareness or commemoration of that pivotal event in all its varied and elaborate iconography for about six hundred years after its founding! Massey records that during the first six or seven centuries no figure of a man appears upon the cross in Christian monumental hierography. There are all forms of the cross except that, the alleged starting point of the new religion! The Christ, and him crucified, says Massey, was not the initial but the final form of the crucifix. Over the first six centuries the representation of the foundation of the Christian faith in a crucified Redeemer is entirely absent from Christian art! Massey writes (Book of the Beginnings, I, 433):

"The earliest known form of the human figure on the cross is the crucifix presented by Pope Gregory the Great to Queen Theodolinde of Lombardy, now in the Church of St. John at Monza, whilst no image of the Crucified is found in the catacombs at Rome earlier than that of San Giulio belonging to the seventh or eighth century. So in the earliest representations of the Trinity made

by the ‘Christian’ artists, the Father and the Holy Ghost (who was feminine as the Dove), are portrayed beside the Cross. There is no Christ and no Crucified; the Cross is the Christ, even as the Stauros was a type and name of Horus, the Gnostic Christ. The Cross, not the Crucified, is the primary symbol of the Christian Church. . . . And that Cross is pre-Christian, is pagan and heathen, in half a dozen different shapes. During centuries the Cross stood for the Christ and was addressed as if it were a living being. It was divinized at first and humanized at last.”

The Gospel incident which dramatizes Jesus as running away from his mother at the age of twelve and saying he must henceforth be about the business of his Father, briefly noticed, must be scanned for some further elucidation of hidden purport. (The very first consideration is the thought that if orthodox interpretation insists upon taking “his mother” as his human female parent in the story, by what warrant does it not take “his Father” also as his human male parent? He says in effect that he must leave his mother and go to his father, and if the one parent is taken as human, why not the other?) The esoteric significance of this “incident” has never been divined in theology. It is a grand cosmic dramatization, based on the puberty trans-215 formation of the boy into the man. The parallelism is startling and suggestive. With the “mother” typing nature and the “Father” spirit, the transition of the boy over from the care of his mother, in which he had been nurtured up till then, to the interests of his father, along with the first development of sexual creative power and the budding of intellect at the same time, as well as the deepening of the voice, which is a most amazing natural symbol of the power henceforth of the voice to utter the true word instead of the fancies of the child, the physiological climacteric was the most striking possible form of depiction ready at hand of the great central truth of all scriptures—the evolutionary transformation of man the natural, or the first Adam, over into man spiritual, or the second Adam. In Egypt there were two Horuses, or two aspects of Horus, Horus the babe and Horus the man, or Horus the younger and Horus the elder. The younger Horus was the child of the mother—nature—and abode under her tutelage, that is, was ruled by natural instinct and not by reason or mind, until he had risen to the development of the twelve facets of his germinal divinity of higher consciousness, whereupon he graduated from the care of mother nature and entered the kingdom of his Father, intellect and spirit. He was then the elder Horus, the grown son of his Father, done with nature and ready to wield the powers of intellect and soul, the business of the Father. With his changed voice allied to developed wisdom he could then utter the “true word” or the echo of the Logos, impossible with his feminine falsetto before! Could anything in nature more completely and admirably typify the profoundest of theological conceptions?

The purpose here, however, is again to indicate that the Gospel mention of the incident, brief as it is, has once more faithfully copied Egyptian prototypes. Every feature of the narrative is found prefigured in the Kamite portrayals. Horus the infant is the child of the Virgin, i.e., matter, or body, produced under natural conditions before the principle of mind (the male element) has unfolded and united with matter to generate the spiritual man. Horus the elder is the child become the man, graduated from the care of mother nature, and having germinated the seed of intellect and spirit into growth and function.

Massey is the first to have made this determination clearly, but his work has been left in desuetude. The god Kephhr, the world-builder, was symbolized by the male beetle or scarabaeus which, the Egyptians alleged, procreated without the aid of the female. This is the type, not of virgin pure matter, but of virgin pure spirit, before union with the female or mother matter in incarnate life.

Astronomically the first Horus or natural man was the child of the Virgin in the sign Virgo; and six months later—which in zodiacal symbology would be at the entire completion of the incarnational cycle—in the sign of Pisces the second Horus, second Adam or the Christ, is reborn of the Fish-mother, or in the house of the Fishes. And in the Gospels Jesus the Christ is born with all the varied forms of the fish-type, as Ichthys the Fish, son of Nun (the Fish in Hebrew), and with twelve “fishermen” as disciples. And Luke’s Gospel places the birth of Jesus just six months after that of John the Baptist; who as the forerunner and herald of the Christos is the dramatic character of the first or natural man, preceding him to prepare the way for him and make his paths straight! Will orthodox exegetists tell us how the six months’ interval between the births of the natural man and his divine successor, the Spiritual Christ, given by Luke, are to be accounted for on any other basis than that of the zodiacal chart, where in pure typology the two births occur just six months apart on opposite sides of the zodiac? This single datum of comparative religion is enough to put the whole structure of Christian historicity on the defensive. If the unthinkable assumption or claim of historical factuality for the occurrence of Jesus’ birth just six months after that of John could be predicated as true, how could the human mind ever contain its wonder at the coincidence of the actual history precisely matching the chart of pagan symbology? This is but one of hundreds of instances in which Christian “history” has had to dance to the tune played by pagan allegorism and typism.

The word “mount” or “mountain” is another link between the Gospels and pre-Christian derivations. The mount is very frequent in Egyptian typology, and the thing it did not mean in

esoteric rendering was an earthly hill or elevation. It meant specifically the earth itself. The earth was the mount, raised up in space, where matter and soul, the god and the (animal) man, the one descending “from above,” the other ascending from the slime to animal, met for that interrelation that meant evolution. Therefore every great transaction in the evolutionary process “took place” “on the mount.” Earth is the only place where spirit and matter ever meet on equal terms or in the 217 balance (symbolized of course by the equinoxes), and so it is that God always called man (typed by “Moses”) up into Mount Sinai to commune with him. Jesus, the Christ, is drawn up onto the mount to be tempted, he delivers his Sermon or Sayings of wisdom to humanity on the mount (though Luke says it was on a level plain), he was crucified on the hill and was transfigured in the height. Even the ark landed on the “mount of earth,” as “Ararat” is a variant of the Hebrew arets (old form areth), “the earth.” It is as futile to try to locate “the hill of the Lord,” “thy holy hill,” “the hills whence cometh my strength,” on the map or earth’s surface as it is to locate the milk and honey of Jerusalem the Golden in Palestine. Horus was symbolically placed, for all his ordeals and transformations, on the Mount of the Horizon, and this Mount—existing nowhere as a locality on earth, but being the mundane sphere itself—is the Egyptian prototype of all the holy mounts, Gerizim, Horeb, Sinai, Zion, Carmel, Calvary, in the scriptures.

The mount was the “place of emergence” in mythology. This is notable because it aids in the definite localization of its meaning. Life emerges from unmanifestation in the invisible worlds of pure Form (in the Greek sense) to visible manifestation in the physical cosmos, and it can do this only where spirit can achieve its embodiment in matter. A physical planet is the necessary ground for such processing. Spirit emerges from subjective to objective existence on the Mount of Earth. A prominent modern school of philosophy, Bergson’s, has dealt so fully with this phase of cosmic procedure that it has taken the name of the “Emergent Philosophy.” As life emerged out of darkness into light it gave birth to the suns, the lamps of creation. Hence the mount again was the place of birth for the sun. The solar orb, symbolizing always the divine power of spiritual light, went to its “death” in matter on the Mount of the Horizon on the West, the Western Mount, Mount Manu, and arose in its rebirth on the Mount of the East, or of Dawn, Mount Bakhu. These two names are instructive. Ma-nu is the elementary primordial abyss of the waters, empty space, or inchoate matter, as nu is the hieroglyph for water. Under the symbolism of the sun setting in the western ocean, life goes down from the heights of pure ethereality into the sea of matter. Passing through the round of the material kingdoms it emerges again on the east with a focus of consciousness developed to divine power in a physical organism, and comes forth as a soul or spirit individually conscious. Human-divine consciousness comes from the union in man’s body of the two elements of psychic soul and divine spirit, and, oddly enough these two “persons” in man were

named by the Egyptians respectively the ba and the khu. The Eastern Mount would then bring divinity to birth as the ba-khu, and so the Mount of Dawn for the divine soul in man was called Mount Bakhu. These two mounts are in Revelation and elsewhere in the Bible. There is no end of repetition in the Bible of the Egyptian “three days in the tomb.” Hosea speaks of the Israelites being held in bondage and being released and raised up “after two days” or “on the third day.” The place of captivity for the soul in matter has variable naming, such as Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, Sodom, Arabia, none of which has geographical but only allegorical reference. If final and clinching proof is needed to show that the captivities and bondages in the Old Testament are only mythical representations, we have it in the prophet’s assignment to them of a three-days length. The descent of the soul into body to manifest her powers and make her appearance or epiphany (or emergence) is the only substance and reality in any of the “captivities” of scripture. When the soul accomplishes its growth in the dungeons of Amenta, Sheol, Hades, and rises in triumph over the flesh and the grave, she is beautifully said to “lead captivity captive.” That the allegories of their Old Testament were known to the Jews as non-historical is shown by the fact that fragments of the original mythos crop up in the Haggadoth, Talmud, Mishna, Kabbalah and other Hebrew sacred scripts, Massey points out. This material was known to the Jews, and obviously not as history. Further, most of it had for ages been known to the Egyptians and again not as history. It is fatal to the historical sense of holy writ that we can turn to such old works as the Kabbalah and Enoch and the Zohar and find their scenes, names, numbers and personages identical with those supposed to be historical in the Old Testament. An article in the Classical Journal (Vol. 17, p. 264), by T. T. Massey says that “the 600,000 men who came up out of Egypt as Hebrew warriors in the Book of Exodus are 600,000 inhabitants of Israel in the heavens, according to the Jewish Kabbalah, and the same scenes, events and personages that appear as mundane in the Pentateuch are celestial in the Book of Enoch.” Indeed the first “mapping” and “localizing” of 219 events in the life and evolution of the race were unquestionably first celestial and not mundane. It was never anything but empyreal—until gross ignorance supervened upon intelligence and made the tragic conversion. Even Swedenborg, a pretty credible testifier albeit he saw only with the eye of inner vision, states that “their historical books were written in the prophetic style and for the most part were made-histories, like those contained in Genesis I to XI.” (Arcana Coelesta, 2897.)

In his *Jesus and Paul* (161) Bacon, who is not specifically aiming at giving the scriptures a mythical rendering, writes that the story of Jesus’ walking on the sea in Mark 6:45-52 has a supplement in Matthew 14:28-33, which further draws out the parallel with purely spiritual meaning; saying that in Jewish symbolism power to tread upon the sea or triumph over it signifies victory over the power of Sheol. And in reference to the inner significance of the “captivities” he

speaks of victory over the imprisoning powers of darkness. Also he very rightly says (p. 205) that the history of the conception of the Messiah as a great light entering the lower world of darkness and death to effect both judgment and deliverance would carry us far back into pre-Christian interpretative application of the Isaian passage: “The people that sat in darkness have seen a great light; unto them that dwell in the shadow of death hath the light shined.” This is just the kind of thing that Massey claims throughout, and supports his claim with mountainous evidence.

But Bacon has a passage which comes dangerously close to repudiating the very fundamental of Christianity in his effort to discredit the Gnosis and early Christian esotericism, or some aspects of them. He says (p. 201) that talk about mystical experiences, gnosis, insight into mysteries, fellowship with God and participation in his eternal life, new birth into eternity and the rest of the current mystical jargon of the day, is all froth and self-deception unless it issues in practical deeds of unselfish service. This pungent asseveration is greeted with the heartiest second from this quarter. Indeed in many respects nothing in religious circles needs to be said so forcefully as just this protest against the extravagances and follies of mystical religion in our day and all days. At the same time it must be recognized that the attainment of these things in a sane and balanced way is certainly the aim and goal of the highest Christian aspiration. If it is not so the whole immense body of saintly mystical rhapsodism in the history of the Church is all froth and self-deception. The point of difference, then, is the degree of sanity and balance with which such experiences are undergone and reacted to. So that once more it is seen that the item in all religion that receives the final and crucial emphasis is philosophical intelligence, as a lever of control over the whimsicalities of mysticism. This point, though touched upon here incidentally, is of absolutely transcendent importance in all estimate of true religiosity.

It is a standing challenge to the proponents of this historical thesis of scripture to explain away the eighth verse of the eleventh chapter of Revelation. If every word, verse, chapter and letter of Holy Writ is—as has been solemnly declared by four or five Church Councils—God’s unalterable truth, we then have the Bible itself in the plainest of words declaring the crucifixion of Jesus to be non-literal and non-historical. Speaking of the “two witnesses” (which it explains are the “two olive trees”—therefore certainly not persons or characters) the preceding verse says that “the Dragon shall rise up and slay them.” Then follows the eighth verse with its categorical denial of a historical crucifixion in Jerusalem:

“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the city which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” Jesus crucified not in Jerusalem, but in Sodom and

Egypt—two places, geographically, making it necessary to assume two crucifixions or a half crucifixion in each place—and these two “places” expressly described, not as physical localities, but as “spiritually” considered. Here is the Bible’s own express declaration that the crucifixion was nothing but a spiritual transaction. Christian exegesis is pretty silent about this verse; it is a question if it has ever been chosen as text for a sabbath sermon. It flies straight in the face of all that ecclesiastical policy stood for from the third century forward to the present. It is the verbatim contradiction of all official Christian theology over sixteen centuries. It is a flat denial of the physical crucifixion and inferentially of the “life” of Jesus, as the Christ. It promises still the final triumph of esotericism. Jerusalem was the “holy city” of the evolved spiritual consciousness, city of “heavenly peace,” as its name implies, and never anything else. As a matter of fact, even in its 221 empyreal connotation, Jerusalem was not the locality of consciousness in which the Christ in us is crucified. Jerusalem, on the contrary, is the city of blessedness in which, after the crucifixion, he enters into the peace of his glorious triumph, carried up to the gates of it on the back of the lowly animal, his body. The place of his crucifixion is not in heaven, where peace abides, but down in the depth (Egyptian Tepht, whence Tophet) of matter, the Sodom and Egypt of the fleshly incarnation. There is enough of the primal truth of Christian beginnings left in this one verse to redeem an errant religion from its lost ways and sorry plight.

One of the Sibyl’s prophecies was to the effect that the Messiah would come when Rome shall be the ruler of Egypt. “When Rome shall rule Egypt, then shall dawn upon men the supremely great kingdom of the immortal king and a pure sovereign will come to conquer the scepters of the whole earth into all ages.” The earliest Church endorsed these Sibylline utterances and cited them to prove the foundation claims of its own religion. Here surely, then, there is a prophecy whose literal fulfillment gave it the lie. Rome did conquer Egypt, and after two thousand years of painful history the world still needs the King of Kings more sorely than ever. Here is an example of fulfilled “prophecy,” the folly of which should—but probably will not—carry disillusionment to the rabid mongers of “Bible Prophecy.”

But there doubtless was esoteric meaning of intelligent sort back of the Sibyl’s utterance. Rome, as the power-center of the world empire, was poetized as the city of epic divine fulfillment, and Egypt, as always in the Bible, was the land of bondage for the soul crucified in body, the “flesh-pots of Egypt.” Of course the kingdom of the Lord of spiritual light would come when “Rome,” the city of attainment, should conquer and rule over “Egypt,” the place of earthly carnal sense. Esotericism redeems another saying of Holy Writ from absurd nonsense and historical

contradiction. And it is the only thing that will redeem the whole historical structure of religious meaning from asininity.

Allan Upward writes that in the religion of the inner life “the redemption of the sinner is not so much the historical transaction consummated on the material cross of Calvary as it is the work of the Christ within. . . . Without this feature the history of Christianity can not be understood.”

No less a philosopher than Spinoza has this to say relative to the nature of the Christ (Op. I, 510, Epis. To Oldenburg): “that a knowledge of the Christ after the flesh is not necessary to the spiritual life, but the thing that is necessary is a knowledge of that eternal Son of God, the wisdom of God, which has manifested itself in all things and chiefly in the human mind, and most of all in man perfected as Christos.”

Paul’s verse in I Cor. 15:17 becomes illogical if the historical thesis is held to: “If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins.” Every inference of this statement points to a non-historical and purely intimate personal resurrection. If the resurrection was historical and the verse means what it says, then the logic of the situation makes the resurrection dependent upon the state of sinfulness of the people then, or at any time. He did or did not rise, according as the people’s general sin is eradicated or is still in force. If people are yet sinful, then Christ can not have risen. The sins or righteousness of people would keep the Christ bobbing up and down between earth and heaven, like a barometer registering the world’s batting average in the overcoming of sin. In the esoteric sense the Christ’s resurrection is indeed dependent upon the progress of humanity upward to righteousness. We do still bury him deeper with every sin, or raise him up with every sincere act. He does rise or fall with our advance or backsliding. But if this true theory is applied to the physical resurrection, an ass’s bray is not ribald enough to express its ridiculousness. And again despised esotericism alone saves revered scripture from harlequin comics.

Oddly enough the Encyclopedia Britannica (Article: Jews) takes the view that the varied traditions in Jewish religion up to a later stage can not be regarded as objective history. It is naturally impossible, it says, to treat them from any modern standpoint as fiction; “they are honest even when they are most untrustworthy.” This peculiar characterization defeats its own intent by obvious self-contradiction. What value honest untrustworthiness has is a bit hard to see. The whole muddle is cleared up if the traditions are regarded as honest and trustworthy allegories. For as honest but untrustworthy 223 history they make no sense whatever, and are valueless if untrustworthy. Any number of texts throughout the Bible at once lose all comprehensible meaning

if taken in the historical sense. For instance, there is the statement in I Cor., 6:1: “Do you not know that the Christians are to be the judges of the world? . . . Do you not know that we are to be the judges of angels, to say nothing of ordinary matters? . . . Do you not know that your bodies are parts of Christ’s body?” Taking “Christians” in its historical sense, the picture gives us the ludicrous scenario of good Church folk in the judgment pronouncing sentence upon Mohammedans, Buddhists, Zoroastrians! And taking Christ’s body as that of Jesus, the man, we would on Paul’s averment be his physical limbs, joints and viscera. Or is it permissible for literalists to take what they like as allegorical and also take what they want as literal? This is their only resort in the end. It makes inconsistency the necessary base of their structure. Also there is I Cor., 8:6, saying, “yet for us there is . . . just one through whom we live.” If the Lord Jesus Christ is Jesus, he is here declared to have made all things, most of which were here and made before he came. As the cosmic Logos, to be sure, he conceivably made the worlds; but as the man Jesus, his hands would have plenty to do with a few mountains and rivers. In the Oxyrhynchus papyri we have the Logos saying, “I am all that was and is and shall be! And my veil it hath never been lifted by mortals”—appropriate for the divine Word, but fatally inapplicable to the man of flesh. Even this lifting of the veil is drawn from the inscription on the base of the statue of Isis at Sais in Egypt. Also John’s passage that “he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not,” can have no reference to a personal living Jesus. If this is so it is important to note that even the last clause—that the world knew him not—must have some larger cosmic relevance and can not refer to popular rejection of him and his preachment, according to the accepted interpretation.

A work of great statistical research and vital data is Godbey’s *The Lost Tribes a Myth*. In it he asserts that modern excavations have shown Egyptian dominance in Palestine through the greater part of 3000 years. There were Israelite kings who were political “sons” of Egypt, and Pharaohs warred to establish their authority. (References to the Book of I Kings are given to support this.) “But,” says Godbey, “there is no extant effort to append the history of Israel to the antiquity of Egypt.” Of course there was not, for the reason that neither Egyptian nor ancient Hebrew literature was dealing with history or antiquity in the historical sense. But if Godbey means that there has been no effort to append Jewish “alleged” history to the religious antiquities of Egypt, Massey’s work alone would sufficiently belie his assertion.

A number of utterances of Jesus in his dramatic character of the cosmic Aeon or Logos makes his human personal stature seem futile and puerile beyond measure. His proclamation that he was before Abraham in the loins of the cosmic creation, helping to shape the universe from the

foundation of the worlds, sounds senseless when the majestic words are supposed to come from the lips of a mere man on earth. It is the same with his final consummative plea which he makes to his Father in John to restore unto him that glory which he had with him aforetime in cosmic heavens before the worlds were, after he had come into the world whither he had been sent and had done the divine preaching, “healing,” “miracle-working,” ending with his humiliating crucifixion on a wooden cross, is to reduce cosmic events to the proportion of newspaper chronicles. A great many texts would show the preposterous inapplicability of cosmic characterizations attaching to Jesus as the Logos when referred to Jesus as the man. The evidence in this chapter is of the kind generally called “textual evidence.” It is by no means lacking in either weight or cogency. What is here assembled is a mere tid-bit or filip to what would be a full meal of this significant material. The quantity could be increased to voluminous proportions. Strong as the temptation is to linger in this field, the practical considerations of the task call for a grappling with a series of far more substantial arguments and evidences in the case, which rise in a scale of pertinence and convincing force from chapter to chapter.

An item of sensational testimony bearing upon the pre-Christian origin and character of insignia claimed to be exclusively Christian is the statement of Lundy (Monumental Christianity, p. 125) that the well-known monogram of Christ regarded as an origination of Christianity and a cryptic shorthand signature for the name of their personal Founder, was antecedent to the time of Jesus. Says this author: "Even the XP, which I had thought to be exclusively Christian, are to be found in combination thus: [X P] on coins of the Ptolemies and on those of Herod the Great, struck forty years before our era, together with this other form so often seen on the early Christian monuments, viz., [X P]. And in regard to it, King well remarks, 'although these symbols, as far as regards their material form, were not invented by the Christians, they nevertheless received at this time a new signification and which became their proper one; and everybody agrees in giving them this peculiar signification.'" (King: Early Christian Numismatics, p. 12 ff.). As to this the important thing is that the emblem was not "invented" by the Christians and must have been therefore pre-extant. As to the "new" signification given it, that is another of those rash statements that are based on sheer assumption and the pious necessity of putting a face on the matter reflecting favorably on Christianity and detrimentally upon paganism, as much as to say that the pagans had the emblem, but of course did not know its real and true import and assigned some base meaning to it, and only the Christians elevated it to pure connotations. There has been enough of this brash apologetic for Christian superiority to sicken the conscientious mind. The truth in this instance happens to be precisely the opposite of what is claimed: it was the philosophical pagans who had the insignium and knew what it meant in its profoundest sense; it was the Christians who adopted it in ignorance and reduced it to the empty status of a supposed abbreviation of the name of a man. Lundy himself lets out a hint that confirms this explanation. He says:

"The Greek monogram, therefore, was the prevailing symbol of Christ as the First and the Last during the first three centuries of the Christian era, as more expressive of the faith in His divine character and mission . . . ; while the cross afterwards became the symbol of his human sufferings and death, until it culminated in the ghastly crucifix. Or rather, the primitive Church dwelt more on the divine side of Christ's person and office than upon the human." This last clause is a hint that entirely falls in consonance with the view that the personal Christ embodied in Jesus was a formulation of later incompetence after nearly two centuries, and not a simple fact stemming from direct original knowledge of such a man's existence. It is perhaps well to add Lundy's

supplemental remark, that the sacred monogram, as well as the cross, was used in every act of worship, stamped upon the bread of the Eucharist, marked on the foreheads of the baptized and worn on seal rings, long before the term Pope was ever exclusively applied to the Bishop of Rome, or ever Romanism was dreamed of. Full value must be given to such a fact as that the early Christian Fathers were insistent on comparing many features of antecedent religion with those of Christianity. For one instance Origen elaborately traces out the agreement of the resurrection of Dionysus in the Greek cult with that of Christ, and does it in such a way as to hint that the resurrection was an allegory of the “Pilgrim Soul” and not historical. Paul carries out this hint in Timothy. The historicity of the Gospel of Mark is directly challenged by Bacon in his *Jesus and Paul* (p. 147). He declares that when we look at this Roman Gospel which became so completely standard for this whole class of literature that no other considerable record of Jesus’ activity survives, and when we see how the material has been selected and what motive controls the elaboration, it will be perfectly clear that we have in Mark not a biography, not a history, but a collection of anecdotes; and even this collection is made for purposes of edification and not of historical record.

Abraham Geiger, German researcher, agrees with Graetz, one of the most voluminous of German textual critics, in thinking that in Jesus’ teaching “there is nothing new, or that what is new is put before us in a somewhat enervated form, just as it originated during an enervated period.” (Geiger: *Das Judentum und Seine Geschichte*, p. 119.)

This allusion to enervation falls in harmoniously with the thesis of deterioration of wisdom in Christian acumen after the second or third century. No students have surpassed the German investigators in thoroughness of research. Another of this group, G. Friedländer, in his *The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount* shows with much learning that not only the Sermon on the Mount, but the entire Christian system (excluding its asceticism) is borrowed from the Old Testament, the Book of Ben Sira, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Philo of Alexandria and the earlier portions of the Talmud and Midrash. Another of the German School, Chwolson, makes a specially noteworthy point that, rightly to understand Pauline and Post-Pauline Christianity, a knowledge of the Sibylline Oracles, Philo and Greek literature generally is most important. One of the finest Jewish treatises on the subject of Jesus of Nazareth is Joseph Klausner’s work under that title. He says definitely that the fourth Gospel is not a “religio-historical, but a religio-philosophical book.” It was not composed, he says, until about the middle of the second century, at a time when Christians were already distinct from Jews. The object of John’s Gospel is to interpret Jesus as the Logos in the extreme Philonic or cosmic sense, and it therefore passes over such details in the “life”

of Jesus as would appear too human! “It may well include a few historical fragments handed down to the author (who was certainly not John the disciple) by tradition; but speaking generally, its value is theological rather than historical or biographical.” Among capable students in the field of this study who entirely disbelieved in Jesus’ existence are B. Smith and Arthur Drews. Smith denies the existence of the town of Nazareth, in which determination some others have sided with him. Origen in the latter part of the second century states that he could find no trace of “Bethany beyond Jordan.” Smith advances the claim that Jesus was an object of worship to a sect of Nazarites who existed at the time when Christianity came into being, and whom the Christian Father Epiphanius mentions at great length.

It may be noticed in passing that Nietzsche, the philosopher of super-humanity in Germany a half century ago, pronounces the combining of the New Testament artificially with the Old in the Christian system as “perhaps the greatest piece of effrontery and worst kind of ‘sin against the Holy Ghost’ with which literary Europe has ever burdened its conscience.” (Beyond Good and Evil, III, p. 52.) Nietzsche’s view is endorsed by Grethenbach, who feels that “the solemn endorsement of the Jewish Scriptures now embodied in the ‘Old Testament’ by the Christian Church must stand out forever as one of the most remarkable facts in the history of religion. By this act Christianity made itself liable for and guarantor of a series of writings not a line of which has a known author, and but few incidents of which are corroborated by other testimony; writings which record prodigies and miracles more daring and more frequent than are asserted in the literature of any serious sort promulgated by any other people.” (A Secular View of the Bible.) This virtually amounts, he thinks, to Christianity’s chaining itself to a “corpse.” However this conclusion must be modified by the knowledge that while the Old Testament literature may be considered a “corpse” if regarded as history—rather a ghost or wraith of history—it must be accepted as a very living thing when taken, as it rightly should be, as vital allegory and drama of verity. Solomon, Grethenbach adds, wise and wealthy as he was, left no inscriptions or other stone witnesses to his name, as did the neighboring monarchs of the Nile and Euphrates.

Meister Eckhardt described the Christ as the collective soul of humanity. The celebrated Orientalist Rhys Davids in Hibbert Lectures, 1881, (p. 33) declares that historical criticism was quite unknown in the early centuries of Buddhism, “when men were concerned with matters they held to be vastly more important than exact statements of literal history.”

And Vittorio D. Macchioro in his fine work, *From Orpheus to Paul* supplements this with a statement that is of the utmost cogency in its bearing on the general thesis of this work. He says:

“In both cases an historical event, which in the opinion of the believers really happened, becomes a spiritual event for every man at all times.” This concedes essentially the whole case for our argument. This is the true and graphic description of the position of Christianity at this time and for centuries past. It is doing its best to make inspiring sustenance out of events that it feels must have happened because the belief in them yields spiritual nourishment. The Gospel story must be true history, it asseverates, for witness to which see the good effect it has had on believers. The events of Jesus’ life could not have worked so beneficial an effect upon millions and not have happened in reality. There must have been a personal Christ to have made Christianity the religion it has been. Without the change of a single word this last form of statement may be conceded to be the truth. But if ever truth was a two-edged sword cutting in both directions, it is so in this case, and with damaging consequences for Christianity. True enough (the conception of) a personal Christ was necessary to produce Christianity and make it the religion it has been. The simple contention of this work is that it would have been a far different and far better religion had it been based on the conception of the spiritual Christ instead of the historical Jesus. Would Christian adherents accept their statement in the form which might justly be substituted for the one above?-- There must have been a personal Jesus to have made Christianity the witch-baiting, heresy-hunting, doctrine-wrangling, war-waging, bigoted and persecuting religion it has been! Macchioro testifies to the truth of all that has been claimed here when he goes on to particularize that “in other words, an historical fact, or, if you prefer, a story which Christians regard as an historical fact, I mean the death and resurrection of the Christ, became a mystical fact, the spiritual rebirth of man.” The crux of significance in his statements is the point that the spiritual efficacy of the doctrine is in its being believed, not in its factuality. And it can unquestionably be better believed as allegory than as history. Any faith, factually founded or fancifully conceived, can become an effective agent of human psychologization, if only it is believed hard enough. Even what appear to be the splendid fruits of any religion may only be proving the operations of human psychology and not at all the alleged facts on which the religion is based.

“The Baptism and Eucharist,” concludes Macchioro, “are in the light of history nothing but acts of initiation.”

Bacon admits that Haggadic teaching, whether Jewish or Christian, has no restrictions in the use of fiction save to bring home the religious or moral truth intended. Its one rule is: “Let all things be done unto edification.”

Another German critic, Bruno Bauer, thought the Gospels were “abstract conceptions turned into history, probably by one man—the evangelist Mark.” W. B. Smith, Tulane University, in *Der Vorchristliche Jesus*, derives the “Christ myth” from certain alleged “Jesus cults,” dating from pre-Christian times. Jesus, he thinks, is the name of an ancient Western Semitic cult-god, and he finds a reference to the doctrines held by the devotees of this deity in Acts 18:25, where a Jew, Apollo, coming from Alexandria to Ephesus, already learned in the Way of the Lord, preaches Jesus. He connects the name Jesus with the Nazaraioi, the Nazarenes, a pre-Christian religious society. Not less summary in his conclusions is Drews, a profound analyst of the Jewish material. He says: “The Gospels do not contain the history of an actual man, but only the myth of the god-man, Jesus, clothed in an historical dress.” Then there is J. M. Robertson, whose labors unearthed much of the buried truth about the Jesus myth. He calls attention to the notable circumstance that the Miriam of Exodus is no more historical than Moses; like him and Joshua she is to be reckoned an ancient deity euhemerized; and the Arab tradition that she was the mother of Joshua (Jesus) raises an irremovable surmise that a Mary, the mother of Jesus, may have been worshipped in Syria long before our era. According to Preller (*Griech. Myth.*, I, p. 667) the founder of the Samo-Thracian Mysteries is one Jasion, a name cognate with Jesus. No less so is Jason, the recapturer of the “Golden Fleece,”—divinity coming under the zodiacal sign of Aries, the Ram.

Robertson is emphatic and decisive in his assertion that “the Christian system is a patchwork of a hundred suggestions drawn from pagan art and ritual usage.” No mind open to the relevance of facts and data can study ancient lore extensively without being driven to the same conclusion. Those who deny it simply have not looked at enough of the material. Even T. J. Thorburn in his work, *The Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels* (p. 91), says that the cave of Bethlehem had been from time immemorial a place of worship in the cult of Tammuz, as it actually was in the time of Jerome; and, as the “quasi-historic David” bore the name of the sun-god Daoud, or Dodo (Sayce:

Hibbert Lectures, pp. 56-7), who was identical with Tammuz, it was not improb-231 able on that account that Bethlehem was traditionally the city of David, and therefore no doubt, was deemed by the New Testament mythmakers the most suitable place for the birth of Jesus, the mythical descendant of that quasi-historical embodiment of the god Tammuz or Adonis.

Among the Gnostics Basilides and Valentinus never did acknowledge any historical founder of Christianity. (Massey: *Ancient Egypt*, p. 904.) And Clement of Alexandria is authority for the

statement that it was after his resurrection that Jesus revealed the true Gnosis to Peter, James and John. (Eusebius: H. E., 2:1.)

Epiphanius, in speaking of the “Sabelian Heretics,” says:

“The whole of their errors and the main strength of their heterodoxy they derive from some Apocryphal books, but principally from that which is called The Gospel of the Egyptians . . . for in that many things are proposed in a hidden, mysterious manner as by our Savior.” (Ad. Haeres., 26:2.) Priceless in value would be that same Gospel of the Egyptians if Christian fury had not destroyed it.

Ancient preoccupation with figurism and neglect of history even extended to a denial of the existence of Orpheus, legendary divine instructor of the Hellenic world. Says Lundy (Monumental Christianity, p. 190):

“Both Bryant and Von Doellinger express the opinion that Orpheus was only a name applied to a school of priests who brought the new cult of Dionysus into Greece. Vossius doubts, with good reason, whether any such person as Orpheus ever existed, citing Aristotle and Suidas to this effect. . . . Orpheus was a title under which Deity was worshipped, and he was the same as Horus of Egypt and Apollo of Greece.”

In the preface to his work, Prehistoric Religion (p. 18), the author, Philo L. Mills, writes that the written Bible is late in its appearance, but absolutely pure and primitive in its message, while the extrabiblical traditions held a priority of composition, but not of content; “they are valuable only so far as they lend confirmation to the biblical record, which is itself founded on prehistorical records, which have since been lost.” Mosheim (I, p. 482) says of Tatian, one of the later Church Fathers, that he “disclaimed the notion of Christ’s having assumed a real body.”

And he also says that “Marcion indisputably denied that Christ in reality either suffered or died; but at the same time he affirmed that this imaginary or feigned death was attended with salutary consequences to the human race.” By what psychological processes he fancied the Church’s perpetuation of a lie could generate salutary consequences for the human race is another of those doctrinal riddles coming down to us from early Christian days which we are supposed to accept without using our reason.

Mosheim adds that the Marcionites were the most fearless in courting martyrdom among the Christian sects, being surpassed by none “either in the number or the courage of their martyrs.”

If this is so, it only unhappily testifies to the fanatical possibilities even among people of considerable intelligence.

Origen, says Mosheim (II, 160),

“thought it utterly impossible that God, a being entirely separate from matter, should ever assume a body, or be willing to associate himself with matter. . . . That is, the divine nature, being generally a different substance from matter, the two substances cannot possibly be commingled.” There is apparent here a singular lack of esoteric systemology on Origen’s (or perhaps Mosheim’s) part. For that soul everywhere does commingle with matter to effect the work of creation is taught in Platonic-Orphic, Hermetic, and all ancient religious systems. But Origen was astute in recommending to the preachers of Christianity to carry into their practice a set of instructions he prescribed, following the maxim that it is vastly important to the honor and advantage of Christianity that all its doctrines be traced back to the sources of all truth, or to be shown to flow from the principles of philosophy; and consequently that a Christian theologian should exert his ingenuity and industry primarily to demonstrate the harmony between religion and reason, or to show that there is nothing taught in the Scriptures but what is founded in reason. If only sixteen centuries of Christian theologians had followed Origen’s prescription!

Mosheim has been quoted as saying that a serious fault of Origen’s was that “he lauded immoderately the recondite and mystical sense of scripture and unreasonably deprecated the grammatical and historical sense.” If this was or is a fault, how can the existence of a single theological seminary in Christian ecclesiasticism ever be justified? If there is no recondite or mystical meaning underneath the scriptures, why does it need a life training of their expositors, and why are the laity kept in ignorance of their deeper import? The gross absurdity of such whinings against the esoteric side of religion and its sacred books can now be better seen in its bald childishness.

Mosheim has to go to the length of saying the damaging thing that it is not good sense to be enthusiastic over the sublimer interpretations of scripture! And this is precisely the absurd dilemma in which Christian theology has always entangled itself in its efforts to talk down the esoteric element in its own history. It has to repudiate itself at its own best. There is no quibbling over the point: either there is a deeper sense to the scriptures, to all religious exposition, to the profounder experience of religion itself, than the simple-minded can apprehend, or all the labored academic studies in the field have been an extravagance and an impertinence. When they are sincere, all Christian mystics and Christianity’s greatest preachers have endlessly emphasized the

deeper intuitions of “the life hid with Christ” in the deeper chambers of human consciousness. The ecclesiastical quarrel with and hostility toward esotericism is on the face of it both dialectically irrational, directly treasonable and patently self-contradictory. It is a grave question whether there is not full warrant for characterizing it as a base sell-out of its own true genius for the reward of currying the support of the illiterate masses. It is a betrayal and re-crucifixion of the Christ in man, that has continued from the third century down to this present.

We have also seen, in his strictures upon Origen’s addiction to “allegory” how Mosheim reflects the constant theological fear of allegory, which is based on the ever-present possibility that if you give free-thinkers and Gnostics an inch of allegory in the scriptures, they may quickly stretch it to a mile and embrace the whole of scripture in your tropes. As between absurd and impossible history and sublime allegorical truth, the truth must be sacrificed for the history. A light on the date of “Luke’s Gospel” is found in the item that Theophilus, the friend to whom Luke addresses himself in the opening chapter, was Bishop of Antioch from about 169 to 177 A.D. (Cath. Ency., XIV, 625). If Luke was written 120 to 130 years after Jesus’ death, the chances of its being a legitimate, well-historicized and positive account of events so far past, and entirely quiescent in the interval since their occurrence, are very slim indeed.

To prove Old Testament “history” unauthentic does not directly discredit whatever may be genuine New Testament history. Still it would strengthen the case against the reliability of the latter if the Old can be disproved. So Higgins (Anac., p. 633) remarks how extraordinary a thing it is that the destruction of the hosts of Pharaoh should not have been known to Berosus, Strabo, Diodorus or Herodotus, that they should not have heard of these stupendous events either from the Egyptians or from the Syrians, Arabians or Jews. Yet, he subjoins, the same “events” happened in India. The Afghans or Rajapoutans, shepherd tribes as at this day, invaded south India and conquered Ceylon, then were driven out over Adam’s bridge; and the same kind of catastrophe is said to have overtaken their pursuers as that which overwhelmed the Egyptians pursuing the Israelites in the “Red” Sea. For its circumstantial significance it is well to bring to daylight another feature of historical fact that has received no attention for centuries. This is the matter of the monumental record of Jesus’ burial. Says Lundy (Monu. Christ., p. 256):

“The earliest example of our Lord’s burial which exists among the monuments of primitive Christianity is, perhaps, that of an ivory in the Vatican, of the sixth century, which represents a square structure surmounted by a dome . . . with a sleeping soldier on one side of it, and two of the holy women who came early in the morning to anoint the dead body of their Lord. No such

representations are found in the catacombs or 'early' churches either of the East or West. . . . So careful was early Christian art in abstaining from all painful representation of the Lord. It is a hint to modern idealists in art that they go and do likewise."

Perhaps it is also a hint that the basis of historical factuality behind the story of the Christ's death was too completely wanting. At the same level of significance is the sister fact that Lundy brings out (*Monu. Christ.*, p. 268). This time it is the resurrection. "It is a most singular fact that no actual representation of our Lord's resurrection has yet been discovered among the monuments of early Christianity.

The earliest that I can find is that published by Mr. Eastlake in Mrs. Jameson's *History of Our Lord*, representing a temple-like tomb, with a tree growing behind it on which two birds are feeding; the drowsy guards are leaning on the tomb, one asleep, the other awake, and two others are utterly amazed and confounded; an angel sits at the door of the sepulcher speaking to the three holy women; and our Lord is ascending a hill with a roll in one hand, while the other is grasped by the hand of the Eternal Father, as it is seen reaching down out of heaven. It is an ivory carving and said to belong to the fifth or sixth century. It is at Munich." Lundy adds that as the crucifixion is only indicated by symbol, so doubtless is the resurrection.

Grethenbach reminds us that we must make liberal allowance in our reading of New Testament Scripture for the desire on the part of Jesus' biographers to make the "incidents" of his life conform to the texts of ancient sacred works. Hence, he says, each reader must judge for himself whether he is being treated to fact or to the results of this process of conformity. What a basis for the substantiation of events that have determined the religion of one third of mankind!

In his *History of the Christian Religion to the Year 200* Waite affirms there is no evidence that any of those Gospels which were basic documents back of Matthew, Mark, and Luke taught the miraculous conception or the material resurrection of Christ, or contained any account of his miracles, or any references to any book containing such accounts or teachings. Waite says it can not be denied that evidence that the canonical Gospels were unknown to Justin Martyr is very strong, and indeed conclusive, and that his references and quotations were not from them but from other known Gospels, of which Irenaeus says there were many.

A weighty consideration is back of Waite's strong sentence that "no work of art of any kind has been discovered, no painting or engraving, no sculpture or other relic of antiquity, which may be looked upon as furnishing additional evidence of the existence of those Gospels, and which was

executed earlier than the latter part of the second century. Even the exploration of the catacombs failed to bring to light any evidence of that character.” It would certainly appear that the event of Jesus’ life had no relation to the time of its recording. It has never occurred to partisan zealots that almost indubitably this would be an indication that the “recording” had no relation to the event. An event that begins to be recorded only two hundred years after its occurrence hardly has a legitimate claim to the title of history. It must inevitably be a construction of legend and romanticism, which is exactly what the “life” of Jesus proves to be when examined.

Miss Holbrook says that the four Gospels were written in Greek (by Hebrew fishermen and simple unlearned citizens) and that there was no translation of them into other languages earlier than the third century. No autograph manuscript of any of them has ever been known, nor has any credible witness ever claimed to have seen such a manuscript. Origen says that the four were selected from a very large number, and Irenaeus says that the four were chosen out of many because there were four universal winds and four quarters to the globe. Such a reason for the number selected puts entirely out of court the reason commonly and naïvely believed to have been the guiding one—the selection of four because there were but four in existence. Of the ordinary natural motives that led to the writing and preserving of actual history, not a single one is evident in the production of the Gospels. Neither the time of their composition, nor the character of their material, nor the knowledge of their existence, nor the definiteness of any data concerning them bears evidence of their being veridical history.

Hippolytus claims that the Basilidian Gnostics accepted the Gospel entirely, but Mead asserts that there is evidence to prove they did not. On the contrary they explained such material as the historicized legends of initiation, the process of which is magnificently worked out in the *Pistis Sophia* treatise. Mead says of the learned Gnostic societies that in their eyes a Gospel was always taken in the sense of an exposition of the things beyond the phenomenal world. As they were the most intelligent of the early Christians, it is warrantable to regard their views as far the most likely version of the truth. The Basilidian view of Jesus was that he was the perfect “man” within the psychic and animal soul of man, or the innermost divine ray of consciousness within the mortal body. A point of fair cogency is made by Harry Elmer Barnes (*The Twilight of Christianity*, p. 415) that if Jesus had been the Son of God, neither he nor his Father would have allowed his doctrines to be perverted and later almost wholly supplanted by a jumbled compound of Judaism and paganism. It counts for much in the argument that Mead (*Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?*, p.

324) makes it clear that the name “Christian” was not a title given by the early followers of Jesus to themselves. Indeed it is found still unused by a series of Christian writers of the first half of the second century at the time when it was employed by Pliny the Younger in 112 A.D., by Tacitus in 116-117 A.D., and by Suetonius in 120 A.D. These Christian writers were content to designate the early communities of these co-believers by such expressions as “brethren,” “saints,” “elect,” “the called,” “they that believed,” “faithful,” “disciples,” “they that are in Christ,” “they that are in the Lord,” and “those of the way.”

A touch of early Christian association of doctrine with Egyptian origins that did not suffer erasure by the vandal hands, is seen in an identification, by Augustine and Ambrose amongst the Christian Fathers, of Jesus with and as the “good scarabaeus,” the Egyptian name for the divine Avatar coming under the zodiacal sign of Cancer, the Crab or Beetle. In accordance with the continuation for some time of the Kamite symbolism in Christianity, it was also maintained by some sectaries that Jesus was a potter and not a carpenter. The Egyptian God Ptah was the divine Potter, or shaper of the clay of man’s nature into divine form.

Not one person in thousands in the Church today has the faintest idea when the chronology or dating of the Christian era was fixed. Mead states that Dionysius of the sixth century, following Victorinus of Aquitaine of the preceding century, fixed the date of the nativity of Jesus. Turner of Oxford, in his article on the Chronology of the New Testament in Hastings’s Dictionary of the Bible, gives the nativity in B.C. 7-6. In the Ency. Biblica von Soden of Berlin, under “Chronology” gives the Birth “circa 4 B.C.” Some encyclopedias give two to three years of the ministry, others but one year. Likewise Mead cites the judgment of many scholars that the speeches of the persons in the Acts of the Apostles are the most artificial element in a book already vastly discredited as history. Schmiedel pointed out that the author constructed the utterances in each case according to his own conception. Even Headlam, the writer of the conservative article in Hastings’ Dictionary, admits that the speeches are “clearly in a sense the author’s own compositions.” It is impossible to ignore the force of the rather startling fact baldly stated by Mead (Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?, p. 48) when he writes:

“It has always been an unfailing source of astonishment to the historical investigator of Christian beginnings that there is not one single word from the pen of any pagan writer of the first century of our era which can in 238 any fashion be referred to the marvelous story recounted by the Gospel writers. The very existence of Jesus seems unknown.”

Mead goes deeply and carefully into the early use of the term Nazarioi (Nazarenes, Nazarites, Nazarians, etc.) and cites especially Epiphanius' references to it, showing how this careless or over-imaginative "historian" of the "heresies" entangles himself in many flagrant contradictions in his statements. Says Mead:

"The historical fact underlying all this contradiction seems to be simply that 'Nazoraei' was a general name for many schools possessing many views differing from the view which subsequently became orthodox. Their descendants are the Mandaites of southern Babylonia, who have the Codex Nazaraeus." Epiphanius claims strenuously that the Nazoraeans were the first Christians and that they used both Old and New Testament,--though how they could have used the New Testament when it was not yet in existence, he does not explain! Incidentally the present thesis that there were extant many documents like the Logia or Sayings and various Mystery ritual texts or "Gospels" in all the ancient period, both before, during and after Jesus' "life," is the only one that permits us to solve the difficulty of Epiphanius' claims without charging him with overt lying. The "Gospels" were in existence, yes, but not as the canonical Gospels officially apotheosized at Nicea in 325. But so were they in existence centuries before Christ.

Further with reference to the term Nazar, Mead (Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?, p. 346) has to say that the Old Testament Nazirs were those "consecrated" to Jahweh by a vow, and their origin goes back to very early times in Jewish tradition.

"Now it is to be remembered," he says, "that in Numbers VI the word nezer is applied to the taking of the Nazirite vow of separation and consecration, and the name netzer (branch) is given to one of the disciples of Jesus in the Talmud, and in one of the Toldoth recensions to Jeschu himself, and that the commentators are agreed that this is a play on notzri, the Hebrew for 'Nazarene,'" or Galilean.

In discussing the Ebionites, one of the earliest Christian sects, Mead says that the main charge against them, as related by Hippolytus (Philos., VIII, p. 34) is that they, like all the earliest "heretics" decried 239 the later doctrine of the miraculous physical virgin birth of Jesus. Strange to note again that the closer one gets to the period of Jesus' alleged time, the greater and more general is the denial or ignorance of his existence. The further one draws away from it, the greater and more insistent the "proofs" of it! This again entirely reverses the universal phenomenon of a historical recording. Most living characters are homely and familiar entities during and immediately after their lives, and only wax romantic and haloed after centuries have elapsed. But Jesus was airy and ethereal in the first century, and crystallized into quite concrete personality

after several centuries. Every writer about him from the twelfth century on can describe his appearance, his moods, his motives to meticulous particularity far better than anyone writing in the first century.

A curious early Christian document is Justin's Dialogue Cum Trypho, or debate with Trypho, in which (xlix) he puts the following argument into the mouth of his Jewish opponent:

"Those who affirm him to have been a man, and to have been anointed by election, and then to have become a Christ (Anointed), appear to me to speak more plausibly than you," that is, than Justin, who maintained the physical birth of Jesus.

Justin represents his opponent as arguing that Jesus was born naturally like other humans, and not by a miracle of virgin parturition. But this whole debate is wide of the mark, since the question is not whether his birth was natural or supernatural, but whether it was a physical event at all,--not how it occurred, but whether it occurred. The question is not one of quality or manner, but purely one of fact.

A work of Celsus, the pagan debater with Origen, called The True Logos, which certainly would have yielded us much light on all early Gnostic or esoteric interpretation of sacred writings, has been destroyed by the Christians. It may with many carry weight in the discussion that both Kant and Hegel negate the historical Jesus.

Of the Church Fathers Irenaeus seems never to have subscribed to the legend of Jesus' death on the cross, or his death at all at the early age of thirty-three years. It is a curious thing and hard to explain in the face of the claim that Jesus' life was accepted historically by the universal early Church, that Irenaeus repeats the famous legend which refutes the Gospel "history" flatly. Irenaeus was born in the early part of the second century between 120 and 140 A.D. He was Bishop of Lyons, France; and he repeats a tradition testified to by the elders, which he alleges was derived directly by them from John, the "Disciple of the Lord," to the effect that Jesus was not crucified at the age of thirty-three, but that he had passed through every age and lived on to be an "oldish man." And we are permitted to wonder how such a tradition, attributed to so accredited a source as John, could have lived on for so many years, if the general field was occupied by the factual acceptance of the Gospel narrative, or how it could have been purveyed by a Bishop of such eminence in the Church as Irenaeus. There are other semi-authenticated tales and legends which keep Jesus alive beyond his early thirties, and afloat in our modern day are works and canards purporting to expose a lost record of the Savior's escape from death in Judea and his travels and

teachings in Eastern monasteries, inevitably in Tibet and the Himalayas, that Shamballah of spiritual mystery, where any such fanciful history can safely be localized. The significant thing to note about all this is that the late inventions in the field of etherealized imagination are very likely no more daring and bizarre than those of the earlier centuries. Candor and honest reflection have both had to be cast aside and a curtain of reticence drawn over the glaring data which operate so directly to contradict the historicity of Jesus, in the material of the famous fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. By theologians it is known as the chapter of the "Suffering Servant." In it are depicted in the most vivid and memorable phraseology the sufferings of the divine agent of human redemption, who sacrifices his heavenly heritage and reduces himself to the form of a lowly servant to bear the sins of wayward men. It is too well known to need quotation. Its impressive recital of the Logos bearing our sins in his body and suffering agony for our transgressions is unforgettable literature. But the point to note is that it is a descriptive summary of exactly what the "historical" Jesus experienced in his earthly career, and it was written centuries before Jesus "lived." Again it appears that Jesus' biography was in considerable part written before he came. Massey has called attention to the fact, disconcerting to the supporters of the historical thesis, that the Jesus of Revelation is described with female breasts. The conception of supernal deity as androgyne 241 motivated the representation of types of deity as combined male and female. But this was all in the allegorical portrayal and it removes the data from history. In this light Lord Raglan's statement can be well credited, that we can not go far toward the true realization of the meaning of ancient literary formulations without recognizing that the archaic tomes rest on no historical foundations, but that they are documents illustrating the development of religious ideas and systems that are of the highest importance. And when research has fortified itself with this initial instrument of correct comprehension, Raglan avers that all the difficulties will disappear. For that which is difficult and impossible as history, becomes not only possible but sublimely illuminating as mythicism. This chapter must include an item of the most curious sort, that will doubtless fall with great surprise and some dismay into the minds of many readers. This has to do with the several varying reports or accounts of Jesus' personal appearance and beauty—or ugliness—of physical features. We have here one of the most certain instances of the confusion of allegory with history, for on no other grounds can so eccentric a misconstruction be accounted for. Very understandably all the prevalent notions of the Christ's personality picture him as of the highest order of comeliness. It would not match popular conceptions of his character to think of him otherwise. Surely the Son of God could be nothing less than radiant with charm and beauty. If he had not been comely, he would have had to be made so to give devotees the only picture of him that would have been acceptable to their fancies. Hence every painting and sculpture from the early centuries

portrayed him as a man of typical saintliness and beauty. The imaginative genius of artists has extended itself to the utmost to create a form and appearance, mien and expression, that would most fully embody the highest Christian conception of divine character. Jesus was painted to depict what the Christian imagination conceived the perfect man and Son of God in human form to be like. This portrayal represented in the finale a compromise between or composition of the worldly ideal of natural masculine beauty and celestial spirituality, softened by the elements limned in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the man of sorrows who bore our pains in his person. It disturbs many who like to emphasize his humanity, in which he is presented as in all respects like unto us, to read that he never laughed. This tradition precluded his ²⁴² ever being pictured laughing. Laughter, though one of the commonest and most natural of human expressions, does not quite comport with the heavier dignity and gravity of the theological conception of his nature and mission. It is a little too light to harmonize with the more austere solemnity of his earthly errand. Human laughter is not commonly thought of as divine, and if the gods laugh, we are not too certain it befits their empyreal dignity. They might be laughing at us. Laughter is commonly too close to carousal and buffoonery to be seemingly associated with high divinity. Our notion of divinity is inevitably colored with Sabbath sanctity of decorum. Our puritanical bent had pretty effectively debarred laughter from the Sabbath, hence from religion, and hence from the Christ's personality.

The portraiture of Jesus inevitably took the form and character which these considerations dictated, and we have the conventional form, face, bearing and clothing so well known. But it will come with a heavy shock to all who with uncritical minds have accepted this portrayal as at least tentatively a possibility of likeness to the living person of Jesus, to learn for the first time that a number of the earliest Fathers positively stated that Jesus was ugly, ungainly, uncomely and deformed! We can do no better than cite Lundy's findings on this matter (*Monu. Christ.*, p. 232):

"Now it is worthy of special consideration that none of the sculptured or painted representations of Christ in early Christian art exactly agree with the reputed descriptions given of his personal appearance by Agbarus, Lentulus and others. It is not an easy matter to determine when the mere symbols of Christ were developed into pictorial and sculptured representations of his person; but one thing is certain, viz., that the uniform testimony of the earliest writers of the Christian era is to the effect that our Lord's person was insignificant and void of beauty, but that the spirit which shone through his humanity was all beauty and glory."

Again Lundy wrestles (p. 231) with the point:

“The New Testament writings give no account of our Lord’s personal appearance. ‘Fairer than the children of men’ in mind, body and soul was the Hebrew ideal of the Messiah, as the Psalmist expresses it. (XLV:2): and ‘He hath no form nor comeliness,’ no attractive beauty, is another Hebrew aspect of him, as Isaiah reports it; and with such opposite prophetic anticipations, is it any wonder that the subject of them has actually given rise to two schools of ancient Christian art, or rather two different modes of treating our Lord’s personal appearance? One made him the young and blooming and beautiful Divinity, like Krishna, Mithra and Apollo; the other gave him a sad and ugly face, covered by a beard, and made him really and literally ‘a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.’”

Lundy should have added Isaiah’s more specific details of portraiture in the verse which runs: “How was his visage marred, more than any man; and his form, more than the sons of men; disfigured till he seemed a man no more, deformed out of the semblance of a man.” The Son of God, deformed more than even humankind! This puts the entire historicity in jeopardy. The structure of Christian theology rests very definitely upon the claim that the babe of Bethlehem was the literal and historical fulfillment of Old Testament “prophecy.” It is now caught in the dilemma of having to admit—if Jesus was divinely comely—that the prophecy failed of fulfillment in this important and specific item. To have fulfilled the “prophecy” Jesus must be put down as ugly and deformed! And if Jesus is admitted to have been ill-featured, then millions upon millions of pages of Christian pious effusion about the Galilean’s austere beauty must be reduced to what they are at any rate—unctuous froth. We find Justin Martyr, early second century Father, quoted as follows: “He appeared without comeliness, as the scriptures declared,” when he came to the Jordan. Clement of Alexandria deposed to this effect: “the Lord himself was uncomely in aspect . . . his form was mean, inferior to men.” Celsus, in his debate with Origen, argues that since the Divine inhabited the body of Jesus, that body must certainly have been different and more beautiful and radiant than common, in grandeur, beauty, strength, voice, impressiveness and influence, “whereas his person did not differ in any respect from another, but was, as they report, little and ill-conditioned and ignoble, i.e., low and mean.” Origen in rebuttal protests Celsus’ using the prophet’s description in literal application to the man Jesus, and argues that any way all human meanness was changed and glorified in his transfiguration, resurrection and ascension. Tertullian decides that no matter how poor and despised that body may be, Jesus is still his Christ, be he inglorious, ignoble and dishonored. David’s words that “he is fairer than the children of men” are applicable in that figurative sense of spiritual grace, when he has put on his shining armor of beauty and glory. Tertullian (*Flesh of Christ*, Ch. 9) says “his body did not reach even 244 to human beauty, to say nothing of heavenly glory.” Augustine sidesteps the bald issue by

asseverating his beauty in all his functions, offices, acts, miracles, words, character and mission. He summarizes his position in his statement (De Trinitate, VIII, Ch. 4, tom. 8, p. 951, Migne's Ed.): "Whatever the bodily appearance or face of our Lord was, it was but one, yet it was represented and diversified by a variety of numberless ideals." Lundy observes that this passage clearly proves that in Augustine's day the representations of Jesus' features were according to each Christian or Gnostic artist's own conception, and that the theologian-saint would have mentioned any portrait of Jesus if there had been one extant, either of him or of his mother, the virgin Mary. For he adds:

"We know not the face or personal appearance of the Virgin Mary." (De Trinitate, VIII, Ch. 5.)

Abarbanel says that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah can not apply to the personal Messiah, because of the prevailing tradition of the Jewish people that he was a beautiful and blooming youth. This tradition surely had its roots in the imaginative characterizations of the Messiah as the sun-god, which gave to Krishna, Agni, Mithra, Zarathustra, Horus and Apollo the ruddiest bloom of youth and beauty.

It has already been demonstrated that the letter of Lentulus in which Jesus is described ostensibly from first-hand knowledge is a forgery. It goes on to state that Jesus' hair is the color of wine and golden from the root, and from the top of the head to the ears straight and without luster, but descending from the ears in glossy curls to the shoulders, flowing down the back and parted in two portions down the middle after the manner of the Nazarenes; his forehead is smooth, his face without blemish and slightly mantled with a ruddy bloom; his expression is noble and gracious. His nose and mouth are faultless. His beard is full and abundant and of the wine and gold color of his hair, and forked. His eyes are blue and very brilliant. In rebuke and reproof he is awe-inspiring, in exhortation and instruction he is gentle and persuasive. None has seen him laugh, but many have seen him weep. His person is tall and slender; his hands long and straight, his arms graceful. In speech he is grave and deliberate, his language and manner quiet and simple. In beauty he surpasses the most of men.

John Damaschius of the eighth century cites an early tradition saying he was like his mother, assuming her features. Lundy, quotes Didron as testifying to the descriptions of him as given by those mystics to whom he appeared in psychic vision. These say that he was tall, clad like a Jew, beautiful of face, the splendor of divinity darting from his eyes, his voice full of sweetness. Lundy notes that these traditions do not agree with the Patristic writings on the subject nor with the portraits copied by Boscio from the frescoes of the catacombs. Lundy concludes by citing the

fact that there is nearly a score of examples like the two copied by Boscio, where the ugly and bearded Christ and the beautiful and beardless one occur together on the same monuments!

This whole debate in the early Church forum is a striking instance of the ignorance and confusion concerning their own theological material in which the Christians became entangled by reason of their smothering Egypt's time-honored wisdom. Egypt stood all the while holding in her hands the answer to the riddle of the two contradictory versions of Jesus' personal appearance. Its Messianic Horus was figuratively two characters in one, "the double Horus," "Horus of the two horizons" (west and east). "Horus the Elder and Horus the Younger." As the elder he typified the adult divinity of one cycle; as the younger, he was the new-born son of that aged father. Horus the Elder represented the aged past, Horus the Younger the new-born present and the coming future. As Massey so convincingly shows, the two characterizations passed over into Christianity through Gnostic or other channels, and after some time the inner connections having been lost, both stood facing the ignorant Christians with all explanation gone. Hence the debate in the dark. Again we have a grim demonstration of what a miscarriage of rational sense is produced the moment allegory is converted into history.

There has been grouped in this chapter a long series of data, all of a certain evidential character bearing with accentuated force upon the chief point to be established by the work. It is not the first time that one or more of these points have been raised. But it is the first time that they have been assembled into an organic whole and focused directly upon a single object on the basis of a thesis adequate to give them all a unified coherence and consistency. All acquire a substantial force and pertinence through the application of the keys of the esoteric method and the esoteric wisdom. And while perhaps no one of them may be claimed to exert decisive influence in the final conclusion, the articulated phalanx of them all in linked array does indeed present a massive body of evidence for the case that can not be pushed aside by any critic. If this was the whole evidence the case would still be strong. Limited space has curtailed the expansion of some of the points, as others of far great cogency are awaiting presentation. Many of these are so strong in their testimony that single ones among them might be deemed of sufficient weight and decisiveness to support the main contention. Collectively they must be accounted as constituting final and conclusive proof. The first group of these deals with the incidents and circumstances connected with the Nativity of Jesus. When these incredible circumstances of alleged history are carefully scrutinized and seen at last in their relation to Egyptian elucidative constructions, the weakness of the historical rendition of the Gospels will be apparent with a vividness never before realized. The Gospel narrative has been so romanticized with far-away ideality that the mere act of

facing the data in the full realistic sense as history that actually occurred is itself a shocking experience to hypnotized votaries. It is a straight fact that, stripped of their imaginative halo, most of the Gospel events stand forth eerie and grotesque to naked vision. The readiest way to discredit three fourths of the Biblical “history” is to take the narrative strictly at its word—and then reproduce it with literal realism. The general result is slap-stick comedy ready for Hollywood’s jaded producers, buffoonery raised to the square or cube.

Chapter X COSMIC MAJESTY WITH LOCAL ITEMS

The first item to be examined in connection with the Nativity is that which has come to be known as the Slaughter of the Innocents. If any sane and intelligent person will let his reason function for a single minute upon the subject he will be assured that such an episode as the wholesale slaughter of the male babes under two years in Judea by edict of the ruler of the province and for the reason alleged could have held its place in Christian minds as factual history for centuries only through a total paralysis of mentality so great as to surpass all credibility. It would surely seem as if the acceptance of such an incident as part of the history of the Savior of the world could have occurred only among people rated as semi-intelligent or semi-barbaric. The phenomenon of its having gained and long held credible status among people whom history rates as the leaders in world civilization challenges the student with the riddle of such an anomaly. It would almost seem a labor of supererogation to demonstrate its patent non-historicity; but with millions of minds still hallucinated by the spell of the miraculous and the supernatural as being the legitimate essence of “religion,” and with the Bible standing in the character of a fetish which must be approached only when the reason has been put in abeyance, the task of disproving what could not by any possibility have occurred must be undertaken.

To begin with, the consideration at once occurs to reflection—when one transfers the episode from romantic subjectivism to concrete realism on the plane of everyday factuality, in the process of which nearly every incident in the Bible at once appears impossible and ridiculous—that to carry out such an edict Herod must have struck at all the infant children of his own political supporters, his friends, his courtiers, the members of the ring that are with him in power. It is incredible that a man in his position, short of being demented, would have risked the infliction of slaughter and grief upon the families of those in his own political “gang.” Nor is it conceivable that this powerful coterie of his closest supporters, his cabinet, and the noblemen would have permitted an order that would have involved their own children. Then the incident is recorded only in the Gospels; and by now it must be clear that the Gospels are spiritual dramas and not histories. There is therefore no historical record of the event. Veridical history knows absolutely nothing about it. It is a total blank as regards this incident in the “life” of Jesus. It is an allegorical formulation and nothing else. It, too, traces its mythological origin to Egypt, where the Innocents—the virgin units of divine mind, our souls-to-be—were attacked, like the infant Hercules in his cradle, by the two reptiles (representing the lower natural forces of the body, in warfare with the newborn Christos taking his initial plunge into carnality), the Apap serpent and the Herut water monster. The soul-

units were characterized as “innocent” because they were children of God, newly generated offshoots of his mind, that had not ever previously been wedded to matter in full incarnation. The meaning, as always, is evolutionary, cosmic or spiritual, never objectively historical. On their downward plunge into the world and body they had to withstand the onslaught of the carnal nature with its menace of engulfing, devouring their incipient spiritual nature. This was dramatized as the attack of the serpent upon them in their infancy or childhood. The youthful David overcame the monster Goliath as one version of it, and the fairy legends of the young St. George or petit Jack battling the giant are other forms of it. It is all to typify the danger involving the hosts of young souls from the side of the carnal body on their first venture into incarnation.

Higgins says categorically that the story of Herod and the Innocents is quite unknown to all the Jewish, Roman and Greek historians. Mead states that the Talmud Rabbis know nothing of Herod’s wholesale murder of the children as recounted in the introduction of our first canonical Gospel. Josephus knows nothing of it, although he had no reason for whitewashing the character of Herod had such a dastardly outrage been an actual fact. And the Talmud Rabbis so thoroughly hated the memory of Herod that they could not have failed to record such a horror had he been really guilty. Mead adds that we must remember that the Rabbis had no belief whatever in the Gospel tradition as history.

On the subject Lundy has this to say:

“Although persecution began with the very birth and infancy of Christ, when King Herod sent his ‘blood-hunting slaughtermen’ to Bethlehem to ‘spit the naked infants upon pikes and make their mad mothers’ howls break the clouds,’ yet of this horrible massacre there is no trace at all in the Roman catacombs and none in any Christian art until about the close of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century, when we have an example on a sarcophagus from the crypt of St. Maximin, France. . . . Modern Romish art must needs represent the actual slaughter in all its horrible and sickening details to make it impressive to the vulgar, as Fra Angelico, Raphael and especially Rubens have done. Early Christian art had a more refined delicacy of taste and far better conceptions of the true and only object of art, which is to teach, cheer, comfort and elevate the soul of man, and not fill him with horrors and ideas of cruelty and licentiousness.”

(Lundy adduces the valuable testimony also that there is no picturing of the flight into Egypt and return of the holy family to Nazareth in early art, and none of Christ among the doctors in the temple until about the fifth century.) To accentuate the point that considerations of factual

history had little to do with the fixing of a date for Jesus' birth, it is worth inserting a quotation given by Epiphanius (Haer., LI, p. 22) from the Codex Marcianus:

“The Savior was born in the forty-second year of Augustus, king of the Romans, in the consulship of the same Octavi(an)us Augustus, (for the thirteenth time), and of Sil(v)anus according to the consular calendar among the Romans. For it is recorded in it as follows: When these were consuls . . . Christ was born on the sixth day of January, after thirteen days of the winter solstice and of the increase of the light and day. This day (of the solstice) the Greeks, I mean the Idolaters, celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of December a feast called Saturnalia among the Romans, Kronia among the Egyptians, and Kikellia among the Alexandrians. For on the twenty-fifth day of December the division takes place which is the solstice, and the day begins to lengthen its light, receiving an increase, and there are thirteen days of it up to the sixth day of January, until the day of the birth of Christ (a thirtieth of an hour being added each day), as the wise Ephraim among the Syrians bore witness by this inspired passage (logos) in his commentaries, where he says: ‘The advent of our Lord Jesus Christ was thus appointed: (First) his birth according to the flesh, then his perfect incarnation among men which is called Epiphany, at a 250 distance of thirteen days from the increase of the light; for it needs must have been that this should be a figure of our Lord Jesus Christ himself and of his twelve disciples, who made up the number of the thirteen days of the increase of the light.’”

The sixth of January is still traditionally celebrated as the day of the birth of Christ in England and elsewhere. Christian heads are for the most part guiltless of any suspicion of the reason for the date. The quoted passage hints at it, but, without ancient Egyptian backgrounds of data, leaves the matter still obscure. We have already seen that the most primary significance of the number twelve, as pertaining to the disciples, tribes of Israel, months of the year, and other usages, was the Egyptian designation, the Twelve Saviors of the Treasure of Light. The Christ would be fully “born” in humanity when his gradual infiltration into human consciousness had unfolded to perfection the twelve rays of divine mind which man is to express. The inchoate divine light in mankind was to increase by twelve stages of growth to the full shining of Christhood in all hearts. What more natural symbolism then could be adopted than the counting of the first twelve days of increasing light from the solstice of darkness, figured as the twenty-fifth of December? And after twelve days came the thirteenth, on which the whole twelve powers were synthesized in the unified being of the Christos. So that now with the resort again to Egyptian constructions of imagery there can be announced for the first time to the Christian population the correct significance of their celebrating the birth of Jesus both on the twenty-fifth of December and the

sixth of January. As the Egyptians would have said, the December solstitial date commemorated the birth of Horus the Younger, the infant Horus, type of the first or natural man Adam; while the January date thirteen days later marked the day of the birth of Horus the Elder, Horus the adult, the *homme fait* or man made perfect, second Adam. In simpler terms, the December date marked the physical beginning of the birth of the Christ spirit in mankind and the January date marked the concluding stage of its aeonial increase. All of which again throws the meaning of the word “birth,” in reference to the Christos, into its true and proper significance, as a gradual increase of a spiritual quality over a long period, the whole cycle or aeon. Man, who is to be divinized, had first to be physically “born” on a given planet. So the Christ-man as ritualistic type of a divinized humanity, had also to be given his “birth-day”—at the winter solstice, as a babe in the flesh. It will be noticed that the tradition outlined in the Codex Marcianus lays significant stress upon the apparently extraneous fact that the Savior’s birth on the sixth of January came in the thirteenth consulship of Octavius Augustus, obviously an obscure hint that Deity fell in with the symbolism to the extent of adding another historical thirteen to the combination. Christians celebrate many a festival day in the year’s calendar without the slightest inkling as to the long-lost purport of the ritual commemorations. Reverting to the Herodian hecatomb of infant death, if the inherent impossibilities of the case do not suffice to determine the matter against the historicity, there is another fact that settles it with finality. This is the date of Herod’s death. Christian historians have been relentlessly forced to assent to the year 4 B.C. as the date of the Tetrarch’s demise. When verified historical fact is the piper, theological fiction must dance in tune. So back goes the official “date” of Jesus’ birth to the year 4 B.C., since Herod must be kept in the story. This throws the whole dating of the Christian era four years out of line with the first guess.

But what will be done now when another authentic date is found and another shift will have to be made on the strength of it? Another ruler is mentioned as on the throne when Jesus was born, and his date is still farther away from the year one. Matthew says that Caesar Augustus levied the great world tax that required Joseph to register at Bethlehem, “now when Cyrenius was Governor in Syria.” There has hardly been a period in eastern Mediterranean history when the records of the provincial governments under the Roman Empire were so well kept as just the time referred to. The official annals of the Syrian government are well preserved; and they show no Governor at all by the name of Cyrenius! The closest approximation to the name is Quirinus, and Moffatt’s translation of the New Testament inserts Quirinus for Cyrenius in the Nativity narrative. But the authentic date of the governorship of this Quirinus is the two-years period between 13 and 11 B.C.! To accommodate its dating to this item of the “historical” chronicle of Jesus’ “life,” official ecclesiasticism must now endorse a date eight or nine years farther back than 4 B.C. Two such

corrections leave the whole historical structure of Christianity badly shaken, near in fact to the point of tottering. Without a change in the date of the 252 first Christmas the participation of Herod in the infant slaughter becomes impossible. The personal Herod was four years in his grave when the Bethlehem babe arrived.

Comment has already been made on the close similarity of the name of the Egyptian serpent Herut to the Tetrarch's name, and the likelihood of a substitution of the latter for the former when the Egyptian myth was converted into "history." Presumably clinching proof of this jugglery may never be available. It must be left then to rest upon the strong presumptive probabilities inherent in the situation. It must be held deeply suggestive, however, that the name Herod occupies exactly the same place, role and significance in the Gospel "incident" that the Herut reptile fills in the Egyptian allegory! It is the Herut menace to our young divine souls in the one instance, and the Herod menace to the young divinity in the other. This alone is enough to remove it from the realm of coincidence and conjecture and to throw it over into that of identity of character. If it was one isolated single occurrence of such definite correspondence, the case might be classed as accidental. But when it is known to be but one of a long series of such agreements and matchings, sound judgment inclines to call it another historization of Egyptian myth. Such it almost indubitably must be considered. The fact of Herod's death in the year 4 B.C. alone jars the whole fabric of Christian systematism to its foundations. Christian apologists have belittled in the past, and presumably will again in the future depreciate the importance of the precise date of the birth of their Savior, and will in spite of all facts cling to the historicity of the episode. But we shall see that the structure of the historical claim, severely weakened by the non-authenticity of its very first chapter of events, will be still further assaulted and finally dismantled by a long series of blows from the side of fact, until if it stands at all, it must rest on sheer stolid faith alone. It will be found to be utterly discredited by reason, by data, and by the sheer physical impossibility of the occurrence of Biblical events when they are treated realistically and not romantically. The latter particular will be noted in glaring vividness when the legend of the star of Bethlehem is examined.

From Herod at the birth, it is a short jump to Pilate at the death, of the historical Jesus.

Authoritative data are wanting to present any outright negative evidence as to the participation of the pro-consul in the Gospel events.

But there is a textual detail that looms larger and larger the longer it is considered. It is a phrase in the Apostles' Creed of the Christian Church.

The creed—worthy itself of a whole volume’s study—is by no means a mere abbreviated rune or formulary of Christian theological belief. It is that, but it is infinitely more than that. It is a brief of ancient cosmology and creative process, incarnation of spirit in matter, descent of soul into body and return to greater deific state by virtue of the victory won in the lower worlds. An item of the journey of celestial divine spirit through the planes of matter that could not be left out was the “suffering” entailed for it by the necessity of its going “under” the limitations imposed on it by matter’s lower range of vibrational sensitivity. Now matter, as has been set forth fully elsewhere, was typified universally and ubiquitously in ancient symbolism by water, so that even the name most generally applied to the mothers of the Christs was in whatever language the word for water, sea, ocean. Mary is incontestably of this origin, being Mare, Maria in Latin, and Thallath, “the sea” (name of a Hellenic “Mother of God”), in Greek. Primeval space, the mother of all things, being matter in inchoate form, was the Great Deep, the waters of the abyss, the firmament of the waters. Now the quality of matter that caused it to be the generator of suffering for the energies of spirit that were “cribbed, cabined and confined” under its sluggish inertness, was its density. It is therefore not a shrewd guess, not a mere chance discernment of a concatenation of phrase and idea that enables us to make a totally new translation of one of the clauses in the Apostles’ Creed, by which change the historical Pilate is swept entirely out of the narrative. It is not a sheer stretching of points to make designed ends meet, but must be the result of the rational necessities involved in the only correct and consistent envisagement of the matters discussed in the Creed, when it is asserted that the creedal phrase detailing with the utmost brevity the duress of spirit under the thralldom of matter, must inexpugnably have been in the true original formulation of the ritual statement, “he suffered under the dense sea, was crucified, dead and buried.” “Dense sea” would have been merely a euphemism, familiar to all in Mystery Ritual cultism, for “he suffered under the limitation of dense matter,”—a shorthand expression in Mystery language. What, then, in the light of this irrefutable statement of the true basic meaning that fits with absolute nicety and exactness into that very place in the Creed, must be our amazement when we turn to the Greek and find a similarity of name even closer to identity than the Herod-Herut one—“dense sea” in the Greek manuscripts is given as @insert Greek equiv. (pontos pilètos)! “He suffered under pontos pilètos: he suffered under the dense sea” (of matter). It is far from being a merely specious argument, indeed it is a fully warranted contention, that the sudden introduction in this majestic cosmograph in the impressive ritual of the name of a mere man is a misfit and impertinence bordering close on to the sublimest ineptitude. It is exactly like the sudden injection of Bill Brown of 128 North Sixth Street into a line in Paradise Lost. It is too sudden a jerk from the sweep of cosmic drama to page 195 of a school history. A personal reference to our own childhood reaction to this phrase in the

Creed may be pardoned. Even from the age of ten or twelve there seemed something wholly incongruous and vaguely disturbing when the Creed jumped without warning from celestial operations on a majestic scale to the judge of a court trial down in Judea. The sudden insertion of one human person's name in the text amid otherwise lofty epic dramatization was jarring and disconcerting. It was an ideological anomaly. It did not ring harmoniously with the context. It stands to reason that the introduction of a local ruler's name into what is provably an august formula of creative cosmology and evolutionary method is obviously an interpolation, and a glaring instance of the wreckage caused by that enormous transposition of allegory and formulae over into supposed history. It will be denied because we can produce no cinema of the scribes caught in the act of changing Herut to Herod and pontos pilètos to Pontius Pilate; but the results of the change glare at us nevertheless. It must strike anyone who thinks clearly for a moment that the writer of a formulary, as the Creed was intended to be, aiming to express most succinctly the suffering of soul under matter's heavy burden, would have been most unlikely to summarize the long list of dramatic ordeals in mortal career with the phrase "suffered under Pontius Pilate," the proconsul. Even in the "history" of Jesus according to the Gospels, the man Pilate was not at all a central factor in Jesus' sufferings. His part was in fact incidental. Pilate's decree was merely an incident in a chain of events that already had gained such moral 255 momentum that any other decision than condemnation would have been an anticlimax and an artistic faux pas. It would have wrecked the scenario. Pilate's pardon of Jesus would have left Christianity limp and unheroic, much as if in a murder mystery the first-chapter murder victim should recover and defeat the story. Jesus had to be condemned—"it must needs be that Christ should suffer and enter into his glory"—and Pilate's dramatic role was merely mechanical. He has never been taken, even by literalists, for more than a puppet or marionette in the play. And all this inharmony of the elements in the situation is nicely adjusted and resolved if the original reading of "dense sea" is put back in place of the forged proconsul's name.

As to the Apocryphal Gospel of Pilate and the documents entitled Letters of Pilate to Seneca and the philosopher's rejoinders, they are obviously forged Gospels, of which there were scores in existence at the time. A perusal of them suggests forgery in every phase and verse, as is also the case with the so-called Gospels of the Infancy, the Gospel of Mary, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the strange Gospel of Paul and Thecla and others. Having foisted upon the proconsul's name the ignominy of condemning the Son of God to death, Christian imagination has pursued his shade even beyond the grave, and in various literary concoctions has pictured the anguish of soul which he is undergoing in some darksome Sheol, as post mortem realization of the ghastly crime he had

committed upon earth overwhelmed him. Unless sanity returns even these lucubrations may become the canonical Gospels of some later ecclesiasticism.

Chapter XI STAGGERING TRUTH ON EGYPT'S WALLS

Theologians have written and the clergy have preached in such positive fashion as to the existence of the personal Jesus that the body of the laity has been thrown under the impression that outside the Gospels the historicity of the Master is well attested by the evidence of secular sources. With this prepossession holding the field it becomes necessary to marshal the material bearing on this issue. The average Christian minister who has not read outside the pale of accredited Church authorities will impart to any parishioner making the inquiry the information that no event in history is better attested by witness than the occurrences in the Gospel narrative of Christ's life. He will go over the usual citation of the historians who mention Jesus and the letters claiming to have been written about him. When the credulous questioner, putting trust in the intelligence and good faith of his pastor, gets this answer, he goes away assured on the point of the veracity of the Gospel story. The pastor does not qualify his data with the information that the practice of forgery, fictionizing and fable was rampant in the early Church. In the simple interest of truth, then, it is important to examine the body of alleged testimony from secular history and see what credibility and authority it possesses. First, as to the historians whose works record the existence of Jesus, the list comprises but four. They are Pliny, Tacitus, Suetonius and Josephus. There are short paragraphs in the works of each of these, two in Josephus. The total quantity of this material is given by Harry Elmer Barnes in *The Twilight of Christianity* as some twenty-four lines. It may total a little more, perhaps twice that amount. This meager testimony constitutes the body or mass of the evidence of "one of the best attested events in history." Even if it could be accepted as indisputably authentic and reliable, it would be faltering support for an event that has dominated the thought of half the world for eighteen centuries.

But what is the standing of this witness? Not even Catholic scholars ²⁵⁷ of importance have seriously dissented from a general agreement of academic investigators that these passages, one and all, must be put down as forgeries and interpolations by partisan Christian scribes who wished zealously to array the authority of these historians behind the historicity of the Gospel life of Jesus. A sum total of forty or fifty lines from secular history supporting the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, and they completely discredited! Some of the evidence of spuriousness consists of the differing styles of Greek or Latin in the language used in the interpolations, the place in the context where the passages have been inserted or other indications open to the eye of critical scholars. It is so rare a thing to find unanimous consensus of opinion on such matters among scholars that their practically complete agreement in this case enables the layman to accept the academic verdict with

assurance. It will be informative to note some of the commentaries on these passages made by the investigators.

In his work, *The Great Galilean* (p. 3) Robert Keable writes:

“No man knows sufficient of the early life of Jesus to write a biography of him. For that matter no one knows enough for the normal Times obituary notice of a great man. If regard were had to what we should call in correct speech definitely historical facts, scarcely three lines could be filled.” Had newspapers existed then, no material could have been found for the obituary notice, not even the man’s name, asserts Keable. Yet few periods of the ancient world were so well documented as the period of Augustus and Tiberius. But no contemporary writer knew of his existence.

Following his statement as to the complete dearth of reference to Jesus’ life by any first and early second century chroniclers and that the very existence of Jesus seems to have been unheard of by them, Mead examines Pliny, Tacitus and Suetonius passages. Pliny was born 61 A.D., Tacitus about the same time and Suetonius some ten years later. All were in position to have gleaned all that was reported of an extraordinary character like Jesus, whose activities and marvels had aroused thousands in the Judean country, if Gospel be history. There are two short statements in Suetonius’ *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, and they deal chiefly with some disturbances aroused in Rome “impulsore Chresto,” “at the instigation of Chrestus.” Just what the reference could be to disturbances at Rome, leading to the expulsion of Christians by Claudius, with “Chrestus” as the instigator—when Jesus was never at Rome—is not clear. Doubtless some insurrectionist activities of his followers at the capital, it is presumed. But the Suetonius passage invalidates its reference to Jesus as a man, it would seem. For Mead says that Suetonius’ reference to “Christiani” in the second passage might easily apply to Zealots or Messianists of any type. Mead adds that it is a well digested conclusion among schoolmasters and their pupils that, as to Tacitus, we have in him a historical romanticist who has too long fascinated readers by the beauty of his style, and that he is not a sober historian. Tacitus’ main statement is that Jesus was put to death under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius. The famous sentence runs as follows:

“Auctor nominis ejus Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium supplicio affectus erat.”

Mead says this has all the earmarks of being a Christian formula. Tacitus seems to know nothing of the name of Jesus. “Tiberio imperitante” cannot be paralleled anywhere in his

vocabulary, and moreover is contrary to regular use, which would be “Principe Tiberio.” Hochart (*Annales de la Faculté des Lettres de Bordeaux*, 1884, No. 2) says:

“This chapter contains almost as many inexplicable difficulties as it does words.”

Hochart thinks that a rescript of the *Annals and Histories* by Poggio Bracciolini and Niccoli is itself a pseudo-Tacitus and that “therefore we are face to face with an elaborate pseudepigraph.”

Josephus (Joseph ben Mattatiah) was born 37-38 A.D., and lived to 100 A.D. His spurious passage is in the *Antiquities* (XVIII, iii, p. 3). Mead says there are a dozen most potent arguments against its authenticity and that it is rejected by all. (He names one scholar, F. Bole, as claiming its genuineness.) We have the explicit statement of Origen in the third century, says Mead, that Josephus had no belief whatever in Jesus being the Christ, whereas the spurious passage states categorically that he was the Christ. The *Antiquities* (XX, ix, p. 1) has a reference to a certain Jacobus, “the brother of Jesus called Christ.” Says Mead: “It follows that Josephus knew nothing of ‘the Christ’ though he knows much of various ‘Christs.’” Josephus, he cites, had been trained 259 in an Essene-like community and seems to have gone to Rome in “Essene” interests. He was at Rome just when the Christians were singled out for special persecution and cruel martyrdom by imperial tyranny; and yet he knows nothing of all this. He does not know of the gruesome tragedy at Rome or even of the Christ of the Christians. Joseph Klausner in his *Jesus of Nazareth* (p. 55) reiterates Mead’s general observations with reference to the inharmony of the Josephus passages with Origen’s statement that Josephus did not admit Jesus as the Messiah. He emphasizes that Jesus’ life, if lived, could not have seemed of small and inconsequential moment to Josephus, who wrote in 93, when the Christians were strong and flourishing. Klausner points out the notable fact that Eusebius, of the fourth century, knew the whole of the spurious Josephus passage, whereas Origen of the third century did not. This again points to interpolation between Origen’s day and the time of Eusebius. Klausner, on good authority, speaks of “manifest additions by Christian copyists.”

But it might be well to note and answer Klausner’s concession to general modern opinion in his remark that “it is far more difficult to explain how certain Jewish writers (the Evangelists) invented such a wonderful character than it is to admit that they were describing someone who did really exist.” This greater difficulty in the way of seeing the truth of the situation is the tremendous fact of the loss of esotericism in general, the suppression of the knowledge of the Mystery Ritual Drama and its significance and the decay of the original Egyptian crypticism. In the absence of all this guiding intelligence, of course explanation is difficult. Certainly it is difficult to see why the Evangelists should “invent” the Jesus character and personalize him, if one does not know that the

Jesus character was already “invented” and had trod the stage boards in the Mystery dramas for centuries B.C. The mere statement of Klausner that the Evangelists “invented” a character that had been the central figure of all ancient Messianic or Sun-God systems for centuries previously, betrays this capable historian’s erroneous foundations and approaches to the analysis of the Jesus situation. The Evangelists neither invented nor perhaps even euhemerized the Jesus person. He was already in the documents they rescripted or transcribed. But later ignorance changed him from a tygal to a personal entification. The misleading supposition with which these analysts approach the problem is that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were first century citizens who took pen in hand and wrote the Gospels out of their heads. The final staggering truth about the Bible books is that no “authors” ever sat down and wrote them at all, in the sense in which Sir Walter Scott wrote the Waverley novels. They were never “written” at all in the sense of original creations by given authors. They were in existence long before ink ever met paper to record and preserve them. They were the spoken lines of the great drama, they were the oral tradition, extant thousands of years before they were ever committed to writing. But at some epoch, here, there or elsewhere, the sages or their pupils did at last commit them to writing, lest in some degenerate age they be lost. This is obviously the whole truth as to their origin, and there will be no sanity in the discussion of them until this is known. So let Klausner’s remark be thrown into proper form of statement,—that it is not difficult to understand how the Evangelists simply brought out to more popular knowledge the recondite Gospels, with a Jesus long their central figure, which had been theretofore kept more closely concealed within the depths of Mystery cult secrecy. Christianity will not be understood until it is seen as a popularization and consequent fatal vitiation of exclusive secret religious philosophy and ritualism, instead of being considered a new creation and a new advance on previous ignorance.

In his challenging work, *The Twilight of Christianity* (p. 390), Harry Elmer Barnes reviews the status of the meager amount of extra-Gospel material mentioning Jesus. He ventures the observation that it may greatly surprise some readers to learn that anyone has ever seriously questioned the actual existence of Jesus. As a matter of fact, he asserts, the evidence for the view that Jesus was really a historical character is so slight that a considerable number of the most distinguished students of New Testament times have declared Jesus to be a mythical personage, the product of the myth-making tendencies common to religious peoples of all ages and particularly prevalent at the period of the early Roman Empire. Among the more eminent scholars and critics who have contended that Jesus was not historical, mention might be made of Bruno Bauer, Kalthoff, Drews, Stendel, Felden, Deije, Jensen, Lublinski, Bolland, Van der Berg, Virolleaud, Couchoud, Massey, Bossi, Memojewski, Brandes, Robertson, Mead, Whittaker,

Carpenter and W. B. Smith. Of non-Christian evidence, he says, next to nothing exists. Of the twenty-four lines, the total of this sort, not 261 a single line is of admitted authenticity. Barnes quotes the Tacitus passage (from the *Annals*, XV, p. 44) as follows:

“In order to suppress the rumor, Nero falsely accused and punished with the most acute tortures persons who, already hated for their shameful deeds, were commonly called Christians. The founder of that name, Christus, had been put to death by the procurator, Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius; but the deadly superstition, though repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where this evil had its origin, but also through the city (Rome) whither all things horrible and vile flow from all quarters and are encouraged. Accordingly, first those were arrested who confessed; then on their information a great multitude were convicted, not so much of the crime of incendiarism as of hatred of the human race.”

Tacitus wrote the *Annals* about 117 A.D., by which time the nascent popular notion of the historical Jesus might have gained sufficient vogue to have let the historian assume he was writing definite authentic history. He cites no sources or witness or authorities for his facts. Barnes points out that the name Chrestus (instead of Christus) used in the Suetonius passage of two or three lines, was a common Greek name, and may not necessarily have referred to the particular man Jesus.

The Josephus excerpt (*Antiquities*, XVIII, p. 3) is given as follows:

“About this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he should be called man. He wrought miracles and was a teacher of those who gladly accept the truth, and had a large following among the Jews and pagans. He was the Christ. Although Pilate, at the complaint of the leaders of our people, condemned him to die on the cross, his earlier followers were faithful to him. For he appeared to them alive again on the third day, as God-sent prophets had foretold this and a thousand other wonderful things of him. The people of the Christians, which is called after him, survives until the present day.”

Written somewhere between 75 and 100 A.D., Barnes says the passage is admitted even by conservative and pious scholars to be quite obviously spurious. No Jew who rejected Christianity could possibly have written in this vein. It is obviously a late Christian interpolation. It may have replaced an unfavorable

reference to Jesus in the original. Philo, Barnes reminds us, the most learned and brilliant Jewish scholar of his day, has nothing whatever to say in regard to Jesus and the Christians. There is therefore in extant Jewish literature of the first century A.D. not a single authentic line making reference to the founder of Christianity.

It is fitting at this place to make answer to the statement of the Freethought proponent Joseph McCabe in his *The Story of Religious Controversy* (p. 228). He there makes the declaration that is worth our reproducing because it represents the common thought of the average Christian who has not critically looked into the matter. He concludes that it is more reasonable to believe in the historicity of Jesus because there is no parallel in history to the sudden growth of a myth and its conversion into a human personage in one generation. Moreover, he affirms, to those early Christians Jesus was not merely or primarily a teacher. A collection of wise teachings might in time get a mythical name attached to it, and the myth might in time become a real person. But from the earliest moment that we catch sight of Christians in history the essence of their belief is that Jesus was a personal incarnation in Judea of the great God of the universe. The supreme emphasis, asserts McCabe, is on the fact that he assumed a human form and shed human blood on a cross. So it seems far more reasonable, scientific and consonant with the facts of religious history which are known, to conclude that Jesus was a man who was gradually turned into a God. McCabe's assertion that there is no parallel in history to the sudden growth of a myth and its conversion into history in one generation is a misstatement of the premises, to begin with. It is both a sly subterfuge and an easy way to win a victory in an argument, to twist the premises into shape to support the conclusion. It is simply not true to say that the myth of Jesus was a sudden growth. We have shown that it was a perennial cornerstone of ancient Mystery cultism. Only, it was held in secret and was esoterically apprehended. The only suddenness connected with it came in the way of its rather sudden popularization and exoterization. This indeed was a lone phenomenon without parallel in history—which is the very point our argument advances against the historicity. No doubt there had been previous cases of the exoteric development, but never had this trend swept to such wide-spread and overwhelming volume and power as to smother esotericism completely and to enthrone in its stead the rule of ignorant literalism. The Christian conversion of myth into history, sudden as it appears, was the culminating denouement of a process or trend that was long in ferment-263 ing and slow in working to a head. The bloom of a flower is sudden, but it is just the apical point at the summit of a long slow process of growth through many preceding stages. Of course there is no parallel to this phenomenon, for it occurred only after long ages of slow preparation and has kept its direful hold on the religious world ever since. Not perhaps in five thousand years could it occur again on the same colossal scale. It is likely the one titanic calamity

in world history. Not the growth of myth, but the historization of myth, is the thing that is, catastrophically enough, without parallel in the world, on the scale and proportions as perpetrated by Christianity in the early centuries. Then there is the senselessness of McCabe's saying that a collection of myths might get a name attached to it, when there was never a time over centuries previously that the name—Jesus or another of similar purport, always designated the Sun-God in man—had not been attached to such collections. All this shows unconscionable lack of acquaintance with the facts of ancient history that should have been the premises of argument. How can any scholar say it is hard to see why the particular name, Jesus, was attached to the myths when Joshua, Jeshu, Jesse, Joses, Josiah, Joash, Jehoash, Jehoahaz, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Jonah, Jason, Iusa, Hosea and many more variant forms of the very name of Jesus were in archaic literature for hundreds of years B.C.? Again McCabe both twists facts and draws from them unwarranted conclusions when he says that from the first moment when we catch sight of Christians in history their belief was centered in the personal human Jesus. This assertion has already been controverted by much material gathered in this work, from Clement, Origen, Philo and others of the Christians themselves. Among the unlearned early Christians it may have to some extent been true; but among the intelligent and philosophical ones, the Gnostics, Nazarenes, Essenes, and others, it most certainly was not true. Were these sects not spurned as heretics for the very reason that they repudiated the personal Jesus? The date of a general acceptance of the human Jesus by the parties that had excluded the rest as heretics and established the orthodoxies was not early in Christian history, but on in the third century.

The refutation of these statements in McCabe's short passage goes far to indicate how sorely intelligence and honesty are needed to meet and straighten out many such tangled webs of Christian presumption and falsification of data. Thousands of pages could be given to the labor of correcting misstatements of fact, unwarranted deductions, sly insinuations and other forms of perversion of truth found in hundreds of books dedicated to the defense of the Christian faith. In a note on page 24 of Josephus' *Antiquities* there is a statement that Photius says he has seen the chronology of Justus of Tiberias, entitled *The Chronology of the Kings of Judah Which Succeeded One Another*, and Photius says: "and being under the Jewish prejudices, and indeed he was himself also a Jew by birth, he makes not the least mention of the appearance of Christ or what things happened to him or of the wonderful works that he did." The inference here is obviously that Justus of Tiberias withholds mention of Jesus not because of Jewish prejudices, but in spite of them, the intimation being that had Jesus lived and been known through his wonderful works and Christly status, any Jew would have been prejudiced in the direction of giving the matter all the mention possible. His silence bespeaks his lack of knowledge of the data. He would have been glad

to mention such laudable things had he known of them. Through the creditable scholarship of Klausner, Mead and others we are enabled to approach the next issue that closely and vitally affects the investigation.

This is the group of references in the Jewish Talmud to a character whom many have sought to identify with the Gospel Jesus, namely Jehoshua (Jesus) Ben Pandira (Pandera, Pantera, Pantêre). Klausner's treatment of the personage or figure is very full and discerning; Mead has a whole work devoted to him: *Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?*; and Massey analyzes the situation capably. It is deemed desirable to go into the question of his relation to the Gospel Jesus, not so much because it may contribute any effective data to the main problem under review, as because it may carry to readers the important knowledge that other sacred writings before the Gospels featured a Jesus figure, with much the same narrative material of his "life," as that believed generally to exist only in the Christian canonical writings. The brief outline of the story of this Talmudic Jesus is indeed like a short summary of the Galilean's career: he was born with an accompaniment of certain supernatural manifestations, went to Egypt, became learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians, returned to Palestine, wrought many miracles among the populace through his Egyptian arts or sorcery and magic, incurred the hostility of the orthodox priesthood, was tried and condemned, was given forty days for partisans to come and clear him, and finally stoned to death and his body hanged on a tree. The date of his birth has been placed by the best calculations of scholars at about 115 B.C. It will be seen at once that if this Talmud figure was the Jesus to whom the Gospels could be claimed to refer, or even the prototype of the Gospel Jesus, the dating would throw off base the entire structure of the Nazareth historicity, and would invalidate a thousand "proofs" of the latter based on dates, sequences of events and arguments grounded on and affected by such considerations. The dating of the Christian calendar would be over 100 years off the true.

We may start with the statement made by Massey (*The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ*, p. 2) that in the Book of Acts Jesus is stoned to death and his body hanged on a tree. This establishes a fairly strong point of identity between the two Jesus characters.

Massey declares that this Jewish Pandira was the only Jesus known to Celsus, the author of *The True Logos*, which was destroyed by the Christians. Celsus says of him that he was not a pure Word, not a true Logos, but a man who had learned the arts of sorcery in Egypt. Massey sums the case when he says that "here is the conclusive fact: the Jews knew nothing of Jesus, the Christ of the Gospels, as a historical character, and when the Christians of the fourth century trace his

pedigree by the hand of Epiphanius, they are forced to draw their Jesus from Pandira! Epiphanius gives the genealogy of the canonical Jesus in this wise:--Jacob, called Pandira, Mary—Joseph—Cleopas, Jesus.” The name Pandira is related to the French panthère, “panther,” which was credited with being the “nickname” of Jacob, the alleged grandfather of the Talmud Jesus, and this Jacob was said to have been a Greek sailor. “Jehoshua ben Pandira” then means “Jesus, [grand]son of the Panther.” That this Talmudic genealogy is found in Epiphanius instead of the long Jesse-David lists appended to the several Gospels is significant of much.

Massey states that Pandira was stoned to death in the city of Lud, or Lydda, and that it must have been around the date of 70 B.C., after the reign of Jannaeus, 106-79 B.C. He says that Queen Alexandra (Salomé) showed favor to him, witnessed his wonderful works and powers of healing and tried to save him from his sacerdotal enemies because he was related to her. The Jews denied the identity of Jehoshua ben Pandira with the Gospel Jesus. Rabbi Jechiels said: “This which has been related of J. ben Perachia and his pupil (J. ben Pandira) contains no reference whatever to him whom the Christians honor as God.” Another Rabbi, Salman Zevi, produced ten reasons for concluding that the Jehoshua of the Talmud was not he who was afterwards called Jesus of Nazareth. The matter was unknown to Justus, the Jew of Celsus, and to Josephus, “the supposed reference to him by the latter being an undoubted forgery.” Massey asseverates that “the blasphemous writings of the Jews about Jesus,” as Justin Martyr calls them, refer always to Jehoshua ben Pandira, and not to the Gospel Jesus.

But Massey is firm and decisive in his conclusion that the Talmud Jehoshua can not be converted into the canonical Jesus as a historical character. The dates can never be reconciled to match contemporary history. Massey repudiates the connection as beyond the remotest possibility. “Make whatever you can of Jehoshua ben Pandira. He is not the Gospel Jesus,” he says. From Klausner we learn, however, that the Jehoshua Jewish tradition was entangled at least in Origen’s mind with the parentage of the Gospel Jesus. Origen is quoted (*Contra Celsum*, I, IX, p. 1) as repeating a story that his opponent Celsus related with reference to the current tradition dealing with the family and parentage of Jesus. And this version of the Jehoshua ben Pandira legend is worthy of notice for several reasons. Apart from the question whether it is the truth or a distortion, it is to be considered significant, first because of the sheer fact that such a story was current at the time—the late second century; and secondly because it either carries fact or reflects a perversion of allegorism, and would be notably significant in either case. The character called “the Jew” in Celsus’ book (I, p. 28) goes on to say that the dogma of the “virgin birth” was an invention of the Christians; the true facts in the case being:

“that Jesus had come from a village in Judea, and was the son of a poor Jewess who gained her living by the work of her own hands; that his mother had been turned out of doors by her husband, who was a carpenter by trade, on being convicted of adultery; that, wandering about in disgrace, she gave birth to Jesus a bastard; that Jesus, on account of his poverty (had to work for his living and) was hired out to go to Egypt; that while there he acquired certain (magical) powers which Egyptians pride themselves on possessing; that he returned home highly elated at possessing these powers, and on the strength of them gave himself out to be a god.” True or false, it is significant that such a story was in vogue in the second century. If one was to employ the usual method of orthodox explanation of such data, which is to assume that the story, however unlikely as truth, took its rise out of some factual foundation, the conclusion would be that it was a garbled version of some more acceptable basis of simple fact. By far the most likely elucidation would seem to be that it was another of hundreds of exotericized myths, being the literalization of a mythical account of the soul’s descent into matter in the “Egypt” of the physical body, “the flesh-pots of Egypt.” It is worthy of citation just as a sample of how the literalizing tendency could work a spiritual or cosmic myth over into a human story of gross realism! It is more than startling, then, that Mead is found endorsing this explanation of the story (Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?, p. 126). He asks:

“Can this possibly be based on some vulgar version of a well-known Gnostic myth of those days? Jesus went down as a servant or slave into Egypt; that is to say, the Christ or divine soul descends as a servant into the Egypt of the body. It is a common element in the early mystic traditions that the Christ took on the form of a servant in his descent through the spheres, and in many traditions Egypt is the symbol of the body, which is separated by the ‘Red Sea’ and the ‘Desert’ from the ‘Promised Land.’”

Mead advances this solution of the gossiped illegitimacy of the Christ character because he had studied ancient Oriental religionism closely enough to have found the constant operation of the tendency of the “vulgar mind” to make hash out of sublime allegory. His conclusion is therefore well justified. But what must be the explanation of another fact which he brings to light in connection with this story, a fact which indeed seems to stand in very sinister shadow? He says that:

“Origen again refers to the quotation from ‘the Jew’ of Celsus given above, and adds the important detail from Celsus that the paramour of the mother of Jesus was a soldier called Panthera, a name which he also repeats later on (i, 69) in a sentence, by the by, which has in both

places been erased from the oldest Vatican MS., and bodily omitted from three codices in this country and from others.”

A note by Mead says: “See Notes on both passages by Lommatzsch in his *Origenis Contra Celsum* (Berlin, 1845).

According to Epiphanius’ original statement (*Haereses*, p. 78), Origen himself says that James, the father of Jesus’ father Joseph, was called by the name “Panther.” Origen apparently wished to explain in this way why Jesus, the son of Joseph, was called “Ben Pandera,” or “ben Pantere,” by the Jews. According to Origen Jesus was so called after the name of his grandfather. Klausner alludes to the Baraita, a tradition issuing from the Tanaim, quoted in the later Talmud, which says that Jeshu of Nazareth practiced sorcery and beguiled and led astray Israel. And the Talmud speaks of hanging instead of crucifixion, since this horrible form of death was only known to Jewish scholars from Roman trials and not from the Jewish legal system. Klausner cites the Pandira legend “in spite of Mr. Friedländer’s various attempts to persuade us that every Talmudist worthy of the name knows that the few Talmudic passages which speak of Jesus are a late addition” and “the Talmudic sources of the first century and the first quarter of the second afford us not the least evidence of the existence of Jesus or Christianity.” (*Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 38.) The Toldoth Jeshu, says Mead (*Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?*, p. 303), notes that the Ben Pandera legend had spread so far and wide that we find two Church Fathers compelled to insert the name in the genealogies of Jesus and Mary. The stories say that the trial of Jesus took place before Queen Helene (Helena) and that the sovereignty of all Jewry was in her hands. Her name never appears in the Talmud Jesus stories, nor for a matter of fact, do the names of Herod, or Pilate, or John the Baptist, or any others that confirm the Christian canonical date. The only date indications in the Talmud are, on the one hand, the mention of Joshua ben Perachiah and Jannai in connection with Jesus, and on the other, the Akiba Mary story. Mead says it is true that Helena was the subject of a prolific legend activity in the Middle Ages. Mead (p. 261) does quote the Talmud as saying, “Now the rule of all Israel was in the hands of a woman, who was called Helene”; also he cites the Talmud passage: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Isai (Jesse), and I am he.” And the Toldoth, like the Talmud, he states, also know of a stoning or a stoning and hanging, or of a hanging alone, but never of a crucifixion.

Mead develops a point of some weight when he says that our studies of the works of the philosophers of early times can show us only that all of them regard the wonder-works of Jesus as being due to his magical powers, or rather to the fact of his being a Magus, like many others in

antiquity. Such miracles, in the eyes of the philosophers, did not prove the contention of the Christians that Jesus was God, for similar wonders, equally well authenticated, and in a more recent case better authenticated, according to Hierocles, had been done by others. This Hierocles had been successively Governor of Palmyra, Bithynia and Alexandria, and was also a philosopher. In 305 A.D. he wrote a criticism of the claims of the Christians in two books called *A Truthful Address to the Christians*, or more briefly *Truth Lovers*. Even Arnobius, in his *Against the Nations*, sets forth the commonest argument against the Christians concerning Jesus, which was that he was a Magus; he did all these things (sc. Miracles) by secret arts; from the shrines of Egypt he stole the names of the angels of might and hidden disciplines.

Even Jerome was conversant with the legends that floated about as vulgar caricatures of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, and in his letter to Heliodorus, which was written in 374 A.D., the Church Father seems to have in memory the passage of Tertullian (*De Spect.*) which Mead had already quoted; for he writes: "He is called the son of a workman and of a harlot; He it is . . . who fled into Egypt. He the clothed with a scarlet robe; He the crowned with thorns; He a Magus, demon-possessed and a Samaritan!" Further in his letter to Titus (iii, p. 9) Jerome writes: "I heard formerly concerning the Hebrews . . . at Rome . . . that they bring into question the genealogies of Christ." Gregontius, Bishop of Tephra in Africa, in the second half of the fifth century says that Jesus had been put to death because he was a sorcerer or magician, so the Jews asserted. John of Damascus in the early eighth century, in the genealogy of Mary tells us that Joachim was the father of Mary, Bar Panther the father of Joachim, and Levi the father of Bar Panther, and therefore presumably Bar Panther himself.

Agobard in the eighth century repeats the Pandora stories. The Toldoth speak of making a virgin pregnant without contact with a man. In the Talmud Balaam is one of the synonyms of Jesus.

With reference again to the Helene character that figured basically in many of the sacred legends connected with the Christ, there is the detail that the harlot who accompanied Simon Magus was a certain Helen (Greek Helene, Latin Helena). He said his Helen was the Sophia or Wisdom. But the conjecture is that Helene is simply the pseudograph for Selene, the Moon, whereas Simon the magician wielding spiritual powers was a pseudonym of the Sun, the type of all spiritual miracle-working power. (Hebrew for "sun" is Shemesh, whence Shimeon, Shimshon, Samson, Simon.) One of the ancient Biblical typical designations of the women who were lunar goddesses accompanying the sun, as mothers of life, the consorts or concubines of the solar deities,

was the “great harlot.” This appellation is simply in virtue of Mother Nature’s (water’s, matter’s) prolific fecundity in the production of myriad life, and when held as pure typism has no sensual imputations whatever—as incidentally have none of the phallic representations when apprehended as pure typology. If the above material seems to be running far afield from base and out into irrelevancy, it is quite worth citation if only to impress the reader, unfamiliar with the quantity of such data encountered in the study of comparative religion, with the feeling that the whole mass of it does indeed run away from solid history and evaporate in sheer myth and allegory. If one will but peruse as little of the Talmud and Toldoth material as is reprinted by Klausner and Mead in their two works from which excerpts have been taken here, one will be convinced that it is not history one is reading, but something less objective, less substantial. It sounds hollow and appears shadowy. And suddenly one finds the supposedly human characters turn to ethereal beings or personifications of the sun and its harlot the moon, in one’s hand. To the modern who is unacquainted with ancient method and ancient profundity, this indeed seems to run out into the little end of nothing. To the ancient sage it was the cornucopia of divine wisdom.

Thorburn, in his attempt to refute the mythical interpretation of the Gospels, quotes J. M. Robertson to the effect that “one of the most important details of the confused legend in the Talmud concerning the pre-Christian Jesus Ben Pandira, who is conjoined with Ben Stada, is that the mother is in one place named Miriam Magdala, 271 Mary, the nurse or the hair-dresser.” (Jastrow, Dictionary of the Targum and the Midrash, part 2, p. 213, 1888.)

“Isis, too, plays the part of a hair-dresser.” (Plutarch, De Iside et Osiride, p. 15) Magdala yields in one ray of its meaning, nursing, rearing, hair-dressing.

Drews adds that Joseph was originally a God. His statement has been already given.

It may be quite fitting to conclude this chapter with a few fragments of positive evidence that true early Christianity, so far from being the outcome of a definite historical event, was instinct with the spirit of ancient pagan symbolic and mythical religion from its very start. These and many more items of similar character intimate indeed that Christianity was close in kinship to the great Sun-God cults of archaic days. The Christs and Messiahs of pre-Christian systems were Sun-Gods, and the great temples of religion were Temples of the Sun, and many hymns were Hymns to the Sun. Rightly apprehended this is not the evidence of heathen “superstition,” but the very heart’s core of sublimest significance and appropriateness. It may shock orthodox modernism to hear the blunt statement that Christianity will not reach its highest purity and nobility, and hence its highest serviceability until, with realistic grasp of its meaning, it restores the sun-symbol

to the central place in its doctrinism. For the divine in man is of the identical essence of the light of the sun.

In *Die Christusmythe* Drews speaks of the identification of Jesus with an ancient Hebrew cult deity, Joshua, and an old Greek divine healer-hero, Jason, equating Jason with Joshua and Joshua with Jesus, “as all representing the sun.” Lundy speaks of the Sun-God of the Persians and Greeks as the true type of Christ, who was himself the sun of righteousness risen with healing in his wings,—the sun with wings being an ancient Egyptian and Chaldean emblem! Lundy says that the Oriental pagan symbols did not indicate a low level of conception, but bespeak the loftiest ideologies, being types of a supreme power and intelligence above matter. Apollo, the Sun-God, he says, must mean far more than merely material light. In the highest philosophical and mystical sense, the pagan types and anticipations of Christ, as Agni, Krishna, Mithra, Horus, Apollo and Orpheus—all Sun-Gods—must be accepted as betokening that the true Sun of Divinity must have been somehow present to give form and character to the ancient shining conceptions of the divine light in man.

“Our Lord the Sun” was used in prayer by Christians up to the fifth and even the sixth century of our era, and embodied in the Liturgy until altered into “Our Lord the God.” And the early Christians painted on the walls of the subterranean necropolis the Christ figure as a shepherd under the various emblemisms of the Greek Sun-God Apollo. The very halo that surrounds the head of the Christ and his mother is the suggestion of the solar disk and its radiant light. And of great evidential value is the item adduced by Massey, that as late as the fifth century Leo the Great was compelled to rebuke the “pestiferous persuasion” of those Christians who were found to be celebrating Christmas day, not for the birth of Jesus Christ, but for the resurrection of the spring sun! The power of symbol and of social tradition has proved stronger than indoctrinated dogmatism, as the Nordic Christmas pine tree proves to this day. Of great suggestive value to Christians would be the item of Philo’s having advanced, thirty years before Paul’s writing and the Christian presentation of the deific transfiguration, the doctrine of a transfiguration of Moses through his intercourse with God. Describing his ascension to heaven at the summons of the Father, Philo declares that by vision of God Moses’ soul and body had been blended into a single new substance, an immortal mind-essence having the appearance of the sun. This is from pagan sources, yet Christian analysts will presume to deny all connection between those wells of early wisdom and the Gospel events on the Mount of Transfiguration, where Jesus’ garments became white as the light and his face did shine as the sun; or that other New Testament promise that in the Christian’s apotheosis, the righteous shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

It would be most interesting to speculate upon the possible psychological reactions of the Christian population if on a given Sunday it was read out from all pulpits in every denomination that in the year 345 A.D., the Pope of Christendom, Julian II, issued a decree fixing December 25 as the day on which all Christians should celebrate the birth of the Christ, instead of March 25, as had been the custom among the Christian people up to that time, in order that their celebration might coincide with that of the followers of Mithra and of Bacchus! And full candor suggests the inquiry why ecclesiastical subterfuge has kept the laity in Christendom in perpetual ignorance of a fact so significant and notable as that Christians for three and a half centuries regarded the annual springtime re-birth of the Sun as the most fitting type of the birth of divinity in the world and celebrated the birth of the Son of God at the vernal equinox instead of the winter solstice. And the Pope's exhortation to his followers that it would be fitting that the Christian celebration matched the time of the Mithraic and Bacchic solstitial festival should not be lost on intelligence. And millions still think that they celebrate the birth of a babe on the calendar day of December 25!

For thousands of years Egypt was dominated by a religion whose gods were typified by the sun symbol. One of the pivotal centers of religious ritualism was Anu (Annu), said to be the On of the Bible, and at any rate the Heliopolis of the Greeks, or "city of the sun." The great pyramid was in reality, as part of its function, a temple of the Sun. Thousands of theological Thorburns have asserted that the birth of the Christian Jesus, the skyey proclamation of the angelic heralds to shepherds, the Gabriel annunciation to the prospective virgin mother, and the adoration of three Oriental Magi before the infant King, were solid events on the plane of occurrence, that their incidence helped to launch the new religion to save humanity from heathen darkness, and that they could have no connection with preceding degenerate pagan idolatry of the physical sun. It is time that this unpardonable obduracy of ignorance be summarily rebuked by the testimony inscribed on the walls of Egypt's mighty structures in stone. Says Massey (Ancient Egypt, p. 757):

"The story of the annunciation, the miraculous conception (or incarnation), the birth and the adoration of the Messianic infant had already been engraved in stone and represented in four consecutive scenes upon the innermost walls of the holy of holies (Meskhen) in the temple of Luxor, which was built by Amen-hetep III, about 1700 B.C., or some seventeen centuries before the events depicted are commonly supposed to have taken place."

Here is witness which outshouts the falsehoods of thousands of pious books, millions of droning sermons and the insincere lucubrations of generations of theologians, with thunder tones of truth that silence forever the claims of Christianity to the historicity of its alleged Founder's 274

Nativity. And how could these four pivotal themes of the incarnation have been thus sculptured upon enduring walls if there had been no Gospels extant at that remote period from which to draw these scenes? If there were no formal Gospels extant so far back, certainly the contents and gist of Gospel material were in some form existent. Evidence of this sort deals sledge-hammer blows at the entire structure of Gospel historicity. The edifice indeed topples under the force of this one telling stroke. Christianity, by subterfuge, vandalism and distortion had buttressed itself against attack on every other side. But it could not fend off the attack of truth from the ancient rear. The Rosetta Stone and the pictured walls of Egypt's tombs and temples have outflanked it and laid its pretensions in the dust. Do what it will, it can not shake off the fact that the annunciation, the incarnation, the nativity and the adoration were already on record, along with the Virgin Mother and her Child, in the Zodiac, in the papyri and on indestructible walls thousands of years before its beginning, and that as religious facts they were old when the Galilean babe was allegedly born in Bethlehem. The Christian organization and system of pious pretension can do nothing in the face of facts such as these. Its arrant claims are silenced once and finally by the deathless voice of ancient Egypt.

The development of the theme has now brought the discussion face to face with another particular in the volume of testimony that has only been denied its validity as a final crushing blow to the historical view of Jesus by resort to the most specious casuistry and the most dogged denial of reason. It is an item that is so tell-tale in its silent eloquence, so dangerous in its implications, that ecclesiastical policy simply dare not permit its witness to be heard openly in the court. This menacing particular is St. Paul's silence about the personal Jesus. Himself almost contemporary with Jesus, and at any rate on the scene of Christ's life within a few decades after its notable events, and still more, an enthusiastic convert to the new faith following a short period of persecution of its devotees, and fired with an unquenchable zeal for its propagation, he surely must have hounded down all the authentic data regarding the life and acts of the great Divine Founder of his adopted religion with indefatigable eagerness. The likelihood in this direction must have been increased a hundred-fold by the little-mentioned fact that he says in one of his Epistles that he spent two weeks (a fortnight) with Peter (Cephas)! If these things happened on the plane of objective actuality, the most elementary imagination can picture the realistic connotations of it all. Two weeks with Peter! Is it thinkable that the zealous young convert would pass the two weeks of this extraordinary opportunity without plying the impetuous Peter with an endless string of questions as to every detail of all that he had personally witnessed in connection with the series of Gospel events? What did Jesus do here and say there? How did he look, feel, act on this occasion and on that? What were the grand high points in the Savior's career, in the disciple's opinion? What about this, that and the other?

The fancy thrills at the electric tension of interest that would have been generated in a meeting between these two! If it also was historical . . . But then,--the scholarly imagination thrills also with just as tense an amazement over the incomprehensible fact that, with all the data of his personal Master's life stored away and glowing in his mind, the dynamic Paul, when he came to sit down and write fifteen Epistles to the young "churches" and congregations of the faith, should never once venture to mention to his brethren the man Jesus! Here is the incontestable, the unanswerable fact. This is the datum that stares the proponents of historicity into silence. Before it sophistry fails and argument goes dumb. There is no answer to this testimony of silence on the side of the orthodox position. If Jesus lived as claimed, and Paul lived and wrote as claimed, it is beyond all cavil unthinkable that the apostle would have left a total blank in his Epistles on the subject of the personal Jesus. Ingenuity can bring up—and has done so—a variety of specious

“reasons” to “explain” Paul’s silence about his Master. But when they have exhausted their plausibility, they have not laid the ghost of the insistent question nor reduced the pressure of its threat to the orthodox position one whit. It stalks the claim of Jesus’ existence like a mocking specter and no legerdemain can exorcise it. The fact stands in all its glaring significance:

St. Paul never once mentions the man Jesus! And Paul is the earliest witness among Bible writers, the one nearest to Jesus, says Bacon. The average man mildly versed in the Bible is amazed when told that Paul does not mention Jesus, for everywhere the assumption prevails that he did. If the matter is broached to a Bible student he will make rebuttal with Paul’s own words: “This Jesus whom we have seen,” and other passages in the Epistles that sound like testimony to the Galilean’s existence,—this Jesus in whom Paul glories and whose witness he bore through pain and travail. How can anyone say that Paul does not mention Jesus?

To be sure, Paul speaks of Jesus. But even the theologians agree that this Jesus of Paul’s Epistles is not a man of flesh. The Jesus Paul dilates upon is the spiritual entity in the core of man’s inner being. He is the Christ principle, and not the man.

While this is generally enough conceded by exegetists, the reader may need some assurance on the point. Our first witness is the Yale Divinity School publicist, Benjamin W. Bacon, who in his *Jesus and Paul* (p. 57) is positive in his position: Paul is the first Bible writer in the first century and he definitely knows no Christ except one not after the flesh. If he had posited a personal Christ, Christianity would not have survived his day.

Evidently Bacon does not adhere to the general Christian belief that Jesus became a historical person in Christianity because early Christianity had knowledge of his existence. It is important to notice that he thinks Paul’s preachment of a personal Jesus would even have killed Christianity. Here is Bacon declaring that the very element of the new faith which others affirm is the innermost genius of its essence and its very *raison d’être* is the thing that would have killed it at the start. Others claim it was the tradition of the living Jesus that made it live to become the world power of later years, and that Paul’s Hellenism and his spiritual-Christos conception would have killed it. What a confusion we see here in the counsels of Christian theology! One school asserts that the early promulgation of the thesis of a historical man-Christ would have destroyed Christianity in its very birthing, and that Paul’s Hellenization of its doctrines saved it. Opposed to this is the general claim that Christianity sprang to life because of its preachment of the personal Christ in the flesh and the asseveration of countless divines that it lived by escaping the esotericism of Hellenic philosophical systems. Compounding these two aspects of Christian thought, we have

the net conclusion that the Hellenism that would have destroyed Christianity actually saved it; and the historical thesis that gave it its very being would have killed it. Such illogical entanglements are inevitable so long as the effort is not sincerely to get at the truth, but to make a case for a traditional position on little or no solid foundation of true data.

Bacon adds that it was not the teachings and miracles which we find related in the Gospels that are the bastions and supports of Paul's doctrine, since, he declares, Paul neither possesses these, nor even seems to care for their story. Again the cat escapes the bag, for here is admission of high authority that Paul knew nothing or cared nothing for the Gospel story of Jesus' living career that had allegedly founded the faith he had enthusiastically embraced! It is commonly assumed in Christian circles that of course Paul knew all that the Gospels relate and that this body of history was the basis of his espousal of the faith.

But it is clear that the Epistles are in no way related to, or an outgrowth or denouement of, Gospel "history." They would probably be in literature if no personal Jesus had ever lived. They trace to quite another source, which Bacon is frank to tell us of: since Paul is addressing men to whom the conception of the Mystery religions is the commonplace of religious expression, it should occasion no surprise if he uses their phraseology. He employs the familiar esoteric symbols to portray his own exalted experience and thinks his own immortality achieved in terms of Mystery arcana. Paul's language is the vernacular of the Mystery cults. No one familiar with the philosophy of personal redemption through absorption into the nature of dying and risen Christhood can fail to recognize this. The fact can hardly be controverted.

Therefore it will be seen from what a background and in what a philosophical milieu Paul presents his preachment of the attainment of Christhood. It is as detached and remote from Gospel "history" and all its implications as could well be imagined for a body of fifteen Epistles that were to take their place in the same canonical Bible as the complement and companions of those same Gospels! If the general Christian presumption is that Paul's contribution to the scriptures reinforces the Gospel story of Jesus' life, that presupposition has a strong ostensible warrant in the sheer fact that the Epistles are put in on the heels of the Gospels, and certainly not for the purpose of nullifying, but assumedly to reinforce the witness and message of the Gospels. What must be the surprise, then, of the general Christian body to be told that Paul's Christianity is Hellenic theosophy and philosophy, Orphic-Platonic Mystery cultism, almost indeed Hindu Yoga mysticism, with no immediate relation or reference to the Gospel life of Jesus! And this ever

bitterly condemned pagan cultism is what saved Christianity beyond Paul's time for later burgeoning into Occidental favor, we are gravely told!

The Yale theologian goes on to identify large and grand aspects of Paul's doctrinism as Hellenic philosophy and Mystery teaching, and even goes so far as to say that Paul's Christianity includes elements that Jesus did not teach! Jesus taught no such doctrine as that of transfiguration by conformation to the likeness of the glorified Lord. According to Paul the adoption of the Christ mind effects a moral new creation here upon the earth, causing the devotee to live no longer unto himself but unto him who died and rose again for man's redemption. It effects also a reclothing with a spiritual body, so that mortality is swallowed up in life. This, says Bacon, is not part of what Jesus taught in Galilee, but it is emphatically Paul's own vision of the risen Christ. Paul is speaking of what he knows because he has seen it, and 279 to express it he is forced to resort to the rich phraseology of the Mystery cults!

This is well conceived by Bacon; but that inevitable narrow contempt for all things pagan and pre-Christian that Christianity has engendered in its adherents asserts itself a little further on in Bacon's work and inspires him to make one of those unfounded assertions which in numberless instances, in sermons and books, indicate nothing more than an inveterate determination on the part of Christian theologians not to admit that any other religion had truth and wisdom equal to that found in their own faith. Bacon admits that Paul borrowed the language that gave majestic expression to the realities of his own (or any man's) divinization from Greek religion. But suddenly realizing that this is impliedly verging on the most egregious praise and glorification of the Mystery religion and imperiling the cherished superiority of Christianity over other systems, the expositor must quickly hedge and retrench. He hastens to assert that Paul's teaching from Hellenistic religion and that the moral ideal presented to the votary of the Mysteries is poor and empty when compared with that of the Sermon on the Mount. Imagine, cries Bacon, the difference between being infused with the mind, or ethical spirit of Jesus, and the mind of an Attis, a Dionysus, or an Asclepius! "Partaking in the nature of" the divinity, "the life in the spirit," "living in Christ," "living the life that is hid with Christ in God," the terms that clothed in words the rapturous experiences of Mystery devotees,--what, Bacon asks, would they all amount to beyond mere magic and superstition, if the convert did not also know the spirit of Jesus? The aspirant must realize a sense of his death to sin and of this union with the Father that can come only through the absolute self-dedication of Jesus. He must be redeemed by adopting the mind of Christ and not that of a pagan god.

It is not often that dignified discussion or scholastic critique calls for or excuses the flat denial of the truth of an argument. But there is little left to do with such a line of sophisticated apologetic save to say it is bluntly not true. More than one item in the statement of Bacon is off the line of truth. To begin with it is disingenuous and logically vapid to speak of the superiority of Paul's teaching to the figures of speech borrowed from Greek theology in which he expresses it. There is no point in contrasting Paul's thought with the forms of speech that utter it. It is well enough known that mind is greater than the capacity of language to express it. Paul chose the best available forms at his command, and those were drawn from his intimate association with the Mystery ritual. Then follows the inevitable allegation of the poverty of pagan teaching beside the shining splendor of the Sermon on the Mount. This has become decidedly hackneyed in the past fifteen years, or since western universities have instituted courses of real study in Oriental religions and have seen something of the profundity and grandeur of religions which it was until then the old Christian custom to despise. But it is worse than hackneyed; it is not true. Christian prejudice has hitherto prevented that frank, sincere and open-minded examination of pagan systems which would have brought to light the true magnificence of other religions. The proper answer to the smallness and error of the slight that Bacon casts on Greek Mystery morality and spirituality is simply to say that a thousand fair-minded scholars and students have more recently looked at both Christian and ancient pagan systems and have been unable to detect any superiority at all of Christian over pagan faiths. Indeed the consensus of much high opinion is that the palm and laurel would have to be accorded to the pagan.

So when Bacon asks us to imagine the abyss of difference between being filled with the mind of Christ and the mind of Dionysus, the frank reply must be that we see no difference at all. It is only because modern theological professors do not seem to know that in Dionysus, Atys, Bacchus, Adonis, Zagreus, Sabazius and others the Greeks had already expressed everything that a Christian can possibly think of as embodied in his Jesus, that they blunder into instituting comparisons and discovering huge gaps of difference that exist only in their own imaginations. If all the acumen of sixteen centuries of Christian scholasticism has not sufficed to instruct Occidental theologians in the simple fact that the pagan sun-god figures were not historical persons, but were typical characters prefiguring Christly nobility of perfected humanity, and were in fact the very prototypes, pre-existent in literature, of the Jesus personage himself, it would seem as if the credentials of Christian publicists to sit in judgment on pagan representations could be stoutly challenged. So much abject failure and incompetence must go far to disqualify further right to pronounce judgment in this field.

Augustine said that Socrates, antedating Christianity by five hundred years and feeding his mind on the contemplation of the (to Bacon) mean attributes, the poor and empty moral and spiritual natures, of pagan gods, was as grand a Christian as any Churchly saint or martyr. And he said that the pagan brand of Christianity was as lofty and pure a type of it as the kind he knew. He himself received the Christian doctrine of the Trinity from Plotinus, who had fed his mind on the attributes of the pagan divinities and was steeped in Hellenistic rational religion and esotericism. It is because Bacon thinks that Attis and Asclepios were mere tribe-made conceptions of semi-crude humanism that he feels safe in rating them as less authentic and less pure models of divine character than Jesus. It is time that Christian critics who indulge in these gratuitous slurs upon non-Christian systems be told that if they would learn to penetrate through the outward veil of myth and allegory that shrouds these gods from vulgar scrutiny they would find to their astonishment and humiliation that the moral and spiritual grandeur of these typical figures takes no second place in comparison with the nobility of Jesus. How can the mind of one of them be superior to that of the others when they are all, in deepest essentiality, one and the same? All the solar deities were the embodiments of the same divine majesty. To assert that one of them is superior to another is just to put on display one's ignorance of comparative religion. But lastly the desperate nature of Bacon's argument is shown by the perilous resort to which he is driven to make a point for his thesis. To prove Greek inferiority he has had to reduce a number of the phrases which express Christian ideality at its loftiest to a low rating because Paul draws them from the discredited poor and empty Hellenistic mystical cult systems. In our turn we ask you to imagine, if you can, the glaring inferiority and baseness of the phrase "partaking of the nature of" the divinity, "the life in the spirit," "the life hid with Christ in God," and such others used by Paul. If these are inferior then Christianity at its highest is inferior, for these Greek pietistic expressions are and have been for centuries current coin to describe the most exalted reaches of the mind of man toward supernal heights in the Church of Christ. But in the twisted logic of a Christian apologist they are classed as base products of a despised Hellenistic pagan culture of the spirit. If Christian mental clarity and moral purity were of so uniquely superior a quality above all paganism, why for some twelve subsequent centuries did the schools of Christian theologians have to go back to two pagan thinkers, Plato and Aristotle, to discover the principles of truth and organic rational structure upon which they could base any dialectical systematization of Christian theology itself? The mind that was in Christ Jesus was apparently not substantial enough or not capably enough known to save Christianity the need of partaking of the mind that was in Plato and Aristotle! Many a claim of cloistered theologians is belied by the record of history. Bacon quotes Dr. Morgan, who claims that the risen Christ of Paul represents a generalized picture of the historical Jesus. It seems

apparent that this word “generalized” is here doing duty as an apology for failure to use the overt words “non-personal” or “non-historical.” Dr. Morgan is saying that those features of Jesus which make him so real, and so human—he might have gone on to “so winsome”—pass out of sight in Paul’s treatment of the character. Paul’s Christ has not the inexhaustible richness or human loveliness of the reputed historical personage. Naturally it would be obvious that if Paul was philosophically, in the spirit of Greek rationalism, delineating the power, functions, grandeur and majesty of the Christly principle in the soul of man, changing man’s nature and winning his life to intelligent godliness, he would not be likely to touch the chords of such sympathies and emotions as are awakened by recital of personal human contacts, trials, pains and joys. This is to compare a keen dialectical analysis of a doctor of philosophy with the cooing smile of a babe in the cradle. You obviously can not have the one and the other in the same individual at the same time. Touching human emotion is out of place in a logical or intellectual tournament. And logic has little to do with the baby’s fetching charm. One wonders when it will dawn upon the orthodox mind that, to be sure, Paul’s Jesus lacks human quality for the very substantial reason that in Paul’s understanding he was not a human person at all. Only by elaborate metaphor would Paul’s description of a principle of mystic exaltation be clothed in terms of touching human appeal. This is the one substratum fact which explains and resolves all the puzzles and conundrums of the argumentative problem, yet it is the last one the apologists will look at. And speaking of touching human qualities, it is a grave question whether the unthinkable amount of human sympathy, some of it pleasantly amiable and consolatory, but masses of it gruesome, maudlin and morbid, which the millions of votaries in Christianity expend every year over the babe in the stable at Christmas, and over the horrible scenes when the man of sorrows finally agonizes in physical torture on the Golgotha cross on Good Friday, is psychologically noble and edifying in any way, or whether it is not a futile, moronish and altogether misplaced and degrading wastage of precious psychic force. If Jesus was not personally in history, it is all sheer fatuity and nonsense, a colossal expenditure of costly human emotion over events that never happened. The amount of sentimental gush over the sweetly human side of Jesus, the picture of him saying “Suffer little children to come unto me” while holding one in his arms and two on his knees,—the total amount of hypothetical coddling of Jesus the man as a likeable person of sanctified presence, is enough to deserve the designation “mawkish.” The efficacious leaven of the Christ spirit in any man will make him likeably human, of course. And the Jesus character, in this facet, is the type of this humaneness. But to affect surprise because Paul does not introduce a picture of winsome personableness in his dialectical exposition of the nature of Christlikeness is to miss utterly what Paul is dilating upon.

Then Dr. Morgan says that it was to this winsome, touching, appealing human figure of Jesus the man that the churches turned after the death of the Apostle and that the preservation of the Synoptic Gospels meant nothing less than the saving of Christianity. Long search would not have brought to light for the purposes of this work a statement from an argumentative opponent that so fully vindicates and corroborates the general context of this study. But Dr. Morgan sees in a different light and puts a different interpretation upon the great fact he announces. He presents the turn from the mystical Christ to the personal Jesus as a salutary manifestation, wholly beneficial to Christianity, and indeed its savior. The view of this work places an altogether different, a quite unfavorable, construction upon it. Paul had striven to limn and color in the most graphic language available—which evidently he judged to be the phraseology of the Mystery religions!—the Christ he knew, the power and grace of the Christ of the inner chamber of human consciousness. To do so he pictured the Christ of the Greek Mystery dramatization. While Pauline Christology, Gnostic esotericism and Mystery initiation doctrine held the Christian movement 284 for two and a half centuries up to a high intellectual and philosophical level, it was Paul's type of Christos that inspired this lofty achievement.

Intelligence restrained the uprush of the ignorant masses' literalized and carnalized conception of the Christ that was so soon to swamp all cultured spiritual ideology in the movement. But with the Apostle gone and the uncultured masses streaming into the Church, with the Gnostics ousted as heretics and the voices of intelligence repressed into silence, the sad and fatal turn of Christianity from the loftiness of spiritual realizations to the basest degradation perhaps known in all religious history marched on to consummation of its tragedy. How fatally right Dr. Morgan is, neither he nor his Church has ever known. To its own catastrophic desolation the Christian movement did surely enough turn from the higher and fuller conception of the Christ as the ever-coming world Messiah of a divine spirit transfiguring humanity, to the winsome-gruesome personal Jesus. This happened when its personnel had fallen to so low an intellectual ebb—amply testified to by leading writers of the time—that compromise had to be made with its incapacity to rise to a more spiritual conception of an Avatar, and the calamitous substitution of the euhemerized Christ that would have shocked Clement, Origen, Philo, Ammonias and Paul had to be pronounced blessed, if the thousands who could reach no higher were to be held in the fold. Only too true is it that when Paul was gone the Church took that fatal plunge into a vitiated and utterly false exotericism that perpetrated the unbelievable debacle resulting from the personalizing of a purely dramatic figure. This step was indeed the “salvation”—rather the initial establishment—of historical Christianity; that Christianity that reduced purely spiritual doctrines to as low a level of mental skullduggery as not even the naked sons of the forest and the sea isles had ever been

guilty of doing; that Christianity which closed the academies of the most illumined wisdom the race has known, burned libraries with fiendish fury, pronounced its own most philosophical students heretics, perpetrated centuries of the most barbarous cruelty in religious persecution ever known in the world, and founded a civilization that at last has consummated its perversion of guiding wisdom by plunging all the world into the climactic holocaust of slaughter in human history. The turning of the Christian masses from the spiritual Christ to the man Jesus indeed “saved” Christianity, which is no more than to say that it perpetuated that kind of Christianity, certainly one that was both derationalized and despiritualized. It utterly wrecked the true Christianity of the ancient Sages, who have given to the world the priceless legacy of lofty truth and tested wisdom. Christian proponents will continue to read victory and blessedness into this saddest of all debacles in the cultural life of the world, for the legend of Christian superiority must be maintained at all costs. The implications of this confusion in the thinking of Bacon and Dr. Morgan should not escape observation. Bacon has been quoted as saying it was Paul’s Greek Mystery systematism that saved Christianity; Dr. Morgan avers that salvation came through the preservation of the Synoptic Gospels with their personalized Master. As the Synoptics rest on a thesis that is in the main diametrically opposite to that of the Johannine and Pauline writings, we have here two eminent Christian exegetists arguing that Christianity was saved by two forces as nearly opposed to each other as could well be. These two views are seen to clash today; how bitterly they clashed in the earliest days of Christian history, and with what lamentable consequences the one prevailed over the other must be later included in our study.

Notice has already been taken of Bacon’s declaration that we have in Mark not a biography, not a history, but a selection of anecdotes, and those not for the purposes of history, but for spiritual edification. If Paul’s Jesus is not a man, and Mark not Jesus’s biographer, pretty nearly one third to one half of New Testament support of the historical Jesus is gone already! More of Bacon’s fine material must be scrutinized in this chapter, as it expresses with great aptness just those points in the case that badly need review. For the moment other data bearing on Paul’s silence must be presented.

There is Klausner, who remarks the significance of Paul’s giving testimony to the existence of Jesus (he evidently assumes that Paul is referring to Jesus as a person) and scans Jesus’ influence on Paul, but admits that Paul shows no interest in the events of the Savior’s career. He quotes a writer (name not given) who says:

“To Paul’s mind the center of interest was not the teacher, the worker of miracles, the companion of publicans and sinners, the opponent of the Pharisees; it was the crucified Son of God raised from the dead, and none other.”

A phrase picked from many similar ones in Massey’s work reads: “the Jesus of Paul, who was not the carnalized Christ.”

Drews briefly in one place refers to Paul, “who,” he says, “knew no historical Jesus.”

“Instead of preaching the Jesus of the historicalized Gospels, Paul preaches the doctrine of the mystic Christ,” writes Mead.

Grethenbach (*Secular View of the Gospels*, p. 243) remarks on the tell-tale fact that in its very earliest stage of propagation the legend of the miracles performed by Jesus is absent from the writings which came from or are accredited to those who were closest to him, and are found only in later accounts by Gospel authors whose names are wholly suppositious.

“As for Paul it might appear from his own ardent avowal that had he ever heard of these prodigies done for Jesus and by him, he (Paul) would not have hesitated to use them for the great glory of God (Romans 3:7-8); and his silence about them comes with the force of absolute denial.”

In Paul’s own account of his conversion he writes in this remarkable fashion:

“Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia.”

“Flesh and blood” is a strange expression by which Paul indicates that he did not confer with the Christian folks at Jerusalem or elsewhere. It indeed sounds very much like a garbled mistranslation of a Mystery or ritual phrase referring to the soul’s no longer having consort with the flesh of incarnation after its conversion from carnal appetencies. And if Jerusalem is taken in its Mystery signification of the city of heavenly peace, the whole passage can not illegitimately be regarded as an epitome of the soul’s transformation, its choice of a middle path, going neither to flesh and blood, nor retreating to heavenly Nirvana, but going away into the intermediate region between Egypt, signifying the flesh, and Jerusalem, the spirit, or into Arabia. It should be remembered, if scholastics begin to snicker at such a suggested rendition, that Mount Sinai, the middle point of meeting between man and God, is placed by Paul himself in Arabia, as seen in the fourth chapter of Galatians. If this reconstruction of the lost original esoteric meaning is correct—

and it is more likely than many will think, for ancient method handled allegorism in just such fashion—it is good case and example of how the historicizers of the spiritual myth turned allegory into history. By turning it back again one can begin to see what the original formulation may have been.

Again Paul almost categorically denies that he is preaching a Gospel of a living Jesus when he says:

“I made known to you, brethren, as touching the Gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man (or from a man), nor was I taught it, save through revelation of the Christ revealed within.” Massey comments that in short, Paul’s “Christ was not at all that Jesus of Nazareth whom he never mentions, and whom the others preached, and who may have been, and in all likelihood was, Jehoshua ben Pandira, the Nazarene.” As to the Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews, a document claimed to have been written by Paul, Massey says:

“Now in this Epistle the Christ is non-historical, he is the Kronian Christ, the Aeonian manifestor, of mythical, that is, astronomical prophecy; he is after the order of Melchizedek, who was ‘without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.’” It would seem that we have in this characterization of Melchizedek, after whose “order” the Christ was, enough to convince any but mystically derationalized “believers” that there could be nothing humanly personal and individual about Melchizedek, and inferentially about the Christ, as of his kind and nature. There are those who think and assert that Melchizedek was a man. He could no more be a man than righteousness could be a man, or liberty or virtue be a lady.

By name he is the “King of Righteousness,” as in Hebrew *melchi* is “king” and *zedek* is “righteousness.” “He” is that “spirit of truth” which, when it has fully swept into all hearts and minds, will lead us all into truth and establish the kingdom of righteousness upon earth. The description of him as without father and mother and genealogy, certainly does not refer to human father and mother and ancestry. It means that “he” is “born” or generated from that highest form and level of spiritual being which is yet undifferentiated into spirit (father) and matter (mother), and is called in the arcane nomenclature “parentless.” In the highest worlds there is neither marriage nor sex to induce it. Out of this pure essence comes the unit of soul and consciousness that is to descend into matter, marry it and through union with it generate the cosmos. This is why it can be further described as being “before the worlds,” “before the foundation of the earth,” “before Abraham,” “in the bosom of the Father,” “in the womb of creation.” “A” (Greek alpha

privative) means “not.” Brahm is the Eternal and Absolute. A-Brahm (Abraham) is therefore “not the Absolute,” but of course the first emanation from the Absolute, the first form of manifestation that is not the Absolute and Infinite, but the manifestation of the relative—and to us the real. Melchizedek, the power of the spirit of rightness and the great aeonial Messiah, ever-coming from the beginning of man, that could by no possibility “come” at any one moment, since it must come to all men as they slowly grow in grace, or in any one personality, since it must dwell in all alike, is that genius to which all Christified men will give body and instrumentality as humanity is redeemed and glorified.

It is in the sense and reference just elucidated that Paul therefore admonishes Titus and Timothy to give no heed to “fables and endless genealogies,” and to “shun foolish questionings and genealogies.” Of course Paul would warn them away from “genealogies,” since it was not likely that one in a thousand of the laity would grasp the impersonal significance of the word, and since Paul knew that the popularization of what would be misconceived as lineal ancestry instead of spiritual descent would certainly lead to the disastrous outcome of the personalizing of the Christos. Paul’s warning was against an aspect of esotericism that he saw clearly enough would act as a trap. He was merely guarding the esoteric purity of the loftier conception, and advising Titus and Timothy to do the same. As Paul was (Bacon and others admitting it) fully steeped in Mystery cultism, he was simply acting as any Mason would do today, cautioning his confreres against using the secret vocabulary indiscreetly. It is notable that genealogies are absent from John, the one Gospel that preached the Christos as the ray of the cosmic Logos, and not the man. This is quite consonant with what would be expected. Presenting Christ as non-human and impersonal, it would omit the externally hazardous 289 “genealogies.” Marcus the Gnostic eliminated the genealogies from Luke! The Docetae, a sect preaching the purely spiritual Christ, “cut away the genealogies in the Gospel after Matthew.” (Epiphanius.) Tatian also struck them out. He had first accepted them, but when he learned better, rejected the gospel of the Christ made flesh. “Barnabas, who denied the human nature of Christ, assures us that it was according to the error of the wicked that Christ was called the Son of David”—in the literal exoteric sense, doubtless. Paul also tells us that no “man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit” (I Cor. 12:3). Marcion does not connect Jesus with Nazareth. Paul’s Christ is nowhere called Jesus of Nazareth, nor is he born at Bethlehem,—the town, but in Bethlehem, the “house of bread,” the sign of Pisces, in the astrological symbolism. There is a ludicrous mixture—as was to be expected and inevitable—of the historical Jesus and the spiritual Christ in the first Epistle of Paul to Timothy, where Jesus Christ is spoken of as he “who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed the good confession”; and half a dozen lines later, Paul’s Jesus is the “Lord of Lords dwelling in the light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen nor can see.”

Massey comments that this is the Christ of the Gnosis who could not be made flesh to stand in the presence of Pontius Pilate. Let the reader note, from the analysis of the name “Pontius Pilate” made earlier in the work, how difficulty such as this vanishes the moment the esoteric non-historical rendition is adopted in place of the historical. Slight and inconsequential as this matter may seem in an instance of the kind, it is the key to the redemption of the Christian religion from its theological irrationality. It may be indeed the key to the salvation of all religion, now threatened as never before with total obscuration.

It is time to meet and answer a typical orthodox retort to the implications of Paul’s silence about Jesus. We find such a rebuttal in Shirley Jackson Case’s *The Historicity of Jesus*. This is a representative work, written by an outstanding modern theologian, of the University of Chicago Divinity School. Case speaks first of Paul’s having acquaintance with relatives and friends of this Jesus. A little later he discusses the claims of scholars and Paul’s own (apparent) statement that he had “seen Jesus our Lord” (I Cor. 9:1). He cites Paul’s incidental remark to the Corinthians that “we have known Jesus after the flesh” as proof that he had actually seen the earthly Jesus. Then he affirms 290 that Paul had come into intimate contact with individuals of note, and a host of others unknown to us by name, who had contacted Jesus. There is of course no evidence anywhere for the claim that Paul had met many persons who had seen or heard Jesus. It is just the assumption—and no more—that if Jesus lived and did what the Gospels report, Paul, living immediately after the events, must naturally have heard, known or contacted the historical aftermath of occurrences that had made such a stir in Palestine at the time. This gratuitous presupposition Case uses as the warrant for his further presumptive statement that this knowledge and first-hand acquaintance would have made it impossible for Paul to mistake a primitive doctrine about an anthropomorphized god for belief in the actual existence of a historical individual. We have to admit, is Case’s argument, that Paul stood too close to the age which professed to know Jesus to be successfully hoodwinked on the historical question. If Jesus never lived, it is not at all probable that even the most enterprising propagandists could have succeeded in persuading Paul of the reality of this mythical person in the generation to which Paul himself belonged. Paul everywhere takes for granted the existence of Jesus, whose memory was fresh in men’s minds; and also a good part of his attention is given to resisting opponents who claim superiority over him because they have been, or have received their commission from men who have been, personal companions of Jesus—a fact, says Case, which Paul never denies, though he disputes the legitimacy of the inference regarding superiority which they deduce from the fact.

It is certainly permissible to state that Case's conclusions from the premises in this facet of the argument are not dialectically supportable. We have ourselves mentioned Paul's statement that he spent a fortnight with Peter. Even without that it would be reasonable to think that he may have known and associated with others who had been close to Jesus—assuming that he lived. For argument's sake, we may concede the major premise of Case's reasoning: that Paul could have known many who had met Jesus. But the deductions Case draws from the premises seem wholly unwarrantable. Paul need not mention Jesus because everybody already knew of his existence, is the tacit claim. Such knowledge was a commonplace and there was no occasion to refer to it. Because Jesus was a definite historical character, his life and personal doings need never be spoken of. Paul could dilate at great length upon the fundamentals of the religion Jesus assumedly founded and had no need to speak of the founder! Jesus was the inspiration of the greatest religion on earth, a man whose life was so epochal that history was redated from his birth, a man whose preachment of the first divine wisdom vouchsafed to men was to free the human race from the bondage of sin and evil, a man whose mission was so mighty that stars beckoned and angels choired, and heavenly halleluiahs mingled with earthly songs to celebrate the descent of deity to the planet,—and when Paul descants with holy enthusiasm upon the marvels of this world-changing message, he found no occasion to speak of the man who was the genius of it all! For Paul to write fifteen Epistles, basic treatises on the religion that this man founded, and find no reason to refer even once to anything he said or did, would be on the order of one's writing a thorough treatise on the American Revolution and never once mentioning George Washington,—forsooth because everybody knows that Washington had something to do with it! This is the sort of reasoning that Case is treating us to. Of course everybody knows that Jesus, like Washington, was there; so there was no need to mention him. The fact that Paul wrote profound discourses on the religion established by Jesus and does not mention him, proves that Jesus lived! This is a new way for a historian to put a man in history—to remain silent about him. Herodotus or Gibbon or Macaulay does not mention Proxon; therefore Proxon must have lived. The best way to promulgate the religion Jesus founded is not to mention the founder! But, says Bacon, Paul's writings do not even dissertate on the teachings of Jesus primarily. Therefore, on Case's line of reasoning, it must have been in Paul's mind that the best way to advance the new Jesus-inspired faith was to write letters on it that leave out both the founder and his teachings! Scholars admit that it was Mystery cult teaching that Paul expatiates upon, and not specifically "Christian" cultism at all, in the ecclesiastical sense. All this, Case would argue, proves the existence of Jesus. All this is logical ribaldry, but it becomes tragic when it is realized that the whole of post-third-century Christianity rests upon the silly foundation of that sort of "logic."

From the standpoint of human sentiment alone, it surely would seem as if such high motivations as gratitude, reverence, honor, and the like, by which it can be assumed with perfect logic that Paul would have been actuated toward the man who was the author and finisher of his ecstatic faith, would have prompted him to express at least an occasional outburst of praise and thanksgiving toward the man himself, instead of confining all his tribute of high feeling toward the purely abstract principle of Christhood. But again the apologists may allege that Paul's reverence for the man was so supreme that it awed him into silence. It is in congruity with every high human presumption in the case to assume that had Paul known of a surety about Jesus' existence, no amount of pressure of any kind could have deterred this impetuous apostle from pouring out his lavish meed of adoration upon the life that had transfigured his own being. He would have been ashamed not to do so. If Paul knew Jesus had been there, how do we account for this unchristian churlishness and repression of such a man's natural gratitude? Every implication of the situation would argue that if Jesus lived and Paul had known Peter and others closely allied to Jesus, nothing could have prevented him from extolling the wise words and miraculous achievements of his idol to the highest point his pen could exalt them. That is the only reasonable presumption permissible in the case; to keep silent would be the extraordinary, the bizarre and illogical thing. There is no dodging the fatally damaging involvements of Paul's silence about Jesus. Even if Case's contention were true, that Paul keeps silent because he and the people he was writing to took Jesus' life for granted, that still would not explain Paul's characterization of the Jesus he does speak about as a spiritual principle, and not a personality. If Paul knew of Jesus' existence so well that he need not prove it by any reference to it at all, there would be all the more and not less reason for his describing him as a man. Why would Paul descant only upon the impersonal Christos, if he knew all the while that the personal Christ had just been present in his own land! Why write of him only as a psychological entity, when Paul knew him as a man?

Thus it is glaringly preposterous for Case (and others) to construe Paul's silence as evidence for the historicity, or to excuse Paul's failure to mention the Galilean on unwarranted deductions from premises that are themselves only daring conjectures. But there is one other premise that Case posits that proves to be quite untrue. He asserts that Paul stood close to the age that professed to know Jesus. It is true that Paul stood close to the age in question, but it is not true that this age "professed to know Jesus." Data already adduced have established the strange fact that the age of Paul was as silent as was Paul himself about Jesus the man. It was a later age that proclaimed the historical Jesus, later by at least three or four generations. Over a century had to elapse before the legend of the human babe and miracle-worker found voice. Paul and his and Jesus' own age were alike silent. Philo and Josephus were close at hand in the same age, and

writing volubly of just such things as were vitally concerned with what Jesus represented, and they are silent, save for the tiny squeak of some daring interpolator in Josephus' book.

As to the argument that no one could have persuaded Paul about the reality of this mythical person Jesus, it again is the weirdest pass at logic, for no intelligent person ever needs to be "persuaded" about the reality of a mythical figure. No person conversant with the Mystery teachings, as was Paul, could fail to know the difference between a mythical hero and a living mortal. Millions of the intelligentsia of many ages of ancient times were acquainted with the mythical personages without once falling into the stupid error of taking them for living persons, as the Christians did, or charged the pagans with doing. The Christians of Paul's type most certainly did not. Case's point is just another instance of the groundless fatuity that features the debate on that side, based on abject failure to apprehend the genius of ancient allegorism. It is worth the time to examine several bits of Paul's writing that point with great decisiveness to the apostle's spiritual Christ conception. In I Cor. 7:29 he speaks of "waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." What is the point of their waiting any longer for a revelation that every Christian preacher and writer shouts to the world had come with the historical appearance of Jesus of Nazareth? What an anomalous situation—the long-expected Avatar of the ages had at last come in the person of this Jesus! He was here, he had wrought his marvels, proclaimed his message, the odor of his sacred presence was still in the air, when Paul wrote! Yet Paul says they are still waiting for the revelation, the Epiphany, the showing forth in Israel! He had come, and apparently his own had not recognized him. What a miscarriage, what blindness, for Paul and his age to miss him, and to keep pathetically looking ahead in expectation when he had been just now behind them, at their very elbow! Again in I Cor. 7:4-5 ff. Paul writes of "judging nothing before the 294 time, until the Lord come." A row of exclamation points would hardly mark the significance of this verse. Case himself cites Paul's writing to the Philippians his confidence that God, who had begun a good work in them "will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." Further he counts on them to remain "void of offence unto the day of Christ," and encourages them to stand fast. How could the apostle write such things pointing to the future for fulfillment if he knew that the Messiah had just been among them?

Massey points out that according to James (5:7, 8) the coming or presence of the Lord was still being awaited. He pleads: "Be ye patient" until "the coming of the Lord," for "the coming of the Lord is at hand"—when it had just taken place! From Peter (3:10) Massey quotes:

“The day of the Lord will come like a thief, when the heavens will vanish with crackling roar, the stars will be set ablaze and melt, the earth and its works will disappear.”

The Lord had come, and in spite of an earthquake and a darkened sun and other convulsions of nature, the good old earth had kept on in its course. It is important to note in passing that secular history records none of these supremely extraordinary natural phenomena, which we must assume would have been the case had they occurred. It is quite worth noting what Gibbon has to say on this score in his great history of the Roman Empire:

“But how shall we excuse the supine inattention of the Pagan philosophical world to these evidences which were presented by the hand of Omnipotence, not to their reason, but to their senses? During the age of Christ and his apostles and of their disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of Nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the Church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and pursuing their ordinary occupations of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alterations in the moral or physical government of the world. Under the reign of Tiberius the whole earth, or at least a celebrated province of the Empire, was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, the curiosity and the devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history. It happened during the 295 lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who must have experienced the immediate effects or received the earliest intelligence of the prodigy. Each of these philosophers in a laborious work has recorded all the great phenomena of Nature, earthquakes, meteors, comets and eclipses which his indefatigable curiosity could collect. Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe.” Etc. (D. and F., p. 443.)

Again Paul’s characterization of Jesus as “the first-born,” “the first-born of all creation,” “the first-born from the dead,” “the first-born among many brethren,” would not fit a personal Galilean. “Now hath Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.” But, Massey asks, in what sense? It is impossible, he avers, to apply such descriptions to any historical person. No historical Jesus could be the first-born from the dead. In the gross exoteric sense this would mean that no man in all preceding centuries had risen out of his physical grave in a body of any kind, physical or spiritual. In a somewhat more exalted esoteric sense it would mean that Jesus was the first in all the history of humanity ever to rise as a spiritually glorified being from his body

of clay in his final transfiguration into immortality. It would mean that no one before Jesus had ever accomplished the resurrection of his spiritual body out of the earthly body of this death, which is the true meaning of the resurrection. But in any of the possible eventualities that fulfilled resurrection doctrine, taken historically, it is unthinkable and presupposes vast injustice on the part of God to the millions antedating 33 A.D., that no mortal had ever achieved spiritual victory up to that time. One has to go over to the deeper esoteric sense to catch the rational significance of the statement that Jesus was the first fruits of them that slept. For obviously the Christ-type of consciousness is the first power of divine rank that is awakened to full and immortal function out of the deep sleep of age-long incubation in matter into which the living energies of spirit are plunged at the beginning of each cycle. The Christ-mind is the first perfected fruitage on the tree of life and nature. This is precisely what is embodied in many cryptic constructions in sacred lore, representing the tree in Adam's garden as bearing the Christ as its topmost and richest fruit. The golden bough on the tree or the bright star on the highest tip of the Christmas pine carries the meaning still. After long ages of gestation in her womb, Mother Nature in her old age 296 (Sarah, Hannah, Elizabeth!) brings forth the Christ consciousness, as the first divine fruitage of the natural order. With this knowledge and conception sane comprehension can at last replace prevalent logical dementia. Paul also speaks of "building up the body of Christ, until we all attain unto the unity of Faith and to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." How could each of us build up the body of Christ, if he be a physical man? If we take such a saying of Paul as that he "knew a man in Christ," we at once run into ludicrous impertinence if we think of Christ as a man. What it would be to be "in" a Christ who is physical, would be difficult to say. Does the orthodox protagonist pronounce this a silly and preposterous argument? But he could call it silly only on the presupposition that of course the phrase means to be "in" Christ in the purely spiritual sense of being in the vibration of the same mind and soul that Christ manifested. But that is to admit nearly all that this work stands for: that the Christ is a spiritual nature in us, and not a man in history. Orthodox strategy falls back on the definition of Christ as spiritual principle whenever the argument would take a disadvantageous turn on the personal rendering, but jumps back to the latter when it seems safe to do so. But the Christ is either one or the other. The one excludes the other and the vacillation back and forth between the two prevents the fixing of one clear and determinate meaning to the term. It is beyond question that the word "Christ" means the flower of divine consciousness in man and nothing else whatever. All ancient sacred books presented a type of this beauteous development in man's organism at the summit of his growth, and—ignorance later mistook the figure for a man. This is the whole—tragic—story.

That the life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of the Son of God were distinctly not behind Paul, but still to come as a consummation for all humanity is indubitably indicated by Paul himself in II Timothy (2:16-18) where he says:

“But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker; of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”

What testimony from the scriptures themselves could be more cogent than this? Paul is warning his Christian brethren to quit the silly talk about the resurrection being accomplished once and for all for humanity, through the exoterically misapprehended physical resurrection of the man-Christ. It was as if Paul cautioned them to be on their guard against countenancing and enhancing the disastrous vogue of the exoteric exploitation and garbling of deeply esoteric material. There is every reason to think that this is the true picture of the import behind Paul's words here, a picture which we owe chiefly to Massey's clear vision.

Then we come to the matter of Paul's vision on the road to Damascus, which is the chief reliance of the flesh-worshipping party in the debate. This incident is supposed to clinch the verdict for the historicity. What doubt can there be when Paul saw Jesus in his vision, and the appearance of the Master to him was so overwhelmingly genuine that it led to Paul's conversion? How can Jesus' existence be doubted when he actually appeared to Paul (and others)? But the matter is not so simple. It involves much that needs understanding. Was the apparition to Paul the wraith of the dead Jesus or the spirit-body of Jesus still living? Massey cites data of much cogency to intimate that the vision came to Paul while Jesus was still living, if facts of Gospel "history" be considered. He shows by data from the Acts that Paul's conversion, supposed to have occurred after the year 30 A.D. at the earliest, must have occurred as early as 27 A.D. He reasons as follows: Paul stated that after his conversion he did not go up to Jerusalem for three years. Then after fourteen years more he went again up to Jerusalem with Barnabas. This second visit can be dated by means of the famine, which is historic, and known to have occurred in the year 44, at which time relief was conveyed to the brethren in Judea by Barnabas and Paul. If we take seventeen years from the 44, the different statements go to show that Paul had been converted as early as 27 A.D. The conversion then could not have been by a spiritual manifestation of the supposed personal Jesus, who was not then dead, and further had not at that time been regarded as, or converted into, a living person of the later canonical Gospels. But that point can be let go, as a bit indecisive. Modern Spiritualists and Theosophists can supply plentiful data as well as a full-fledged rationale

of spiritual science to make it possible for Jesus, living in 27, 298 or dead in 33, to “appear” to Paul in vision. Whether spirit or wraith, little is the difference. But a far more vital point is one which, of course, the pro-flesh debaters have never commented upon. Quite—and refreshingly—unlike medieval and modern visionaries who see the radiant figure of “Jesus” in their inner world, Paul distinctly does not make the unconscionable mistake of the latter by asserting the identity of the figure or personage of his vision with an allegedly former living character whom he had never seen. We have covered this point in the first chapters. He simply designates the figure appearing to him as the Lord Jesus Christ, which can be seen to stand here for a generic name of such a type of radiant manifestation, apart from any necessary connection with any former or present living personality. Ancient Egyptian necrological science predicated that the gods and the elect of perfected humanity could appear to men in whatsoever garments of solid or etheric matter they chose. They could appear in many different forms, clothed in flesh or clothed in light. Paul, with his Mystery cult associations, must have been familiar with these possibilities in a commonplace way. It was enough for him to know that he had experienced a spiritual vision, that an apparition of a celestial-appearing figure, an angel of light, had flashed across his inner eye. He did not presume to tie the vision back to any earthly personage, particularly to an individual he had never seen. He only says that the radiant light of the Christos enfolded and blinded him.

Strange as this may sound to theological ears, there is much solid reason to suspect that the whole episode of Paul’s great vision was the rescript almost verbatim of a portion of Mystery dramatism. For Paul says that the stunning, blinding radiance of Christly glory threw him with his face to the ground, after which a voice out of the light spoke to him and said, “Stand on your feet, Paul.” This hardly seems like personal history; for in the Mystery philosophy the descent of the divine soul into incarnation in the early human beginning stage sent it into the bodies of animals who yet walked on all fours, with face to the ground. And as the Christ consciousness gradually asserted its rulership, the humanized animal forms slowly rose to their feet, upright! For the god-soul to incarnate at the beginning of the cycle was for it to fall to earth with its face to the ground, and then the divine voice within spoke and bade it stand up on its feet as the upright human-divine! It is not hard to presume that an age saturated with the effort to dramatize mythical typology would have introduced into the Mystery ceremonial just such a typical representation of the soul’s descent into lowly animal body and its resurrection to the upright human status. Furthermore the transformation was accompanied by a change of name—Saul to Paul, as Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel. “A new name shall be given unto” the Christified human, carved on a white stone, says Revelation. The whole recital may not unwarrantably be construed as a bit of the initiatory ritualism of the Mystery societies, which was itself just a dramatic typing of the

transformation of man, starting with his face to earth in brute body, and rising from his animal nature to spiritual stature, when he received his new baptism. In all probability it stood at first as pure typism in Paul's writings, and may have been made over into an alleged personal experience of his by the hands and fancies of those redactors who transmogrified sublime mythicism into startling history.

In *Myth, Magic and Morals* (pp. 6-9 ff.) F. W. Conybeare says that Paul's Christ is an a priori construction of his own, owing little or nothing to the historical man of Nazareth, and to those who knew that man and cherished his memory. The most that Paul owed to him was the name Jesus. Paul's Jesus is an ideal superhuman Savior, destined from the beginning of the world to play an ecumenic role. Paul, he says, shows no acquaintance with the Sermon on the Mount or with the parables.

Paul could not remember in another instance of mystic vision of his (I Cor. 12:1 ff.) whether certain experiences occurred to him "in the body or out of it, I know not; God knoweth,"—twice repeated. This can serve as the legitimate foundation for the suggestion that Paul's ecstatic vision may have been one of those super-conscious experiences which many people have had, so detached from objective reality that they can by no possibility be related to actual events in the world at all.

Chapter XIII **ROBBING PAUL TO PAY PETER**

The study now touches upon a phase of Paul's relation to Christianity that involves a portion of early Christian history which is generally unknown to the laity or the people at large. It is the Peter-Paul controversy, so-called. It was a factional dispute in the early Church between two sides representing respectively the spiritual and the literal construction of Scripture. There appears to be evidence that there was a Petrine party upholding the historical interpretation of the Messiahship and the Gospel narrative, opposed to a Pauline faction that stood for the esoteric mystical meaning of all Scripture. Massey is speaking of the great gulf that separated these two views and their factional advocates in early Christianity when he makes this drastic declaration:

"The bodies of two million martyrs of free thought, put to death as heretics in Europe alone, and all the blood that has ever been shed in Christian wars, have failed to fill that gulf which waits as ever wide-jawed for its prey." There is first the matter found in the Clementine Homilies, which is ostensibly inspired by the Petrine faction. The author, assumed to be Clement of Rome, designates Paul as "the Hostile Man." Peter is made to say to Paul, "Thou hast opposed thyself as an Adversary against me, the firm rock, the foundation of the Church." Paul's conversion by means of abnormal visions is attributed to the false Christ, the Gnostic and Spiritualist Christ opposed to a historic Christ.

Peter is hitting obviously at Paul in Homily 17, when he says, "Can anyone be instituted to the office of a teacher through visions?" Paul is treated as the arch-enemy of the Christ crucified—he is declared the very Anti-Christ! He is predicted to be the author of some great heresy expected to break out in the future. Peter is said to have declared that Christ instructed the disciples not to publish the one true and genuine Gospel for the present, because false teachers must arise, who would publicly proclaim the false Gospel of the Anti-Christ, that was the Christ of the Gnostics. "As the true Prophet has told us, the false Gospel must come from a certain misleader." The true Gospel was confessedly "held in reserve, to be secretly transmitted for rectification of future heresies." The Petrine party knew well enough what had to come out if Paul's preaching, proclaimed in his original Epistles, got vent in wide broadcast. Hence those who were the followers of Peter and James anathematized him as the great apostate and rejected his Epistles. Justin Martyr never once mentions this founder of Christianity, never once refers to the writings of Paul. Strangest thing of all is that the Book of Acts, which is mainly the history of Paul, should contain

no account of his martyrdom or death at Rome. Paul's writings seem to have been withheld for a full century after his death.

According to Massey, "The Praedicatio Petri declared that Peter and Paul remained unreconciled until death." Klausner (85) refers to the dispute between Peter and Paul over the observance of the ceremonial laws, circumcision and forbidden foods.

Clement of Alexandria states that Paul, before going to Rome, said that he would bring to the brethren the Gnosis, or tradition of the hidden mysteries, as the fulfillment of the blessings of Christ, who, Clement says, reveals the secret knowledge and trains the Gnostic by Mysteries, i.e., revelations made in the state of trance. Thus Paul was going as a Gnostic and therefore as the natural opponent of historic Christianity, the promulgation of which was the aim of the Petrine party. Massey declares it was the work of Peter to make the Mysteries exoteric in a human history. It was the work of Paul to prevent this by explaining the Gnosis. Paul warns against the preaching of that "other Gospel" and that "other Jesus."

The data on the subject are none too full or explicit. Controversy could easily rage over it. The gist of the matter is, however, apparent. Christianity started as Gnosticism, became vitiated by the introduction of exoteric elements and proceeded along the track of that course of literalization and historization which made it acceptable to all the ignorant and repellent to all the intelligent. Endless controversy arose between the leaders of the two trends and it appears that Paul was arrayed against Peter. If it was not Paul, the subjective esotericist, against Peter, the objective exotericist, it was at least Pauline spirituality against Petrine literalism. As has so often been admitted by scholars, Paul preached the gospel of the immanent Christ; Peter stood for the fact and the message of a personal Jesus. The resolution of the controversy in favor of the Petrine party was fateful for the whole future of Christianity and the Occident. It committed the Catholic Church to an effort to organize the whole world under its aegis in an earthly body, in which effort it has achieved so large a success, but also in which, by the very fact of its adapting its message to a form of attraction for the less intelligent masses, it has lost its own interior meaning, its profoundest spiritual genius. No one can predict history unless he is blessed with some power of vaticination, but it is reasonable to assume that had the Pauline wing of the early movement prevailed, the service of Christianity to the Western peoples over sixteen centuries would have brought more of benison than it has done.

But the matter of this controversy is not ready to be dismissed with the treatment given. The obligation to deal fully with its historical implications rests heavily on anyone treating the

development of early Christianity. The early Petrine victory has fixed the character and set the course of all following Christian influence, and as this course and character have been defended, ecclesiastical polity has ever since stood stoutly behind the historical interpretation of scripture. Scholars and theologians in every camp have inveterately lauded the Church's third-century choice of Petrine as against Pauline theology and they have without limit hailed that choice as Christianity's escape and salvation from the evils of Gnostic doctrinism and Pauline mystical spirituality. It is the purpose of this study to challenge the dominance and the tenability of this posture and to refute its basic contentions. It is the thesis that the Church, Christianity and religion itself lost immeasurably by following after Peter instead of Paul. Our contentions on this score will fly directly into the face of all orthodox scholastic opinion and will doubtless invite bitter scorn and condemnation. But truth is important and worth the cost one often has to pay for it.

Bacon has so well stated the conventional and established view on the matter that it will serve the purpose handily to let him present it. In his *Jesus and Paul* (p. 138) he is speaking of Mark's Gospel and says that, try as he would, Mark finds it impossible to make his recital the story of a real man under actual historical conditions, and at the same time the story of the superhuman being who steps down into incarnation from "heaven" and who is treated in the Christology of the Gnostics as a "principle" and not as a man. The combination is attempted, however, says Bacon, and Paul's influence is seen pressing on the side of the subjective Christhood. John carried the subjectivization of the Christ even further, but, says Bacon, it is fortunate indeed for us that the move in the direction taken by Paul and John could not be carried through to triumph. John came close to making the "life" of Jesus one long ode of spiritual transfiguration, ignoring the mundane Jesus on his personal side. John was more a history of abstract Christhood than of the Christ himself. Then, asserts Bacon, we all know how fatal would have been the result for real religious values if the later Gospel—John—had completely superseded all its predecessors. Mark superseded all earlier Gospels (this is a bit strange, since many scholars have made Mark the earliest Gospel). Then John had carried the apotheosis still beyond Mark. Had the transference of human to purely spiritual character in the Christos been carried through to final victory, the real and historical Jesus would have been completely eclipsed behind the raptures of spiritual exaltation and mystic rapports. The solid ground of plain, hard fact underneath the Christian structure would have disappeared. Our science of religion would have been reduced, alleges Bacon, to the tiny dimensions of a figure scarcely more substantial than the mythical heroes of the Mysteries. We can be thankful that the whole Gospel was not written in the mystic style, as displayed in the stories of the baptism and the transfiguration, that there was so much rugged fact, defying all imaginative effort to romanticize it into sheer ideality, so much narrative established in the mouths of many

witnesses, that those who aimed to idealize the man clear over into pure spirit could not have their victory. Well is it that the Church did not follow the lead of that ultra-Pauline element which for so long in the movement sought to exalt the impersonal Christos and to ignore the Galilean mechanic whom Paul had not known in the flesh. Sober moral common sense led the body of the movement to fall back rather on the Petrine reminiscences of the sayings and doings of Jesus the man.

One has to wonder whether the eminent and learned writers of this and similar material—to be found in endless profusion in Christian apologetic literature—have ever paused long enough in their laudable zeal to vindicate the Christian record to reflect upon the implications and commitments of their position thus stated. As a matter of simple fact these grandiose assertions to the effect that Christianity was fortunate to escape the Pauline influence come close to being a blank confession that Christianity has never been a wholly spiritual religion, and from the third century was not capable of absorbing and assimilating the completely spiritual message and import of the true Gospel! The realization has never seemed to dawn upon orthodox defenders of the faith once delivered to the saints that to proclaim its good fortune in escaping Paul's thoroughgoing preachment of the indwelling spirit of God is practically the equivalent of proclaiming Christianity to be a system that refuses to go the whole way in the direction of inner spiritual illumination. The inference of good fortune in escaping a certain element implies the presence of evil in that element. If the Church is proclaimed fortunate in having escaped Paul's spiritual systematism, the plain deduction from the syllogism is that Paul's high spirituality was and is a dangerous and evil thing. Yet a million sermons have taken Paul's beautiful runes and rhapsodies of the spiritual life and gone on to magnify and extol their sanctifying power in the Christian experience. If this is the benign thing that Christianity escaped (and it is our assertion that this beauteous influence is just the thing it did lose), how in the name of all that is reasonable can a religion be declared fortunate in escaping the highest blessedness of spiritual exaltation? If Paul's ethereal afflatus, his lofty flights on the wings of beatific realization of the presence of God in the soul, are things of danger to be sedulously escaped, it is imperative, then, that the Christian system turn to repudiate Augustine, Thomas à Kempis, Bonaventura, St. Francis and its thousands of idolized saints and enchanted mystics, whom it has persisted in holding up as heroes of the sacred life. In striking, however glancingly, at Paul and his contribution to their movement, the exegetists are shouting aloud the ultimate spiritual deficiency of their own cult. Their attitude represents mental insincerity, if not open duplicity, inasmuch as the condemnation of Paul's exalted communion with inner deity clashes diametrically with a stupendous volume of experience on the part of Christian devotees from Augustine to Rufus Jones as to the supreme excellence of the Gnostic pathway to the vision of divine light. In the face of this enormous volume of most

highly acclaimed and venerated mysticism of Christian votaries, which, if anything, outdoes even Paul in pure rapture—since Paul never relaxes his hold on rational elements, and the Christian mystics often do—it is surely disingenuous for theologians to decry the Pauline influence or hold it up as a potential peril happily escaped. And if the Church was fortunate to escape the fate of being ridden with the highest and sanest type of rational mysticism perhaps ever to be introduced into religion, its good fortune did not continue longer than the fourth century. For Augustine straightway fell into exalted ecstasies more unrestrained than any Paul expressed. And a whole catalogue of saints and ascetics since then have followed the same path to what they reported to be the acme of inner blessedness. Not even the Hindu Yogi has surpassed the line of Christian revelers in transcendental enchantments. When the holy saints and nuns of medieval and modern Christianity have fallen into such white-hot rapture of identity with the suffering Jesus of Passion Week that the replicas of his wounds opened and bled on their very bodies, and all this (and much else) has been held in awesome regard by the Christian body in general, it comes close to downright insincerity for scholars to denounce Paul's lofty rational spirituality as not genuine Christianity.

It is time that someone called attention to the glaring inconsistency of this position. That which has been exalted as the noblest and highest strain in Christianity over the centuries is precisely the attainment of inner rapport between the individual soul and the God consciousness, and this is the Pauline influence that we have seen denounced as a peril. If Paul's emphasis on this experience was a life-and-death danger to Christianity, then it was not fortunate to escape it, for it never did escape it! Not only did it adopt it—on one side of its life at least—but it became the religion's brightest crown! If that influence spelled catastrophe, then the religion has suffered vast catastrophe, for that influence is exactly what it exalted to the highest. It is surely strange that the very element which these critics pronounce the gravest danger that Christianity escaped has never been seen as calamity, but is on all sides held to be Christianity's truest expression. And again can be seen how decisively historic fact gives the lie to an ingrained facet of stereotyped ecclesiastical pietism.

Bacon confesses that it would have been fatal if Christianity had gone the whole way with Paul into the inner realization of divine presence and communion. This is to say by inference that it was all right to go a little way into realization of inner divine values, but not to go into it with whole-hearted intensity. It must be granted that moderation in all things is commendable, indeed is the sum of most virtue. And no one goes beyond us in decrying the dangerous tendencies and extravagances that so often engulf the unwise or unbalanced dabbler in the mystic ocean. There is

here full and even hearty accord with those who press that side of the case. But still it is the height of anomaly to assume that any true goal of human aspiration is to be striven for only half way. No goal of real worth will be reached without consummate care and balance at every stage of approach. That is understood in any effort at perfection.

Bacon holds that it would have been a calamity if the real historical Jesus had been eclipsed behind the glories of apocalyptic vision. Then Christianity is headed for calamity, for its confessed and approved aim is eventually to eclipse any outward value or nucleus of value behind supreme inner realizations. If this is not so, a thousand Christian books and ten million Christian sermons have been a resounding lie. The pro-Jesus argument is a bubble that bursts and vanishes under the touch of the final consideration in all religious experience, that no Savior external to man's own mind and heart can avail to help any mortal win his immortal crown unless and until that mortal has incorporated into his own nature the mind and self of the Christ spirit. No Christ outside can transfigure a mortal until the mortal feeds on that body of divine essence, transubstantiates his own being with it, becomes transfigured by the ineffable infusion of a higher consciousness and ends by being changed in a moment into the likeness of a divine soul. Be there a thousand holy Messiahs in body on earth, they would not alter the conditions of the individual's apotheosis one whit. The eclipse of an alleged personal Jesus behind individual spiritual attainment and a true estimate of the relatively minor importance of a personal Avatar, could not be fatal to Christianity or any religion, because in the end, with evolution the judge and jury, any historical "Jesus" must be eclipsed behind a real divine achievement in consciousness. If this is not true, all religious or ethical exhortation for the spiritual purification of the life is waste and impertinence. On the other hand, the eclipse of the Pauline emphasis on the life of spiritual realization, irrespective or regardless of the solid fact of Jesus' personal career, could and did become a terrible handicap to the promulgation of the only true Christianity worthy of the 307 name—that Christianity which builds the Christ mind and heart into the ranks of humanity.

By what species of clairvoyance Bacon and his fellow apologists profess to see more terrible consequences flow from centuries of Christian effort to incorporate divine graciousness into the European and American consciousness than have accrued to history from that same amount of effort to commemorate a solidly real Jesus, we do not pretend to know. A myriad of the grossest forms of man's inhumanity to man, fifty millions of people, historians estimate, murdered by Christian bigotry and hatred, religious wars of frightful proportions, persecutions, intercreedal antagonisms, hopeless division and hostility, the total suppression of free thought and free inquiry, of scientific investigation and search for truth for ten to twelve centuries—all this is but a

suggestion of the record of that same Christianity which drew its motivations from the (alleged) solid fact of Jesus' existence. Surely the challenge can be flung down to the theologians to tell us on what sound knowledge they dare to assert that the record of their religion would have been still far more terrible if the millions of devoted followers had been actuated by the esoteric motive of trying to incorporate as much of the Christ mind within the area of their own lives as Paul would have taught them to do. If the Church's dodge from Paul's rational mysticism back to the exoteric factuality of Petrine doctrine saved it, it saved it for a record of brutal and conscienceless inhumanity that would utterly discredit any other organization on earth. Every rational assumption in the situation gives us the right to assert that had it held to Paul instead of turning to Peter, it might have been saved from the horrible record it has made in being saved from the still more horrible record it would have made—as claimed—if it had not been saved to make the horrible record it did make! Crazy as this sounds, it is exactly where the logic of this conventional line of theological reasoning leads us. It robbed Paul to pay Peter; far better had it been to rob Peter to pay Paul. And the Peter's pence it has paid have not bought it remission of any of its sins against the glimmering of the esoteric light of spiritual truth in many corners here and there in Europe in the intervening centuries, light which it has with fell fury rushed to black out as soon and often as it appeared. For from the days its ignorant masses elevated the Petrine doctrine in triumph over the Pauline esotericism to this present, it has been crucifying not only the spirit of Paul but the heart and soul of the true Christ in humanity. And this is the institution and the creed that Bacon defends. The real historical verdict after sixteen centuries is that it was a calamity that the solid ground of plain hard fact of Jesus' personal existence did not disappear behind the living reality of inner grace. Had the personal Jesus disappeared, as Bacon laments the possibility of its having done, we would have had left nothing more substantial than the mythical heroes of the Mysteries and a vague general idea of a god somehow dwelling within us, is the claim. But our early chapters have dealt with this point. Since the work of saving grace must be consummated eventually by each individual for himself, and a model or paragon was provided by ancient sage wisdom in the form of the Messianic Sun-God figures in the Mystery dramatic rituals, man's only inspiration toward the task of his salvation is the knowledge that the excellence of the model can be achieved by him in time. A living exemplar can do no more. And since he can not, all the claims that a historical Jesus is the only solid basis for the one true dynamic religion fall out as untrue. All the writers in the strain that Bacon labors to express lay great stress on the fact that the hard plain data of Jesus' actual career are the only solid or substantial elements to which a religious faith can attach itself and feel under its feet the firm ground of certitude from which dynamic fortitude can be drawn. But we have particularized the item that if this is the one rock to which we

can safely moor our bark, it is by the very fact of its “onliness” most unsafe and insecure after all. If Jesus alone attained, our victory is far off. As a matter of truth, there is no safe ground for humanity to stand upon in religion save the rock of divine instinct in the inner self. If, as said, this is insecure, no historical man is of avail to save the individual. The sad effect of teaching the masses to look outward for their salvation to a historical person is seen in the helpless bewilderment and resourcelessness of people today when they are suddenly told for the first time that their only God is the Christ within their own souls. They are filled with dismay, they are overwhelmed with desolation, and they turn and cry: “They have taken away my Savior—on whom shall I lean now?” They have so little cultivated the acquaintance of their inner divine guest that they have certitude neither of his presence nor of his competence to save them. Through dearth or desuetude of the doctrine and practice of the immanence of God, millions today stand trembling in helpless terror when this challenge leads to the sudden revelation of their own inner poverty. When they are told they have nothing more substantial to count upon than their feebly-glowing spark of divinity—all drowned in the welter of human loves and hates, greeds and cruelties—their situation appears to them hopeless indeed. No wonder they find consolation and safety when the sanctified priest assures them that the personal Jesus will look benignly upon them and be their vicarious benefactor.

Paul, Bacon agrees, had not known the Galilean mechanic in the flesh. He had apparently never heard of him and writes nothing of him. Yet this bereavement and deprivation did not prevent him from being the actual founder of the true Christianity and possibly its foremost expounder and teacher. The spiritual model of the Mystery drama was quite as dynamic an inspiration as ever was needed to lift a man to near-divine intelligence and holiness. Paul’s own life and writing put out of court the arguments of his unworthy successors in the great religion he promulgated. Paul himself disproves that the existence of a living Jesus is a necessary element in the psychology of Christly attainment. He attained without knowledge of a personal Savior, as did, shall we say, Plato and Socrates long before him.

There is nothing in the whole of the illogical position upheld by Bacon in this passage that would not be readily corrected by a proper study of comparative religion, with especial reference to the Egyptian sources of all Bible material. But the idiosyncrasies of the argument can not be seen until such study has been made in considerable volume and with proper insights, as well as freedom from established biases. The entire body of supposititious data on which criticism and judgments have so far been based must be drastically altered, and a new foundation for both criticism and interpretation formulated, on the basis of the inclusion of later and sounder Egyptian

studies in comparative religion. The perennial weakness of the Christian essay to evaluate its own scriptures has been the delimitation of the scope of its survey to the too narrow bounds of the Christian movement alone. Contempt of “pagan” influences has kept Christian perspective focused on the narrow study of a body of literature that has been believed capable of standing alone and revealing its meaning without reference to its relation to antecedent and environing connections. The truth is that the total of its form, nature and meaning is so closely intertwined with these antecedent elements that without them the study can proceed only in dense darkness. The sun of truth that is needed to throw light into the dark recesses of the mystery, confusion and unintelligibility of the Christian exegetical problem is that luminary of wisdom that shone of old in Egypt, but that was eclipsed by the uprush of popularized Christianity and buried until the Rosetta Stone opened the long-sealed door to let the light shine forth once again. Only with that torch in hand will the scholars have the light to see both their former erroneous methods and the true nature of the problem.

Chapter XIV A QUEEN DETHRONED

Nor immediately apropos to the theme of Paul's silence, but closely cognate to the broad implications of Bacon's position as above set forth, and of great general interest in relation to the vital changes in early Christianity which affect the study, is a statement from the Yale theologian on page 230 of *Jesus and Paul*, to the effect that it has been credibly estimated that Christianity lost one half of its following to Marcion and other Gnostic "heretics" bent on divorcing it from its Jewish affiliations and making it over in the true likeness of a Hellenic Mystery cult of personal redemption. Mead asserts, too, that the great Marcionite movement had cut Christianity entirely apart from Judaism. Valentinus tried with some modest success to harmonize the two elements. This datum as to the Marcionite invasion into the ranks of Christianity must be considered a fairly true estimate. Mosheim also says that Origen "had introduced the Academy"—Orphic-Platonic esotericism—entire into the fabric of Christian theology. Augustine a little later came from sitting at the feet of Plotinus, and, previously tinged with Manichaeism, introduced the Plotinic-Platonic doctrine of the "three fundamental hypostases" into Christianity from early Jewish popular exoteric tendencies over to an alignment of doctrine with the most enlightened philosophic wisdom of ancient days. It represented an effort on the part of the more illumined elements, the real intellectual leaders, who had affiliated with the movement perhaps from the motive of saving the strong popular surge of religious ferment from swinging completely out of hand and degenerating into exoteric rubbish. The danger of the deterioration of high spiritual religion into vulgar misrepresentation of truth, which only the most clear-sighted sagacity can envision and guard against, is always great. But it was never so acutely crucial as in the very epoch under review. It seems likely that there was a lessened tone of spiritual character and perhaps some moral laxity in the personnel of the Mysteries, provoking some wide-spread disgust. Likely also was it that resentment and impatience prevailed among the masses over the exclusiveness of the Mystery cults, and there probably was a growing desire on the part of the people to break down the barriers of secrecy and spread the teachings abroad to the world. Discerning that it was both impossible and undesirable to resist this sweep, which represented grave danger to the inner teachings, but also perhaps feeling some sympathy with it, the philosophical element allied itself with the movement, seeking to direct its currents into safe channels. Almost every great popular movement—like the French Revolution—engages at its inception the interest and support of idealists. Later on, when more grossly human interests surge to the surface and find expression, the idealists are disappointed and disillusioned and drop out. A typical example of this in an individual case is the poet Wordsworth in connection with the French Revolution. The philosophic

thinkers who joined the early Christian movement later either dropped out or were forced out by the overwhelming surge of crude exotericism that made hash of the doctrines after two and a half or three centuries. Origen was in particular posthumously excommunicated and anathematized three hundred years after his death for having introduced into the theology the great Oriental doctrine of rebirth or reincarnation.

The high-minded endeavor of the philosophic Christian leaders to hold Christianity up to the superior levels of sage wisdom and interior insight, could it have held its own, is the thing that would in truth have saved the religion of Christos. Yet this most salutary and enlightened trend in leadership and following, Pauline and not Petrine, is the influence that the theologians say Christianity was lucky to escape. In the ironical long and short of the matter, the claim is that Christianity was saved from a worse fate than its now known despicable record of centuries, by following a trend that left every one of its doctrines void of true or intelligible meaning and introduced chaos into every interpretation. We are asked to believe that another trend that would have retained the true inner essence of vital significance, to the eternal enlightenment of mankind, would have represented a great and catastrophic danger to the faith. If this does not reveal the poverty of exegetical and interpretative insight on the part of Christian theologians, we would not know how otherwise to read it.

Brief notice must be taken and rebuttal made of an excerpt from Dr. Morgan quoted by Bacon. He says that the Hellenistic conception of fellowship with God is intellectual and mystical rather than moral, a participation in divine omniscience and immortality by enlightenment or ritual. The Church, on the moral side, insists on conduct. This is one of those fine-spun differentiations that, to have the force intended, must slur the highest tenets and accredited principles of Christianity itself. To hit at Hellenistic philosophy, elements of its doctrine or practice must be belittled. But the odd thing is that these same elements condemned in Hellenism turn out to be influences that have been lauded and glorified in Christianity itself. What Christian Church would not feel itself highly blessed to know that its ministry brought to its people the most intimate mystical fellowship with God? The sad thing to note is that if it does not attain that much of victory, it also does not attain the straight moral purity advertised as more distinctly a normal Christian performance. Forsooth the attainment of communion with God in the inner sanctum of conscience and character must be decried as second rate performance because it is Greek and not distinctively Christian. It is a weird logic that has to defend the probity of moral conduct by slandering the sanctity or sincerity of mystical and intellectual fellowship with God. Their efforts to translate history into the meaning they wish to give it force them into the necessity of condemning

fellowship with God as evil. All this bespeaks the reduction of Christian dialectic to a one-sided belittlement of everything non-Christian. Even the highest elevations of the human soul in aspiration for union with God must be written down as dangerous, because Greek rational religion inculcated them first.

One other venting of Christian antipathy to the lofty systems of pagan religion is worth closer scanning, as it is found expressed in another passage from Bacon (247). After saying that he had made special effort in his survey of the fourth Gospel to show its completely Pauline character, he declares that Gentile Christianity faced its critical hour forty years after Paul's death when the churches of Asia lay between the Scylla of reaction toward Jewish legalism and the Charybdis of Gnostic theosophy. That the stream of Christian development was able to take a clear and open course by preaching to the world the spiritual Christ of St. Paul and interfusing also into the teaching of Jesus the Pauline doctrine of grace, is owing to the Ephesian evangelist. If this so great boon came to Christianity through Paul's influence, again it must be asked: why the universal orthodox judgment that the adherence to Paul's type of religion would have wrecked Christianity? Again it is difficult for the laymen to understand how Paul's contribution both saved Christianity and threatened it with obliteration. The later years of development in the early Church, says Bacon, were marked by the incoming of grievous wolves not sparing the flock, by a teaching of Anti-Christ, threatening to sweep away the whole Church from its relation to the historical Jesus. The Asiatic wing of the Church was in danger of forsaking the way of approach to God by moral self-dedication in the spirit of love and taking its course along the dangerous path of Gnosis. By what license or chicanery of logic a Christian theologian can stigmatize the inner realizations of divine grace and divine presence aspired to (and often, apparently, attained) in the practice of Gnostic Christianity as Anti-Christ, is not clear either on the surface or in the depths of the situation. The realization of inner sanctification is apparently to be belittled or stigmatized because it was not attained with the help of the doctrine of a personal Jesus. And how it can be contended that a Gnostic's achievement of divine grace is Anti-Christ and spurious, while the same realization by a Christian saint is the legitimate divine unction, can not readily be apprehended. What can all this narrow logic-chopping mean but that Christian jealousy of its own asserted virtues has reduced its apologists to the childish maneuver of declaring the Christ it proclaims as the only true one, and the Christ non-Christians cultivate as a false one? The presence of such a motive is at hand in the egregiously overweening presumptions on which the whole Christian missionary movement was based. "We have the only true religion, because we alone have the true Christ," was the cry that accompanied the attempt to force Christianity willy-nilly upon all the rest of mankind.

It took a hundred years of pretty nearly flat failure to open the zeal-blinded eyes of vaunting Christians to the fact that other religions had found ways to reach the true Christ within the heart.

If it is true that Christianity would have been ruined by following “the delusive path of Gnosis,” it should be expected that those who for centuries did follow that path would show in their lives and fate the awful consequences of having lived this baneful doctrine. The Gnostics themselves, it is to be presumed, must have presented in their history the evil results of the system. What did the acceptance of Anti-Christ do to them, as a horrible example of false teaching? Surely those who devoted their lives to following such a pestiferous perversion of true doctrine must have given evidence of the disastrous effects of such a plague in their own lives. If it would have ruined Christians, surely it must be clear that it ruined its own devotees. Bacon and his fellow slanderers of Gnosticism have surely put themselves “out on a limb,” which can be sawed off in quick order. For what do we find when we turn back to look at the Gnostics and their careers? Let the great and competent Gibbon answer for us (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. I, p. 393): “The Gnostics were distinguished as the most polite, the most learned and the most wealthy of the Christian name.” Mead and other scholars testify to the high character of the Gnostics.

And the modern Harnack is fair enough to say, in comment on Irenaeus’ strictures against the Gnostics, that these fine Christians have been severely misjudged.

He writes:

“Owing to omissions and because no effort was made to understand his opponents, the sense of the by-no-means absurd speculations of the Gnostics has been ruined by the Church Father.”

The great German exegetist adds this:

“According to Hippolytus (*Philos.*, VI, 42), the followers of the Gnostic Marcus complained of the misrepresentations of their teaching by Irenaeus; the followers of our newly discovered book [the Akhmim Codex] could also have complained of the incomprehensible fashion in which Irenaeus had represented their teachings.”

The time is ripe at last, after eighteen hundred years, to scotch this unfounded and unjust canard that Christian bigotry has kept alive against these highly intelligent and philosophic early Christians whom ignorance designated as heretics. There is nothing but an arrant Christian prejudice to support the Christian claim that the embracing of Gnostic religion by the early Church

would have been calamitous. On the other side we have the clear verdict of that court of last appeal—history—that Gnosticism, if it did not itself produce the most excellent type of Christians, was produced and held by them. Its unimpeachable 316 testimony gives the lie direct to this habitual slander of the splendid protagonists of one of the world's noblest religious enterprises. Christians themselves would have their eyes opened upon a new perspective of historical values in the appraisal of their own faith if they would scan the verifiable item of history that has perpetually been held from their knowledge, the fact that in the early proscription of "heretics" by the orthodox party in the Church, it was a case of the worst elements pronouncing judgment against the best, exoteric blindness striking as esoteric insight, a fury of zealotry tramping down calm balance of philosophy. It was Christianity at its worst smothering Christianity at its best. To say this today is open *lèse majesté* against official attitude, but it happens to be on the line of truth. We are asked to believe that Christianity found a salvation, still apostrophized in spite of a record of historic failure, by rejecting the well-grounded religious systematism of the most cultured, intelligent and philosophical class of the third century, who at least had inward discernment adequate to the comprehension of a purely spiritual Christos, and adopting in place of it the crass literalized theological melange of a rabble of the lowest grades of intelligence who were so completely incapable of grasping the spiritual conception of immanent divinity in man that the Church was compelled to feed them on the fiction of the Christ as a living man. Celsus and others have testified that the orthodoxy of the time made its appeal only to the most abject in mind and social station in the Roman Empire. Indeed Celsus tells us that it would tolerate no persons of learning and intelligence in its fold. He says it reached out after only the most wretched and "god-forsaken." It spurned the counsels of philosophy and erudition. Libraries and learning were anathema in its eyes, that in rejecting the Gnosis as heresy, the ignorant leadership of the early institution condemned Christianity to ages of error, blindness and fateful miscarriage of true religion, with a record of inhumanity that crushes the human spirit merely to read it. If this was the salvation from the dreadful menace of Gnosticism, Christianity had better not been saved.

And how is all this impeachment of Gnostic Christianity to be held 317 consistent with a summary statement made by Bacon—one with which there can be ready accord—that Jesus and Paul were the champions of the only gospel that has real promise for our struggling world? How can it be both safe and salutary for the world to pin its faith to a Pauline preachment now, if the cause of the true religion saved itself by turning its back to Paul and its face to Peter long ago? This makes Paul both a menace and the bearer of salvation at the same time. The purpose in laying stress on such a point as this is to show up the precarious and unsound nature of whole volumes of the sort of critical Christian apologetic, Bible analysis and academic investigation in this field that

has been under discussion here. One must ask what becomes of the tedious hair-weighting lucubrations of eminent theologians speculating on the Pauline authorship of certain New Testament books, when other schools of thought just as plausibly demonstrate that Paul did not even write the Epistles attributed to him. It all points to one thing clearly,--the uncertain authorship of all the material of the scriptures and the shaky status of all determinations arrived at concerning it. Inasmuch as the whole case for the historicity of Jesus rests upon just such insecure bases, occasion is taken here to introduce some of the available testimony of scholars on the question of the Pauline authorship of the books assigned to him in the canon.

In his *Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?* (p. 38) Mead cites the authority of a distinguished Dutch scholar, Van Manen, to whom had been assigned the writing of the article on Paul in Hastings' Dictionary. What so eminent a specialist has to say on the subject of Paul's literary work must weigh with considerable force on opinion. Says Mead:

"Van Manen emphatically repudiates the genuineness not only of the Pastoral, but of the whole of the rest of the Letters traditionally ascribed to Paul." And Mead says this is of great moment, since it is not the opinion of an isolated scholar, but the outcome of the studies of a school. Van Manen himself is definite in his statements:

"With respect to the canonical Pauline Epistles, the later criticism here under consideration has learned to recognize that they are none of them by Paul; neither fourteen, nor thirteen, nor nine or ten, nor seven or eight, nor yet even the four so long 'universally' regarded as unassailable."

Mead follows with this comment:

"Van Manen is unable any longer in all simplicity to hold by the canonical Acts and Epistles, or even to the Epistles solely, or yet to a selection of them. The conclusion it has to reckon with is this: (a) that we possess no Epistles of Paul; that the writings which bear his name are pseudepigrapha containing seemingly historical data from the life and labors of the Apostle, which nevertheless must not be accepted as correct without clear examination and are probably, at least for the most part, borrowed from the 'Acts of Paul,' which also underlie our canonical book of Acts. (b) Still less does the Acts of the Apostles give us, however incompletely, an absolutely historical narrative of Paul's career; what it gives is a variety of narratives concerning him differing in their dates and also in respect to the influences under which they were written."

Important is Van Manen's statement that the Paulinism of the lost Acts of Paul and of the canonical Epistles of Paul, is not the "theology" or the "system" of the historical Paul, although it

ultimately came to be, and in most quarters still is, identified with it. "It is the later development of a school, or, if the expression is preferred, of a circle, of progressive believers who named themselves after Paul and placed themselves as it were under his aegis." This would not be an inordinate supposition, by any means. Much of "Aristotle" is believed to have been written down by the students in the Academy. But it is of greater importance for us to be told that this group that "edited" the Pauline Epistles was, according to Van Manen, "among the Gnostic-heretics." If this be true—and its probability is very great—the tangle, confusion and logical rout of Bacon's thesis are overwhelming. The whole structure of his argument falls down in a debacle of ruin. For having said that it was Paul (now declared by such an eminent scholar as Van Manen to be a group of Gnostics) who saved Christianity from popular superstition and Jewish legalism to flower out beyond his generation, and having denounced the Gnostics at the same time, he is by his own opinions thrust into the logically senseless and untenable position of denouncing the school and the influence that he has said saved the faith.

Mead quotes McClymont of Aberdeen, the conservative writer of the article *The New Testament in Hastings' Dictionary*, who frankly states that the so-called Pastoral Lectures (I and II Timothy and Titus) "are distinguished from all others by their want of historical agreement with any period in St. Paul's life as recorded in the book of Acts, and also by their strongly marked individuality alike in style and substance." That there must be great strength in Van Manen's view is attested by the data which show that the oldest witnesses to the existence of the Epistles are Basilides, Valentinus and Heracleon. Marcion is the first in time. And these men were all Gnostics. As we learn from Tertullian, traces are to be found of an authoritative group of Epistles of Paul. It is notable that Tertullian still calls Paul "the Apostle of heretics," and, addressing Marcion, speaks of Paul as "Your Apostle"! What do these little items intimate but that "Paul," whether as man or group, school or circle, was of the Gnostic persuasion if not indeed of the Gnostic party?

Van Manen dates his "Paul circle" about 120 A.D. and assigns 130-150 to the Acts. Justin Martyr, in the second century, knows nothing of the Acts, even when referring to Simon Magus, a reference which he could not have omitted had he known of Simon's mention in that treatise, and one which all subsequent heresiologists triumphantly set in the foreground of their "refutations" of that famous "heretic" and impostor. Also there is no clear quotation from the Acts known till 177 A.D.

A matter that is full of meaning from every point of view and is especially corroborative of our position, is the postulation by Van Manen and indeed many others of the existence of a

“common document” under or behind the Gospels. This represents the sanest approach or tentative in all textual Biblical investigation to what must be the genuine nub of explanation of sources, origins, context and authorship. The close similarity of three Gospels, or four, has never been interpreted in its clear implications. The explanatory theory was that one of the Evangelists wrote his document first and three others copied it—with variations. Weight of opinion settled upon Mark as the first-written text. Much more likely would it seem to be that all four were variant renderings of a hoary oral tradition, the first setting down of which on paper became the “common document” behind the four and all others—as there were many. Irenaeus told us a valuable thing—though it is known from other evidence—when he said that there was “a multitude of Gospels extant” in his day. Were facts exactly known, it is quite likely that some of the “other Gospels” considerably antedate 320 the canonical four. There is no datum which proves that these four were the earliest. The air of the day was filled with Gospels, and common sense closes the door on every other thesis than the only one naturally assumable,—that they were all essays on the part of many writers to render the truest version of the great oral tradition. On every hand there were members of the several Mystery Brotherhoods, and one after another writer would be inspired to try his hand at transcribing portions of the memorized Mystery ritual, adding his own glosses and elucidations, omitting some sections of the great mystic drama, or some of the allegories and sayings, inserting others. Many scholars predicate the existence of the collections of the Sayings of the Lord, the origin of which it seems easy to attribute to the program of the Mystery ceremonial, where in each performance a large part of the typical drama of the descent and career of the Soul in incarnation, its “death,” “burial,” “crucifixion” and “resurrection” in and from the “tomb” of the fleshly body, consisted of an elaborate set of discourses which constituted the message, given orally, by the Messianic spiritual principle to mortals on earth. Since, as seen, the earth itself was the “Mount” both of crucifixion and of transfiguration, the discourse of the Christ character in the ritual came to be known as the Sermon on the Mount. Burton Scott Easton, in his book *Christ in the Gospels*, a quite erudite treatise, says it is silly to speculate on the geographical location of the “Mount” on which Jesus preached his discourse, as it is likely not to be taken in its physical or material sense at all. This is a welcome ray of light penetrating the gloom of theological obtuseness. The “Sayings” were the body of the verbal or declamatory interludes in the acted drama. The parables were other spoken specialties. From century to century at least a few innovations or novel features might be introduced in this or that country. Though all depicted the same mystery of the Incarnation, or the oblation of the Son (Sons) of God on the altar of fleshly humanity, the various national Mysteries such as those of Samothrace, of Phrygia, of Eleusis, of Bacchus, of Atys, of Osiris, Serapis, Isis, Aten and others were modifications in one of another pronounced direction.

The Mysteries solve the great mystery of the Gospels. In whole or in part, the Gospels were just the written transcript of the great religious ritual-drama that had been almost the ancient world's sole theme of sacred literature. The assumption on the part of Christian leaders at the start, and of Christian 321 apologists ever since, that the great body of "Gospel" literature afloat in the middle East in the early centuries of our era—and quite obviously also before it—bore no relation to the total organic religious effort of the world before the time specifically marked "Christian," is on the face of it manifestly a stultification of both scholastic judgment and common sense. To attempt to place a specific date of the first origin, which date must at all costs be kept after the year 35 or 40 or 50 A.D.—of a body of literature that in either oral or written form must have had an immemorial antiquity behind it even then, must be seen at last as the prize folly of the ages. Unquestionably there was a "common document" behind the Gospels; and some of the hoary books of wisdom that survived the besom sweep of Christian destruction, give us inklings of its contents.

The endless aspersions cast on the Gnostics and their philosophy come with bad grace from the Christian side in view of the manifest advantage in standing, repute and character which accrued to the early Church from the adherence to it of various philosophical groups, however much some of them might still be adjudged "heretical" from the dogmatic point of view. It might profit the Gnostic traducers to turn back and read again what Mosheim has to say on the close intimacy between early Christianity and Greek philosophy. It must be noted in glancing at this material that the word "philosophy" had come to connote in the minds of third-century Christians a thing of reproach. It was to them the genius and embodiment of heresy. A faint idea of what inspired this antipathy to philosophy may be gained by putting it side by side with the recent American popular animus against the incursion of the "brain-trust" into the political arena, and the vulgar distrust of the cap and gown or the university degree.

There is inevitable, no doubt, a submerged subtle resentment against the cult of intellectualism or pretensions thereto from the masses who lack it. When Christianity gathered in the lowest elements of the Roman population and propagated itself by catering to their level of hysterical religionism, the resentment against learning, genuine or superficial, was widespread and deep-seated. There are ever two vastly divergent planes on which the thing known as religion can deploy its psychologizations in human life, that of the intellect and that of the emotions. Like other religions, Christianity has swung its emphasis back and forth at different epochs between these two modes of the force. In the third century it was in the throes of a movement sweeping it from the intellectual aspect to the emotional. It brought, as we have seen, a hatred of books, learning,

philosophy. But before the debacle became overwhelming and catastrophic philosophy had rendered the Church great service, which it is quite worth our while to recall and cogitate.

Mosheim (Vol. I, p. 341) analyzes the contribution and influence of Clement of Alexandria. Clement tells us, he writes, that he would not hand down Christian truth—that is, the truth about the Christos in its purely spiritual form—bare and unmixed, but associated with or rather veiled by and shrouded under the precepts of philosophy. For, according to Clement, the seeds of celestial wisdom communicated by Christos to the world lay hid in the philosophy of the Greeks, after the same manner as the succulent part of a nut lies concealed within the shell. For he appears to have been firmly persuaded that the essence of Greek philosophy was sound, wholesome and salutary, in fact that it was consonant with the spirit of Christian wisdom, but that it was reconditely veiled by a cloud of superficial images and fictions (which we know were the mythical and allegorical dramatizations) just as the kernel is hidden by the shell. It should be the business of Christians then to endeavor industriously to penetrate this exoteric covering in order to discover the true relation between human and divine wisdom. The origin of Greek philosophy he attributes to Deity himself—would that such liberality had prevailed in the Christian hierarchy ever since!--but its transmission to humanity had to be through inferior agents. Philosophy was the way to eternal life before Christ himself came, and therefore he allows that the Grecian sages were saved. He reiterates that philosophy was divinely communicated to the Greeks. (Deity must have chosen Chaldea and Egypt as his agents of this communication, since Greek philosophy emanated from those lands.) It was given to Greece as a special testament or covenant, and it in fact constitutes the basis of that doctrine which the world has since received from Christos. Mere inner persuasion of the spirit must always be strengthened by that more accurate knowledge of religion which was to be acquired through the aid of philosophy.

This sagacious counsel of Clement the Church would have been wise to follow. But Mosheim goes on. With a view to accomplishing this desirable end, the Christians not only adopted the study of philosophy themselves, but became loud in their recommendation of it to others, declaring that the difference between Christianity and philosophy was but trifling. And it is most certain that this kind of conduct was so far productive of the desired effect as to cause not a few of the philosophers to enroll themselves under the Christian banner! Those who have perused the various works written by such of the ancient philosophers as had been induced to embrace Christianity, can not have failed to remark that the Christian discipline was regarded by all of them in no other light than as a certain mode of philosophizing. (Sad the day when this liberal spirit was replaced by that of dogmatic bigotry!)

Much light peeps out through obscuring veils in the next observation of Mosheim:

the opinion was held by many that philosophy had been surreptitiously brought down from heaven and communicated to mankind by those angels whom, according to the ancients, a love of pleasure had induced to rebel against God and who descended to earth to unite their divine intellection with material bodies for the sake of the opportunity thus afforded pure spirits to enjoy the sense of life. (The real motive of “rebellion” was not hostility to God, but revolt against the inane passivity of the purely ideal world—vide Plato.) Clement himself seems to have adopted this opinion; and he is at pains to refute those who maintained that philosophy was a device of the evil one to deceive the human race. (This tell-tale hint gives positive evidence of the virulence of the proletarian revulsion against the rational wing of Christianity, which this work claims has never been given its due place in historical analysis.) Mosheim adds that from this position of Clement we may assume that the alleged origin of philosophy in diabolism had taken deep root among the multitude. Clement explains that Paul, in warning Christians to beware being spoiled by philosophy, obviously was speaking to the more perfect Christians, those “who had attained to the very heights of Gnostic intelligence,” cautioning them that the philosophies were but an elementary discipline and should not be permitted to obscure the fuller realities of the Christian experience. It will readily be apparent how widely the views of modern commentators like Bacon, who indulge in the conventional derogation of the Gnostic Christians, diverge from the attitude of Clement, who had first-hand acquaintance with Gnostic philosophy. It is Clement, not Mosheim, who here equates “more perfect Christians” with “the very heights of Gnostic intelligence.” Not only Gibbon, but Clement, makes the Gnostics the elite of the Christian personnel. Mosheim adds that through Origen and Heraclas, pupils of Clement, and through pupils of Ammonias Saccas, who mostly entered the ministry, the love of philosophy became pretty generally diffused throughout a considerable portion of the Church. Porphyry says that Ammonias, a father of Neo-Platonism, had taken up Christianity and later renounced it. Eusebius says that he held to it to the end.

We can see in Clement’s—and no less in Origen’s—high regard for Greek philosophy, as being indeed the innermost kernel of rational Christianity, the sufficient answer to the indignant howl let out nearly two hundred years before Augustine’s day by that loud and blatant protagonist for doctrinal Christianity, Tertullian. That fierce zealot had written:

“What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? . . . Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic,

Platonic and dialectic composition!” True enough, by the time Christianity had been adulterated and transformed to the thing of literal gibberish and pious emotionalism to which it had degenerated in Tertullian’s day, little enough of its pristine kinship with the lofty Platonism and the splendid eclecticism out of which it originally flowed was discernible. Also, hidden under esoteric veils as its highest teachings and revelations had been, of course the crassness of blunt exoteric vision could detect no connection with the primal system of arcane philosophy in which the deeper Christianity of Gnosticism had had its roots. But the sad mistake of the Church had been manifest in its propensity and its final historic choice to follow its blind and fanatic Tertullians instead of its clear-seeing philosophical Clements and Origenes—and Dean Inges. The supreme lesson that the whole historical episode should teach is that, in the words of Mosheim (I, 346) upon Clement’s attitude on the relation of basic philosophy to religion, “. . . our conviction of mind must necessarily be strengthened and confirmed by our acquiring that more accurate knowledge which was to be obtained through the assistance of philosophy.”

Whenever the principles of this maxim are transgressed religion swings into channels of irrational behavior. In short religion is never safe until it is well grounded upon and stabilized in the rudiments of truth discovered by a profound study of philosophy. Christianity despised, then threw out its early sage philosophy, and a hideous historical sequel trailed its long shadow over the ensuing centuries.

It is too much to expect that attack and denunciation will not fall heavily upon the thesis here advanced that Christianity was a movement of ignorance against mental culture and rational philosophy. It is found, however, that Mosheim directly confirms this position. He goes on to describe the growth of a party in the Church which violently resented the encroachments of philosophical interests on the religion of “simple piety,” and which feared that the spread of earthly philosophy (they must have forgotten that Clement said it came down from heaven) would injure the cause of celestial truth. The two parties, then, of the philosophical enthusiasts and the dour pietists, “opposed each other with the utmost warmth,” the one contending for the utility and excellence of philosophical discussion and urging the teachers of the Church to demonstrate the harmony between religion and reason; the other regarding every species of human learning, and more particularly philosophy, with detestation and contempt, and urging the brethren to maintain the faith in all its genuine simplicity. And the theologians of the modern Church still exhort us to regard as our true Christianity the bewildering irrational literalisms of the Christian party—which is what Christian doctrine became in its “simplicity”—that held instruction, learning, reason and philosophy in utter detestation and contempt! In the finale of his discussion of this point Bacon

ends by asking the very pertinent question whether we may hold that there is still need of the Gospel as theology. He notes that in our time few pay homage any more to the fallen “queen of the sciences,” as it was denominated in ancient days. The cry today is for religion without theology.

There is not room here to debate this question. It is of the utmost importance, however, that the sheer fact of theology’s having fallen into desuetude in Christianity should be fully analyzed and comprehended in its true significance.

That the one religion vaunting itself to be the truest, highest, purest in world history should have shifted so far from its pristine constitutional character as to find itself in these latter times of world stress entirely out of unison with its original intellectual foundation, is attestation enough that great and vital divergence from basic principles must have occurred at some epoch. A long chapter would not suffice to detail the nature and immense import of the divergence that did assuredly occur. But however searchingly we may probe, it will come back in the end to the one fact that the far distant root-cause of Christianity’s defection from its own theology was generated back in that fatal third century, when the Gnostic and philosophic wing of the movement was amputated by the rising power of the tide of ignorant exotericism that flooded in upon the new religion at that time. It would be easy enough to trace the effects right up to the present aggravated scorn and neglect of theology. When the shift from allegory, myth and drama to history was made, the cryptic esoteric keys to the lofty and sublime inner meaning of theological formulations were lost. The doctrines of the faith were thus left standing as little more than empty shells, devoid of intelligibility and hence bereft of dynamic power and so, finally, powerless to engage interest. They became relegated to the cloister, the library shelves and the theological seminaries. They sank into the background and were covered by the dust of oblivion from the sheer fact that the cord of relevance and meaning by which they would have been tied to living human interests and problems had been cut, and they became a thing apart and out of meaningful relation to life itself. The Bible also, of which theology is the intellectual exposition of its meaning, shared largely the same neglect and ostracism out of living experience. No voice raised today would be a more desolate bleat in the wilderness of uncomprehending stolidity than one which proclaimed anew the need of theology as the solvent of the world’s gripping problems of this age. It would go utterly unheard, shouted down by the raucous chorus chanting the total inadequacy of theological doctrine to meet even the mental needs of our time. Yet the early Church proclaimed those doctrines as the saving truth of God for the guidance of men through this life. And the profound wisdom of the purest philosophy in history, the Greek, blessed these teachings with its sanction.

Perhaps nothing, then, will surpass the surprise of the Church itself when it hears the plaintive bleat for theology rise from this end of the field. For there is ample ground to support the forthright declaration that every single dogma, creed article and ceremonial item in the original Christianity was, and still is, the very truth, and likewise is knowledge critical for the practical needs of the world today! It is an unbelievable anomaly that while Christian theology is the saving truth of life, the religion that promulgated it has so weirdly perverted it into unintelligible gibberish that it no longer bears the stamp of either truth or utility, and the Church is itself forced to disown its own primal genius as unrelated to the problem of practical good. So recreant has the institution been to the teaching of truth it itself proclaimed in creed and scripture and theology that it must now turn and disavow its own organic constitution. The enormity of this dereliction must be seen as proportionate to the vastness of the change and degradation necessary to have brought it to pass. The prodigious extent of the transformation from sublime meaning to unconscionable jargon in Christian theology can be seen in all its appalling significance only by those who will make the comparison and see the shocking contrast between the present corruption of the doctrines and their transcendent majesty of import in the minds of the ancient sages who clothed the body of truth in the romantic garb of allegory. In rounding out this long chapter it is supremely desirable that the full import of Paul's silence that so damages the case for the historical Christ be summarized and crystallized. On the basis of the premises established it is simply inconceivable that the ardent Apostle—the actual founder of Christianity!--could have left in his writings a total blank about the man Jesus. No amount of sophistry or mental chicanery can set aside the verdict of common sense. Any argument advanced to “explain” it rings from the start with the hollowness of sounding brass and the feebleness of a tinkling cymbal. Paul was in essential leanings a Gnostic, one of the Hellenic philosophers so despised by the anti-philosophical wing of fanatical Christianity in the third and fourth centuries. The ineluctable reason why Paul does not mention a historical Jesus is that he had obviously never heard of one, and further could not have conceived of one. No more could he have believed in a personal Logos than could Philo, who was about contemporary with him. Paul and John, says Bacon, saved Christianity from vitiation for the generations beyond their own. Yet Paul and John had no theology of a personal Jesus, obviously and admittedly. So logic concludes that it was a theology that had no room for the personal Christ that saved Christianity.

The final word here should be a dissertation on the true inward meaning of the phrase—the Word made flesh. The easy step from the esoteric collective sense over to the exoteric personal caricature of the idea spelled a swift and facile “descent to Avernus” for Christian theology. With the total loss of the formulae and keys of the antique arcana, the fateful transmogrification of true

meanings into nonsense fell speedily upon ecclesiastical doctrinism through many avenues. But one of the chief and most immediately damaging misconstructions was that which inhered in the misreading of single names of type characters in a singular instead of a multiple or distributive sense. Just as it would be a misconception to read Santa Claus as one character giving gifts to all children, instead of the spirit of giving distributed among all parents, so it was a mistake to predicate the flesh which the Logos was to assume as the mortal flesh of one man. Naïve thinking, if the more discerning truth is withheld, jumps to the conclusion that if the Word is to become flesh, it must be encased in the body of one man. But the thinking and the knowledge behind Biblical esotericism is by no means naïve. It is inexpressibly recondite, unbelievably cryptic. It takes at least as much acumen to decipher the occult sense thus embalmed in allegory as it required constructive genius and inventive deftness to embody it there. What the vital phrase then signifies in its original cryptic intimation is that the Logos, the ideal archetypal structure-form of God's thought, which was to be borne out to utterance by the resonant thunder of his Voice or spoken Word—precisely as our voices carry out in their tones the ideas of our minds and stamp them upon the living world—was to go vibrating down to the lowest levels of the reach of the creative emanation and finally stamp its image and form upon the highest creature of flesh. The pulsing electronic energy of divine Mind was in the end to become the presiding genius in bodies of flesh. Not in the flesh of a man, but in the flesh of humanity was the light of the Word to be born, glimmer and shine. It was to enter and become flesh collectively, with its rays distributed among all men, and not confined in one single body alone. The Egyptians have the term from which indeed, in utmost likelihood, the very name “Christ” has come, to designate the “soul made flesh.” It is their Karast, the name of the deceased in the mummy-coffin, and it means “fleshed.” Modern theology will never recover the genuinely correct sense of much of the ancient sacred writ until it restores to a central place in 329 its structure of exegesis the forgotten doctrine of “Dismemberment,” the idea of the fragmentation or cutting of deity to pieces, or as the Greeks put it, “the distribution of whole natures” of the gods into infinite partition, so that a seed fragment of divine Mind may be planted in the life of every creature. This principle is indeed clearly embodied in Christian theology and ritual in the Christ's breaking of the loaf—after declaring that it typified or “was” his own body—and distributing a portion of it to each participant in the divine transubstantiation. Each fragment of his deific nature thus transplanted in the body, heart and mind of the communicants became “fleshed” or Karast; and this became the Christ on the cross of flesh. The Christ in each of us is the Word made flesh, which after the analogy of the broken pieces of the loaf, came and dwelt among us, telling us that indeed unless we take and “eat” of this divine essence, our aeonial salvation will not be accomplished. The mind can see at this juncture that the

moment one leaps from the meaning of the incarnation of the Christos “in all men” to the other sense of “in one man, Jesus,” the groundwork for a rational and intelligible comprehension of the fleshing of the Logos, and with it the whole basic sense of ancient religion, flies away, and confusion stalks the effort to grasp the purport of all theology. The entire edifice of theology is built upon and around the central fact of the descent of the Logos into flesh and matter. It is the nub of the entire system. It is the key to the scriptures. The planting of the seed fragment of divine nature distributively in humanity was and is the advent of Christos, the great aeonial divine coming. That the Son of God was collectively the Sons of God, or the principle of Sonship distributed like bread to the “multitude,” has never been decisively grasped as the prime key to the theological systemology. “The gods distribute divinity” is one of the most sententious and revealing items in the profound Platonic philosophy belittled by Christian dogmatists. “Each superior deity,” explains Proclus, “receiving from on high the excellent nature of those gods who are above it, imparts it in divided measure to those natures immediately secondary to themselves.” The gods in the rank above us offer us their very bodies, i.e., the essence of their divine natures, the substance of intellect and will, for us to feed upon by appropriation, or “eating.” If the bread is the body of the Christ’s nature, how can it be implanted germinally in the flesh of billions unless it be broken into as many fragments as there are to be communicants?

This is the meaning—all lost in the historicizing process—of the multiplication of the loaves (and fishes) to feed the multitude. The Logos was made flesh, but not in one man only. Paul thrilled to this knowledge, and the Bible hardly anywhere rises to such majesty and loftiness as in those passages in his Epistles wherein he dissertates on the forming of the Christ in us through the growth of charity in our hearts. There is no confusion there. That comes in only when the man-Christ is thrust into the picture.