

WRITINGS OF ALVIN BOYD KUHN

by Alvin Boyd Kuhn

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Alvin Boyd Kuhn, compiled for study and devotional reading.

23 Chapters

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01.01. CHRIST'S THREE DAYS IN HELL

CHRIST'S THREE DAYS IN HELL REVELATION OF AN ASTOUNDING CHRISTIAN FALLACY
By Alvin Boyd Kuhn, Ph.D.

Version 1.0 (Most references to scripture tool-tipped, and a few references to other ancient sources have been added). The next update should have all references to scripture tool-tipped, and more references to other ancient sources added.

Justin Gunther

01.02. Preface

PREFACE When in a moment of high dudgeon, exasperation or exhausted patience at someone's despicable conduct we cavalierly consign his immortal soul to Dante's Inferno, we should be told that our mode of redress is silly and ridiculous beyond measure, since both he and we are already in that dark and gloomy underworld of theology. There is no sense in urging a fellow mortal to go to a place when he is already there. The present writer could, with full legal equity, claim an international copyright on the idea, now to be proclaimed for the first time authoritatively, that in plain cold fact, devastating to the canons of theology, but nevertheless irrefutable, that no one can go from this earth to hell, or ever will go there. This declaration is not thrown out in either scurrility or buffoonery. It is meant to be asserted as literal truth, and, as will be shown, is demonstrated as true by the simplest and most inexpugnable logic. One can not go to a place where one already is. One has to be elsewhere to go to a given place. And this fact and this logic can now bring to this world release and relief from the most frightful of its theological nightmares over the centuries by shattering forever the baneful religious superstition that a human soul can go to hell. Because, as better scholarship now clarifies it, all the souls now inhabiting physical bodies on this earth are already in hell.

It can now be heralded to the four quarters of the world that this earth is the only hell ever contemplated in the minds of the sage writers of the ancient sacred Scriptures of the world, and therefore hell is not to be found or located anywhere else. For better or worse, for good or ill, we are all right now in hell; and it is only a matter of our education, our understanding, our culture or our self-discipline whether we are enjoying what can legitimately and not too irreverently be called a hell of a fine time or making a devil of a bad go at it. As God the Father never designed that his children should fall into a region where pain and misery are suffered gratuitously or out of relation to purposed beneficence, it has to be presumed that our sojourn in this hell has been contrived in cosmic counsels to bring us joy and eventual bliss. For all religions in their highest and sanest presentments consistently affirm that felicity is to crown earth life. Hell has been loaded with opprobrium and infamy only because we have been misled to believe it is some other place far worse than this world. It is now possible, with all good grace, for us to extend to all our fellow inmates in this limbo of a false theology the wish and hope that they are enjoying some felicity without having to wait for transferal to the celestial Paradise. With metaphor shifted a bit to match another Biblical symbolism, we may heartily wish each other a "whale" of a good time in Hades, since in the Jonah and other "fish-stories" that one finds in ancient sacred lore, it was in the belly of the whale that Jonah (the divine element in man's nature) spent his three days and nights in hell. For he exclaims: "Out of the belly of Hades have I cried unto thee, O God (Jonah 2:1-2)." Holy Scripture does not inform us whether he enjoyed his unique voyage across the sea of life in this extraordinary mode of transportation, but at any rate it landed him safely and perhaps triumphantly on "that farther shore." On a naïve and somewhat superficial view it may be considered unfortunate that instead of a "whale" of a glamorous time in this belly of Hades, millions have had or are still having a "wail" of a deuced bad time. But, as all experience undergone by the souls of

God's children in any sphere may legitimately be considered educative, being in the nature of strains and stresses calculated to lead all lives upward to enhanced happiness in a progressive evolution, the lament over our enforced session at the wailing wall of this life on earth can be happily mollified by amended philosophical considerations.

It seems now and forever incredible that the whole grandiose structure of the wondrous ancient arcane science of the soul, the unified physical and spiritual evolution of man to grades of higher consciousness, has been wrecked for any sane comprehension by a thing seemingly so minor and inconsequential as the misconception of the use of symbolic imagery and the play of poetic fancy in analogical depiction of truth. Yet, categorically and bluntly stated, such has been the case in the greatest miscarriage, defeat and debacle of human intelligence in the field of religious philosophy in all the ages. The place or region in which theological ineptitude located the two states of conscious being, happiness and misery, universally presumed the one or the other, to follow this life on earth, has been psychologically determinative of the mental health, or conversely, of the insanity and hypnotic hallucination of millions of earth's inhabitants over the ages. This essay is conceived in the spirit and with the motive of awakening the slumbering mind of the Occidental world to the sobering realization that its dominating Christian religion has almost from the moment of its inception nearly twenty centuries ago located its predicated heaven and hell in a time and in a world both completely amiss from their proper locale and proper period. It can now be proclaimed as an incontrovertible fact that this religion of the West, so presumptuously vaunting itself as superior to all others, has perpetrated the crassest asininity of all religious history in both mistiming and misplacing the hell, or dark underworld of its Scriptures and its theology in a totally different world from the one which the knowing authors of the world's sacred scripts intended to be understood. In fact its theologians and interpreters have ridiculously mislocated their hell! They have thrust it from that area of life to which it was meant to appertain in the esoteric formulations of ancient religious literature clear over into another world, a limbo concocted by the lurid theological imagination out of the elements of misinterpreted Biblical representation. Missing entirely the real world to which the hell experience of souls rightly appertained, they have fantastically fabricated an utterly spurious hell for which their Scriptures, when read with full comprehension of their deeper meaning, offer not a line of warrant. This incredible blunder came in consequence of the entanglement of several threads of meaning flowing forth from the misinterpretation of one single term of symbolic reference and import in that language of recondite semanticism in which all those revered texts of Holy Writ were indited. (The loss of knowledge of this form and method of ancient Biblical writing was the initial cause of the total gross misinterpretation of the Scriptures.) The continued mistaking of the pristine purport of the spiritual allegories plunged the exegetists into the fatal error of misplacing in part the heaven, and wholly the hell experience. And this was primarily due to their failure to retain, or to apprehend at any time, the cryptic connotation of that single word of key significance in the symbolic lexicon of antiquity. That word now looms up in the recovered science of arcane wisdom as the most strategically important in the entire dictionary of theology. It is the word "death", with its correlative terms "to die" and "the dead". The initiated ancient Egyptian hierophants, the learned Hebrew tanaim and later the Church's own Alexandrian Fathers, notably Clement and Origen, and above all Philo, the Jewish philosopher of the first Christian century, all declared that underneath the literal surface meaning of the Scriptures astute intelligence could discern a far more subtle significance, hidden by allegorical cleverness under terms of common usage. As physical and material things must at any rate be used to adumbrate all spiritual

conceptions and verities, the veiled language of symbolism employed objects and phenomena to pictorialize their abstract and recondite mysteries of the spirit. So it was that the sage authors of sacred books used the term and concept of physical death, the demise or decease of bodily life, as at once both the cover and the revelation of another death, not of body, but of soul, which was the cardinal principle of understanding in their sacred "science of the soul". Pledged on penalty of death in their Mystery Associations not to betray the secrets of their esoteric knowledge, their veiling of true sense under an outer physical fact was in this case most crafty, for the very paradoxical reason that they here attributed death to that one element or component of man's constitution which can never suffer death, - the soul. Bodies die, but souls do not. Upon separation of soul and body, so the Scriptures tell us, bodies return to dust, but souls return to God who gave them.

01.03. Through Death to Life

THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE

How, then, we will be challenged, can it be declared that the central doctrine of all the sacred writings of old, the death and resurrection of divinity, refers to that very part of man which can not die? It is a legitimate challenge, but it can be met. The divine soul, sent by the Father to earth to inhabit a mortal body, can never die, in the sense of total extinction, or loss of being, else it could not return to its heavenly home after its term of life in body. But there is a form of "death", rather a state or condition of "deadness", a partial or semi-death, a torpidity, inertness, slumber, coma and veiling of full consciousness, which the soul was said to undergo when it first took residence in the earthly body, and in which it lay, like the human child in its cradle, until the body's growth to adulthood unfolded its dormant or latent powers to full manifestation. Plato denominated this state as the soul's loss of its divine memory, its descent into the realm of darkness and oblivion, out of which it would have to struggle through the mists and fogs of earthly sense and the distractions of the passional nature arising from the side of body, to regain its lost Edenic felicity. Through the succession of many such descents and returns it pursues its evolutionary course from its infancy in elementary existence, through animal instinct, then human self-consciousness to eventual godhood. Like all things that live, God's immortal Sons must be begotten out of elemental essence of being, then created through birth in a body of the eternal Mother, matter. But while the soul lay in its initial long period of unawakened and undeveloped divine potential, the sages of antiquity expounded, it lay in "death". If it is to have its resurrection, it must suffer its "death". St. Paul so clearly states this feature of our psychogenesis when he writes (Ephesians 4:9): "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth?" - grossly mistaken, as this essay will demonstrate, for some supposititious region underground. "The first man is of the earth, earthy (1 Corinthians 15:47)," declares St. Paul, and when the soul descends into body, which is composed of earthy elements, it truly can be said to have descended into the bowels of the earth. And this is that "death" from which it will have its ecstatic resurrection on its glorious "Easter morn". This word "death", then, connotes both mythically and mystically, but most truly and actually, the anthropogenetic process in the soul's evolution, which is the central stone in the arch of the spiritual science delineated in the Scriptures. And the flagrant misreading of its recondite esoteric connotation as referring to ordinary bodily decease instead of its profounder mystical reference to the unawakened, or "dead" state of the soul in its initial incorporation in earthly body, has been the hidden source-spring of all the frightful insanities of theology and the idiocies of popular superstition that have grown, a rank crop of noxious weeds in the garden of human credence, out of a derationalization of the religious mind of Western humanity through the ignorant mistaking spiritual allegory for literal history. The failure of ecclesiastical scholarship to retain, or recover, this proper sense of "death" and its mythical locale, the "underworld", or "lower earth" of religious dramatism, was in turn due to the attitude of inveterate contempt and hostility of the rabid early Christianity (which was not really Christianity, but a hybrid Christianity) toward antecedent Pagan systems of theological science. By turning deaf ears, unseeing eyes and closed

minds upon the majestic ancient Chaldean, Greek and Egyptian philosophies, the Christian exegetists shut tight the one door, that leading out from the profound rational system of Greek thought, itself a derivative from still more ancient Egypt, which might have kept them in communication with the abstruse sense of this word of concealed wisdom, this fairy word of enlightening power, the occult meaning of "death". But, blind to that light-giving beam in the darkness, the assignment of a body reference to "death" bore the fateful consequence of shifting the locale of the meaning of the most important doctrine of theology from the world of man's conscious experience, subjective, mystical and spiritual, out into another world, objective, material and historical, in which world the physical realities are only the crystallised deposit of divine thought in matter. In the train of this shift of locale and reference, in the turning of religious thought outward upon the death and resurrection of that which must die and can have no resurrection, came that disastrous transfer of relevant significance of all the Scriptures, whose axial theme is the death and resurrection of a thing, the divine soul which can "die" and have its resurrection from the dead, from the area of man's ever-fateful soul life out into the area of inconsequential literal history. With this stupid literalization of spiritual allegories in mythology and in the Scriptures ensued the stupefaction of theological genius, and that fatal inoculation of the general mind with a run of doctrines that stultified the common sense and unsettled the rational balance of sixty generations of Occidental life down to the present. And in the confusion of meaning and reference that followed upon this perversion of a cryptic sense there was tossed up like foam on the surface of this wrong connotation of "death" and its mislocation in a false and unreal world, or limbo of theological imagination, of three cardinal doctrines, those of the judgment, Purgatory and the hell-fire torment. The meaning of "death" having been turned outward upon the body - and that of one alleged historical person alone - inevitably the judgment, purgatory and the ordeal of hell-fire fell, in popular superstition, into a world localized in some region - never even yet definitely placed - into which souls passed after bodily demise here on earth. And the final deposit of common belief in the minds of the populace during all these centuries in the West has been the fixed persuasion that at physical death souls pass from earth to one or the other of the two hypothetical chambers of an after-death mansion, the one exalted in character as heaven, the other deprecated as hell. With this crotchety caricature of the true ancient rationale of the fate of human souls after separation from bodies on earth, the Christian faith has corrupted the mental life of its millions of devotees over twenty centuries. With what consequences in the form of neurotic instability and mental derangement engendered by fear, by uncertainty, by credulity flouting all reason, by the warping of sanity through commitment to fantasies and falsities history volubly and tragically attests.

How the system of Christian theology thus blindly, to its everlasting hurt, stumbled and fell over the metaphorical significations of that single word "death" in the sacred tomes of antiquity is now oriented into true perspective for the first time since ancient days. The astute esoteric strategy of concealing the profoundest of conceptions under cryptic glyph and arcane symbol took a far heavier toll of mystification and deception than perhaps the esotericists ever expected to accrue from their designed methodology. It virtually wrecked Christianity. It afflicted with fatuity the rational genius of the Occident in all the field of religion and philosophy. The mistaking of spiritual allegories for ostensible history, the resultant conversion of ideal characters and type-figures into assumed historical persons, and then the mistiming of the "death" of the central god-figure in the mystery drama that resulted from the misreading soul-death as bodily death, along with the

shifting of the fabled underworld, or Hades, from the present earth-life to the post-mortem hell, - all this interlocking confusion generated the entire distortion of the Christian theology into the most eccentric vitiation of sane anthropological science ever known in civilized society.

01.04. "He Descended Into Hell"

"HE DESCENDED INTO HELL"

Faced with the final fixation of the popular mind in the belief of the soul's ascent to heaven or alternate descent to hell after earth-life, orthodox religion has had to reckon with the situation developing out of the implications and involvements arising from the body of early Christian literature, especially when these are examined for evidences of derivation from antecedent pagan sources. Furthermore certain passages in the Christian Bible, Old and New Testaments alike, themselves present elements constituting challenge and demanding explication or rationalisation. For some of this material poses difficulties, provokes questions and stirs wonder or doubt.

One of these passages in particular turns out to have had a quite crucial part to play in the accommodation of Christian dogmatism to popular forms of belief as to the soul's after-death habitat and condition. When the central type-figure of our divinity in the ancient dramatic representations was transformed into the carnalized character of Jesus of Nazareth, all that pertained fittingly and luminously to him as mystic typism depicting its corresponding reality in man's nature had to be explained all afresh in a totally new frame of reference as relating to him in person. So his descending into hell after his death on the cross immediately gave rise in all naïve minds to the wonder - how it was that he, the perfect God, had to descend to a world still lower than this, into which the common theological assumption consigned only the sinner and the evildoer. But ecclesiasticism, basing its position on a few words in the Bible text, had an answer that appeared to cover the ground and resolve doubt. The potential dilemma was satisfactorily elucidated by the explanation that this descent of God's Son into the dark limbo of an underworld was a "special" mission, of only three days duration and for a specific purpose of benevolence in obedience to the Father's will. It was an extraordinary errand of divine mercy on behalf of those "spirits in prison", the souls of pre-Christian humanity and fell at an interval when, so to say, there was nothing else for Jesus to do. Jesus' sojourn of three days in the lower region of darkness was rationalised, for the appeasement of pietistic orthodox doubt, as in no way a natural necessity for the sacrificial Lamb of God, but as an act of divine condescension on his part to crown his mission of salvation to the race by extending it retrogressively back in time to cover all previous ages of humanity. He came to earth to save not only those who were fortunate enough to have been blessed with a knowledge of his message and those to come in the future, but as well those who, having lived prior to his advent, had missed his preaching on earth. With his soul released from body while it lay in the Palestinian tomb, he could readily devote the three days to a visit among the dead in the Plutonian underworld and convey his saving message to them. As he had given three years to preach salvation to the living on the earth, so he could give three days to a similar mission to the dead in the underworld. Before his glorious ascension he had this chore of cosmic justice to perform. And what better opportunity was there to attend to it than during the three days his soulless body lay in the grave? His spirit, then free of the flesh, could project itself to Tartarus, to Gehinnom, to Tophet, to Avernus, to Sheol, to Amenta, to Hades, to hell, and bring the message of liberation to the hosts whose spirits, never having been christened with the oil of

divine grace, awaited in darkness the coming of the light that would release them from the bonds of ignorance and the prison-house of death, as Isaiah had foretold. Not only was the seeming inconsistency of the Lord's descent to hell thus met with a plausible explanation, but the answer itself was provided - and it was an answer of crucial consequence - to the glaring reflection that sprang up in even the most uncritical thought, as to what provision for salvation God had made for the multitudes living before his Son's advent. It was a fateful question. Theological discomfiture threatened the ecclesiastical system if a satisfactory answer was not forthcoming from the collegium of orthodoxy. Someone seized on the verses of the sacred script which told of Jesus' three days visit to the realm of Hades and his preaching to the spirits in prison there and it was happily adopted as a theoretical solution to the baffling query, one at any rate that could still the dangerous force of a sound logical challenge.

Few have ever stopped to reflect how implausible this quirk of Biblical "interpretation" really is, even if granted argumentative recognition. Of the millions presumed to be living at the year 33 A.D. Only the tiniest fraction, a few thousand at most, even then heard the "glad tidings" in person, or by report or in literature. Millions, living since that time have lived and died without ever having heard of the Galilean carpenter's existence or his message. Even those hundreds who may actually have heard Jesus' discourses would have had but a sermon or two out of which to extract the essence of salvation's power. Along with that, granting Jesus' brief Good Friday to Easter visit and exhortation to the hosts of souls slumbering in death in this underworld, in what way, form, manner are we to conceive his having assembled and preached to those trillions of souls lying inert or grovelling in Stygian darkness, how his voice could reach all of them? And it seems fair to ask how we can assure ourselves that, even with this colossal miracle magically achieved, the forty-eight hours of preaching could open the heavenly gates and the everlasting doors for the entry of the King of Glory into the life of all previous humanity. Granting the utmost of fairyland efficacy to the divine voice to work this propitious marvel, there is still the dubious question of God's justice and what the Hindus call karmic equity, in gratuitously causing all these trillions of the pre-Christian time to wait in duress, in darkness, in suspension - it is implied - of life and progress for thousands of years until, a bit suddenly, on two days of the spring of year 33 A.D., From a Friday until the Sunday falling first after the full moon of the Hebrew month Nisan, God finally sent his son down to earth, with a further side trip on down to Hades, with his physical body lying comatose in a rocky tomb in Judea, to release those hosts of benighted souls from the prison-house of Gehenna. (One who ventures to introduce a touch of realism into these sacred mysteries will be charged with irreverent scurrility).

Right here it might be observed that there could and should have been a hint of great enlightenment for all the Bible exegetists from ancient days to the present, if the significance of the fact that the Son of God went to both places, earth above and Hades below, for identically the same objective, the liberation of souls from the kingdom and power of spiritual darkness. Could they at the same time have weighed the import, in this connection, of the additional item well known to many scholars, that the ancient mythicizing Sages, the Egyptians first and then the Greeks, considered souls incarnated on earth as "the dead", needing rebirth and resurrection, they would have been in position to save the Western world from sixteen centuries of direful religious superstition. This essay will deal in particular with certain involvements of this situation.

It must now be seen that the old argument based on Jesus' descent to Hades never could merit the rating of a competent or tenable answer to the great challenge that confronts Christianity ineluctably. When the utmost is made of its potential, either as fact or as hypothesis, it still falls far short of logical adequacy. It leaves the Christian God still answerable to the challenge of human reason and human sincerity: why, if the Christian theological structure correctly rests on the asseveration of the power of the supercharged blood of his only Son shed on a wooden cross about the year 33 A.D., Had he thus left the uncounted hosts of his children living on earth prior to that date (and other billions living since, but not even having heard of that power) without the provision of any means of salvation? It is at best a "solution" so weak that it is shameless for the religious hierarchy to continue using it as an answer to the grave challenge. The full measure of its incompetency, the abject hollowness of its pretence, have not hitherto been detected because of the obtuseness of orthodox scholarship with respect to the subtle intimations carried by the Scriptural term "death" and the mythological "underworld". By the failure of mental acumen to grasp these arcane connotations, both the locale of this supposedly under-earth Hades and the identity of its population were wrongly determined, the result being that the whole structure of the scheme of salvation was thrown out of focus and turned topsy-turvy. And from the double misconception sprang the entire mass of gullible beliefs, the illogical and impossible superstitions of a Christian theology warped beyond recognition out of its original forms of intelligibility and beauty. It is the aim of this essay to divest these distorted structures of their false representations of meaning and to restore them to their first forms of sublime truth. This matter of the descent of Jesus to the realm of Hades during his three days in the tomb is in the general religious mind a thing of incidental occurrence and practically of no major or axial importance in the Christian theological purview. Quite on the contrary, it is, if not the central item of all Christian doctrinism, an integral element, link or indispensable part of the system. In the form of a short allegorical or dramatic parologue, it is nothing less than the pronouncement of the divine incarnation itself. The descent of the Christ into Hades to "preach to the spirits in prison" is a compact dramatization of the descent of the collective units of God's sons, his mind-born spiritual progeny, into fleshly bodies in this Hades-world called earth. And what the drama represented as "his" (collectively their) "preaching" to the souls bound in darkness there, was their impartation of their Christly message of a new dispensation of life, charity and graciousness to the race of men once born on the physical basis of life, but not yet reborn on the spiritual plane. Their mission to earth was precisely to inaugurate, through the potency of their higher spiritual nature, that regeneration. The Hades into which their divine mission called them was this old earth, and the "prison" in which they lay fettered was this human fleshly body which the soul must put on to accommodate itself to the rigorous conditions of life on this planet. The construction was just another of the variant parables or allegories adumbrating the basic principia of all theology, fabricated on a slightly different pattern from that of the Prodigal Son allegory, the parable of the Sower of the Seed, that of the treasure hidden in a napkin, and others. Because its identity of meaning with these was lost through interpretative blindness, it was falsely assumed to be the announcement of a visitation of Godhood to another limbo of lost souls beside the one we know so indubitably from our present experience. The Christ's descent to Hades was just the birth of the infant Sons of God ("Now are we the sons of God" - 1 John 3:2) into this earthly humanity that we affect to celebrate at Christmas. For this good earth that under religious persuasions we berate as evil is the only Hell, Hades, Sheol, Amenta, Avichi, Gehenna, Tartarus or Tophet of an underworld that souls from the

empyrean have visited. Or at any rate it is the only one to which the Biblical allegories refer; there may of course be different hells for the life manifested on other planets. And we, living souls, are those "dead" lying inert in our graves which we call these human bodies. We are those "spirits in prison", those captives chained in the dark dungeons of this underworld. For the Greeks equated the body (soma) with the tomb (sema) by giving both the same name! In the profound Greek philosophy "souls were confined in bodies as in a prison or a grave". The mummy in its coffin was the Egyptian type-figure of a soul lying "dead" in its earthly body, its "grave" or "prison-house", awaiting the advent of the Christly power to release it. The spirit-soul was represented as the goddess Hathor confined in her "birdcage of the soul" - the body of flesh. This is the substance and the essential truth of the theology thus dramatically pictorialized in the ancient Scriptures. This is the Greek "descent of the soul" into physical embodiment on earth. This is the Fourth Gospel's "and was made flesh" of the cosmic Logos. This was that doctrine which Christian misconception travestied into the "fall of man into sin" from literal following of Genesis. And this, too, is man's rebellion against the passivity of heaven and his consequent expatriation therefrom and loss of Paradise, of Milton's great epic. There is no other "preaching" of Christhood to spirits in prison than that of the still small voice of conscience, which is the admonition of the evolving Christ-soul in the heart and mind of all humans. For this earth, the foster-mother of our divinity, is that "mount" on which deity came and stood to proclaim its message of its magical power to transform man's nature from that of the beast to that of the god. (The evidence for this etymological construction is clear throughout the ancient literature, but it is conclusively clinched by its derivation from the Latin word for "world" itself, mundus.) The "Sermon on the Mount" is just that discourse which our inner Christ consciousness preaches to us perennially throughout life on this stellar mount. But when this mount was liberalised from its mundane reference and taken to be some fictitious hill in Judea, again misconception perpetrated a most wretched caricature of precious truth.

01.05. The Harrowing of Hell

THE HARROWING OF HELL

Since, then, this item of creedology is one of crucial significance in all Christian doctrinism, it becomes necessary to re-examine it in the light of a deeper understanding of the ancient symbolic method of literary expression and of the principles of the occult soul-science cultivated by the sagacious theologians of old. The true import of the doctrine has been elaborated at full length and with succinct clarification of its subtle semantic intimations in the author's major works. But certain phases of its relation to the theological edifice in Christianity and the bearing upon it of numerous Biblical passages, as well as its extensive treatment in both the Patristic Christian and the Apocryphal literature of the early centuries, render a new survey of the theme eminently desirable.

Attention has been focused all afresh on this item by our recent perusal of a remarkable book dealing exhaustively with the doctrine from the distorted orthodox point of view, but marshalling the relevant data with a brilliant flourish of scholarship. It is the work entitled *The Harrowing of Hell*, by a prelate of the Anglican Church, J. A. MacCulloch, Canon of St. Ninian's Cathedral and Hon. Canon of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Cumbrae. It is subtitled: *A Comparative Study of an Early Christian Doctrine*. It is thoroughgoing and ably handles the assemblage and classification of basic data. Praise must stop short there, for it completely misses the correct interpretation of the great doctrine it deals with, leaving the reader as deeply mystified by the strangeness of the doctrine itself and as abjectly confused by it all at the end as at the beginning. In fact in the way of a literary oddity it is a phenomenon of exceptional uniqueness. We venture to assert that in its interpretative theses it misses the true import of its data completely. And in addition to its freakish character in this respect it can claim an exceptional mark of queerness from the fact that at one or two places it actually advances the hint of what would make the true interpretation and as summarily discards it, clinging doggedly to the erroneous theses postulated by orthodoxy. The book is, as said, a fine scholarly survey on a wide comparative basis of the universal ancient tradition of the Christ's descent to hell, the references to the doctrine being collated from a considerable library of the texts of the early Christian Fathers, exegetists and commentators, closely integrated with the texts from the Bible itself. This product of extensive research and correlation is a valuable one in spite of the entire miscarriage of the meaning, which is carried from its true locale of reference into a world in which the meaning cannot possibly apply. Error damns a book generally; but this work becomes, by way of accentuation of its true significance through sharp contrast with a false rendering, an exceptionally enlightening study through its very error. As the doctrine assumed prominence in early dogmatic formulations, it received elaboration and imaginative reconstruction at the hands of the Christian writers, who presented it in the full array of all its poetic embellishment, its correlative features and its Pagan antecedent background. It is in the light of these ancillary particulars that the study here undertaken, by virtue of its application of the recovered lost keys to the arcane wisdom of olden time, can take on the character of a veritable new revelation of all Scriptural theology.

What becomes apparent first is the realization that the doctrine, with all its strange and mystifying features, had a far greater, more detailed and expanded exegesis in the Patristic, Apocryphal and Pseudo religious literature of the first five or six Christian centuries than it was accorded in the canonical Gospels, Epistles or the Apocalypse. In this range of evangelical writing it is seen as far from an isolated episode, an irrelevant occurrence of Gospel history. For it is found in close and integral connection with the whole main body of basic Christian doctrinism. But also it is the comparison of much material from diverse sources that accentuates the clashes, the inconsonance and the confusion in which the whole panorama of orthodox interpretation is from beginning to end ludicrously involved. It is the purpose here to elaborate and expose the major points of such confusion, as part of the effort to realign this important element of Christian creedology with a true comprehension.

MacCulloch's book gives us, so to say, the pegs on which to hang the cardinal issues of the discussion. The legend of the descent of the deific power to an underworld and its wrestling there to overcome the forces of evil is almost universally present in the religions of the world. It is significant that this descent usually followed upon the hero's decease on earth. In this nether world the dead were believed to be detained until they were awakened, reanimated, liberated and led forth to regain an upper world of light and air through the sacrificial agency of the hero god, or other divine emissary. Death itself was personified, likewise Hades, as powers holding souls in captivity, so that the Son of God has to break their hold on the dead to set the prisoners free. Dramatically the old texts tell of the astonishment, dread and final panic of the rulers of Hades when the mighty light that radiates from the presence of the celestial person illumines the dark grottoes of hell. "Who is This King of Glory?" they cry in stupefied fright. "The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory," the voice of God resounds in reply. "The Lord mighty in battle (Psalms 24:8-10)." He has entered Hades to overthrow the powers of death and hell and bind the lord of the underworld in chains for the millennium. As he overcomes the reign of death he unbars the aeonial portals, he bursts the confining bolts of hell, he throws down the gates and topples the walls of the city of death and leads out to freedom the hosts of those lying inert.

Passages are found profusely in the various texts in which the souls bound in Hades, like Jonah in the belly of the great fish, raise their pleas to the heavenly Father that he will not suffer them to see corruption in Hades. The one in Acts (Acts 2:27) is notable: "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Similar appeals from the soul in the underworld abound in the Old Testament.

Again the symbol of "death" is exchanged for that of its twin brother "sleep". It is said that Jesus descended and preached "to them that slept." Those who had been held in some ill-defined condition of suspended life awaiting the coming of their liberator were often, as particularly in Egyptian lore, described as lying asleep in their coffins. The Christ is assigned the role and function of Awakener of the Dead. Resort is even had, as in Ezekiel, to the figure of bringing together dry bones, reconstituting them in their proper relation, clothing them with flesh, and restoring the organism to life (Ezekiel 37:1-10). As Jesus descended after his death, conquered the powers of darkness and came forth victorious, he is said to have achieved resuscitation also for all the saints who, freed by his power to melt their bonds, ascended up to heaven with him.

MacCulloch shows that the theme of the descent formed a definite part of the teaching of the Apostles; but that they missed its true esoteric intent and relevance is as clear as anything can be. The precincts of the underworld were guarded by powers in the service of death denominated by the Greeks Archons. They are the doorkeepers and wardens of Hades, and the souls bound under their guardianship have to wait for the coming of Jesus, who alone can free them. These jealous wardens have to be overcome, generally from stupefaction from terror inspired by the coming of the radiant One, if the enchained captives are to be released.

Many times the rite of burial accompanied the Saviour's "death" in the underworld; "dead and buried", as in the creed. So prominent was the doctrine of the Christly descent to Hades in early Church theology that the Nicene-Constantinople Council of 381 A.D. condemned those who denied that the Lord, "in his reasonable soul", had descended to Hades. The first canon of the fourth Council of Toledo, 633 A.D., contains in Latin this statement: The Logos "descended to the lower regions that he might release the saints who were there detained, and he resurrected them from the vanquished rule of death." An early creed-form recites that the Logos descended into hell and trod down the sting of death. Dramatically, as St. Paul puts it, the victorious cries of those released from the despot's clutches hurl back at him the jubilant taunt, "O Grave, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting? (1 Corinthians 15:55)" In certain writings God is said to have "remembered his righteous ones", or "his holy ones", or "his dead ones who slept in the land of sepulture." The Apocryphal Gospel of Peter has the phrase: "Hast thou preached to them that slept? (Gosp. Pet. 41)" Jesus was heralded as the "first fruits of them that slept (1 Corinthians 15:20)."

It may be injected here that the sheer stolidity of mind which permitted the Christian leaders early and late to read a literal sense into this "sleep" of the tenants of the fabled underworld, or Hades, thus giving it a quasi-historical significance, must be regarded as a phenomenon of stupendous magnitude and singularity. In a thousand particulars the material of a spiritual allegory, which renders its message with sublime aptness and luminosity as long as it is taken as allegory, almost invariably becomes ridiculous and impossible when it is transposed into historical realism. The "preaching" of a Christ spirit to a race of men unawakened to mystico-spiritual apprehensions can be well considered and understood, and this is unquestionably the only true sense which this allegory was intended to convey. But it is surely illogical to read a meaning in any way factual into the objective reality of a man, a human person, while his body lay dead in a rocky tomb in Palestine, entering any such kingdom as Hades and addressing an audience of all the earth's past dead lying fast asleep. From any point of view that makes it realistic, it is a stupid and silly presupposition. And its acceptance as such testifies vociferously to the havoc that pietistic credulity can wreak upon uncritical minds. If one tries to recreate this scene realistically, the Christ stalking about among the billions of sleeping wraiths in the dark caverns of Hades, the utter senselessness of it all - redeemable to sense only if taken as poetic representation of spiritual reality - will preclude any rational acceptance of it. Its acceptability on any factual terms presupposes that all these countless dead were collected at one place if they were to be within hearing of the divine oration. Of course the whole matter gains credence in the religious mind on the presumption that spirits are not bound by the laws of the physical realm. It will be said that the Christ's voice in this preaching was not a vocal resonance, but a spiritual radiation that shot electrically through all the corridors of the underworld. However the irrationalities of the situation

are to be "explained", it has to fall back on "miracle" in the end. And this is the inevitable resource whenever the ostensible framework of an allegory is transmuted into the alleged actuality of an event. It is sure to be the case that in the construction of allegory fancy creates situations that, like children's fairy tales, become fantastic, grotesque and bizarre when taken to be real objective occurrence. To be held in the category of history these things had to be classed as "miracles". Gerald Massey has, with irrefutable logic, found all the "miracles" performed by Jesus in the Gospels to have been pre-existent as allegories in old Egypt's immemorial literature. They were mythical constructions portraying the divine powers and attributes of the Christ figure of Horus, by dramatic representation.

01.06. Allegory Becomes History

ALLEGORY BECOMES HISTORY

Much dramatism enters into the ancient sagacious efforts to portray the rejuvenating power of the Christ-spirit when it is awakened from its "dead" condition and takes its rightful leadership in the individual's evolution. Death in person (or Hades, also personified) is depicted as standing thunderstruck as he notes the entry into his kingdom of the radiant Son of God. He has been hitherto the undisputed conqueror of all those who, struck down by his hand, have entered his underworld house to be his victims and his prey. He sees the Christ enter and expects to make him his victim also. But he finds his prospective new subject unconquerable; not only that, he finds his own power being vanquished by the power of light. Overcome with dismay, he sees the Redeemer snatch from his grasp the multitudes whom he had held bound. The legend is that the Christ empties Hades of its occupants. Thus he conquers death and hell, as the Easter anthem chant. At the appearance of Jesus in the lower world Death demands to know who this puissant challenger of his dominion may be. Whence has he this power to defy the monarch of the underworld, where all denizens are Death's subjects. He is seized with dread and trembles as the radiance of Jesus' glory sheds a brilliant light throughout the lower regions. Then he sees the graves of his dead opened and the dead come forth to follow the saviour as he leads them out into the full light of the upper world. Expressive indeed are the utterances which escape the lips of the Satanic monarch as he sees this radiant spirit "whom I am not able to grasp", dissolving the very doors and walls of his kingdom. Stricken with fear, he cries: "Who is this who extinguishes darkness with manifold splendor, nor permits me to rule over those who are mine, but draws souls given to me into Heaven? For this is the Christ who was crucified, by whom those who were below are brought on high, and those who were behind are set in front, when He rose from the dead, trod on Sheol, destroyed death by death and rising the third day, gave thanks to the Father." Death trembles, recoils and flees in terror at the approach of the Christ-light in his underworld dominions. Our author, MacCulloch, cites a scholar, von der Goltz, to uphold his theory that if the date assigned by the latter to Athanasius' *de Virginitate* is correct, such passages taken from this apocryphal document may well be the source of similar dramatic scenarios in the Testament of Our Lord, another uncanonical work, and both possibly inspiring some of the Gospel symbolism relative to the release of souls from death and the resurrection theme in general. Von der Goltz is mentioned as having suggested that for all such material some ancient Egyptian tradition, whose provenance can not be traced to original source, is being drawn upon. This is introduced here with the idea of showing that now and again, in spite of an inveterate reluctance to trace Christian material back to ancient Pagan backgrounds, scholars at times are forced to see what is the obvious factuality in this pursuit: that a body of literary treasures, all showing evident grounds of common source and kindred relationship, must have come down to the time of early Christianity from some antique fund of general wisdom, expressed in documents whose content and message form a unity of both expression and meaning. More than a few scholars have seen no way to bring a semblance of order and harmony out of a tangled exegetical situation in dealing with the

Gospels and the Apocryphal literature save to assume that these religious books were based on "a common document" antecedent to the production of the extant literature. Yet this, the only credible conclusion in view of many redoubtable considerations, is generally rated as a random guess and at once abandoned. Unquestionably it is the one sure rock of exegetical criticism on which Biblical scholarship can take a stand. And with Gerald Massey's colossal array of the data of comparative religion to validate the thesis, von der Goltz must be right in surmising that some ancient Egyptian tradition has been drawn upon for this scenario of terror of the ruler of death. Massey indeed has traced all such links of connection between the Bible literature and antecedent Egyptian dramatism. Christianity will never regain its secure footing on a platform of inerrant truth until it follows Massey's prodigious revelations of the Egyptian source of all its literary treasure.

Emanating from a common source in remote Egyptian wisdom, the primal origin of which must be far older in time and far nearer a truly divine provenance than orthodox Christianity has ever been willing to concede, the majestic formulations of some surpassing intelligence that presented high truth in the garb of myth, drama, allegory and the semanticism of nature were disseminated by the "grapevine" of esoteric secrecy among the Mystery Brotherhoods and such associations as, particularly the Essenes and the Gnostics in many nations, who copied and preserved the sacred books which carried the thesaurus of wisdom in cryptic forms and idioms. Indeed no one - except, alas, a mind distorted out of rationality by the force of pietistic indoctrination and an indefeasible prejudice - can carry on the pursuit of documentary study of ancient religious literature without arriving at this inescapable conclusion. Comparative religion study has failed to reach this verdict with any unanimity only because of the recalcitrant obduracy of Christian anti-Pagan biases. It is time the simple interests of truth are accorded their rightful primacy over less vital considerations.

Interesting sidelights - though all are integral elements of the ancient drama - are cast on the central theme of Christ's descent to hell by the efforts to identify those long-moribund tenants of the underworld who were to be resurrected and freed by the visit of the Logos to their subterranean dungeons. On this, as on several other items in the representation, Christian writers of the early centuries are much at variance and often in destructive contradiction. Some assume that the divine potency melts down all the bars of hell and releases all earth's previous dead en masse and empties and destroys hell in finality. Others are not so generous in granting an eventual salvation to all, as this would cheapen the value of salvation through the crucified Christ and weaken all claims as to the sole efficacy of the Christian path of redemption. If all the dead are to be saved, willy-nilly, what need of dying with Christ on his cross? Others limit the benison of release from hell to those who for a sufficient measure of repentance and turning from heathen error, of sincere yearning for the light, of inner purgation of sin and true piety, may have earned the right to receive the boon of the Savior's liberating power. But there seems to have been rather general unanimity on the presumption that the coming of the divine liberator to the purlieus of the lower world would surely bring release and resurrection to the Patriarchs of the Old Dispensation, from Adam through Noah and the Israelite Fathers down to David at least. These had been God's agents of the Adamic first birth of humanity, and, like Moses, had led the race of mankind over the preparatory stages toward spiritual unfoldment, but were not to bring the full unction of divine grace to the world, since only the Christ himself could achieve that consummation. But when in the fullness of time the Christ would come to visit the lower earth and release his saving power, then the time was fulfilled for the exaltation and apotheosization of the leaders of the fore-stage of

human sanctification.

Yet this "liberal" concession to antecedent and non-Christian influence was not accorded without much reluctance, since ineluctably the early Christian mind was permeated with a hard repugnance against the Jews, on the general ground of the Jewish failure to acknowledge and welcome the man Jesus as the long-expected Messiah. There has always existed this great impasse between the two attitudes of Christian theology toward Judaism. On the one side the office of heralding and birthing the coming Messiah, as prophesied in the books of Jewish religion. Jesus came into a milieu that was prepared by the Jewish nation, this historical fact thus indicating God's choice of this people for the great honor. The coming Christ was to be born of the Jesse-David line of Jewish kings. Hebraism is therefore the initial stage of Christianity itself. On the other side the Jewish adherence to strict formalism in religion prevented recognition and acceptance of the Christ when he came. Judaism rejected him as the fulfilment of its own prophetic heralding. It had therefore forfeited the right to receive the blessed unction of his deliverance of the dead when he visited the underworld. So that it was a considerable stretch of theological liberality for Christians to include even the Jewish Patriarchs in the category of those to be resurrected from Sheol and Gehenna. It was hardly to be supposed that the underworld visit of Jesus would free those who still stood in hostility to his message and his mission to the world. Yet on the wide theory that Jesus' descent ad inferos would give all those souls who had lived and died under the Old Dispensation their chance to partake of the redemptive power which Christ was to release for the reign of the new Dispensation, opinion was broadly expressed that the mercy and favour of God would open the prison doors to all except perhaps the most perversely wicked and evil souls detained in the "lower parts of the earth". One version asserted that Christ liberated all the dead in Hades except Cain, Judas and Herod. It is given as the problematic view of the Gnostic Marcion that the Jews in Hades would be found as stiff-necked as they had been on earth. Others presumed that Christ's descent was to raise all the dead.

One surely must conclude that allegorism and not history is being purveyed - and mistaken for history - in the stories extant in a number of the Apocryphal writings, to the effect that when Jesus opened the gates of hell the Patriarchs and holy men of old time emerged in body from their graves opened by the great earthquakes and even appeared and were seen in Jerusalem by people writing the accounts. When one reads enough of the literature foisted on the simple constituency of the early Church, dealing with wonders of faith, of healing, of miracle, one realizes how far the zeal of religious piety can override reason and subject the mind to the sweep of credulity. When allegories have been converted into historical events, all the resources of thaumaturgy must be called in to condition susceptible minds to their acceptance in defiance of logic.

Likewise the literal rendering of semantic constructions has made inevitable no end of confusion, since in the various dramatizations the authors used different terms in naming the graded states of consciousness through which man passes in his upward progress. Hell itself had many names, as Hades, Sheol, Gehenna (Gehinnom), Amenta, Tartarus, Avernus, Orcus, Tophet, the Tuat and others. Also heaven had a variety of synonymous designations, as the Elysian Fields, Olympus, Paradise, Eden, the Fields of Arru, Isles of the Blest, Beulah Land, Canaan, Jerusalem and more. Another term, apparently designating heaven introduced much confusion into the reading. This is the name given to the region into which the soul of Lazarus was carried after his death, -

Abraham's bosom. No Christian believer could think of this hallowed place as other than heaven or its equivalent in blessedness. But trouble arose when this localization appeared to be in conflict with the view that had become nearly universal in early Christian writing, that all souls at death (except only the Christian martyrs) descended to Hades! Residence in Hades, or a temporary and intermediate sojourn there, had not then assumed its eternal or indeed its condemnatory character at least in scholarly circles, as it did in later times. It was considered to be a region of temporary or transitional habitation for all souls following death, there to await the final separation of "the sheep and the goats" at the judgment. But if all souls went at death to Hades, where was this place of seraphic bliss called Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22)? Here symbolism found itself impaled on the horns of a dilemma. If all souls went to Hades, but the sanctified Lazarus landed in Abraham's bosom, then Hades must not be the underground land of darkness and misery, but a quite delectable homeland. In fact it makes Hades heaven itself! The Christian apologists cudgelled their brains to extricate themselves from this logical trap in which they found themselves caught, and came up with the only "explanation" in sight: that Abraham's bosom, though not the ultimate or highest heaven, was a pleasant section of Hades, a sort of special compartment of the dark underworld that was set aside as a fairly delightful abode where the souls of the righteous might find refreshment. In terms of metropolitan housing one is led to think of it as a penthouse apartment above the dark lower stories in hell's tenements. Though all go down to Hades from the earth, each soul goes into that section of the underworld justly allotted to it by karmic equity - although this is not stated in MacCulloch's volume.

It is evident on the face of it that the conception of Hades as we find it elaborated in the speculations of the early Fathers and Scriptural exegetists, is far from that simple idea of it which came to be current in popular thought in Christendom. It is not by any means unequivocally the "bad place" to which the wicked and the ungodly are despatched at death for eternal torture. All, the righteous and the wicked alike, had to abide in Hades till the time of the apocalypse. (The enlightened reader will hardly need to be reminded that the Greek phrase *teleuten aion*, which has been stupidly mistranslated "end of the world" is properly to be rendered "end of the cycle", or "end of the age".) Even that Edenic heaven, Abraham's bosom, where Lazarus had been taken to be rewarded for earthly poverty with celestial riches, had to be included in its province. The very Christ himself, either by providential design or for some reason of cosmic purport, was called upon to descend into this nether earth.

01.07. Moses Also Descends

MOSES ALSO DESCENDS From the standpoint of sheer expediency the Church was fortunate that it could find at hand a plausible apologetic for this episode in the Scriptural narrative in the Christ's mission of preaching to the dead spirits in prison. His descent could therefore be haloed with the aura of a sacrificial condescension on the part of divinity, a gratuity divinely vouchsafed, not a cosmic compulsion or obligation. So Christian polity has rested on the assumption that Jesus' descent to the "bowels of the earth" was motivated by his divine compassion for the unfortunate dwellers in the underworld and that he undertook their release, since only through him could their prison bars be broken. Had not the organic structure of the ancient esoteric systematism been totally lost, the theologians of the Church could have seen that the matter of the Lord's descent to the land of the dead was not a thing or whim or impulse on the part of the Son of God, left to his voluntary initiative, but was integrally in the order of beneficent evolutionary schematism. For it is the law of life in the ranks of graded being that the organic life on a higher plane must inject the seed of its potential renewal of life in the beings subsisting on the plane next below it in the scale. But sight was lost of this basic formula when the night of stark ignorance settled over the near-East nations in the centuries of decline of deeper spiritual science following the heyday of philosophical glory of the Periclean Age of Greece. The savage upsurge of resentment on the part of the illiterate masses against anything savoring of learning, had by the third century swept out of common ken all knowledge of the esoteric thesis of the soul's continued progression up the ladder of life through recurrent incarnations in earthly body. Hence along with the obsession of the idea of the limitation of earth experience to the one-only life, an idea at once over-whelmingly destructive of any philosophical attitude toward life on earth, there fell upon the general mind the persuasion of the finality of death, once its reference had been shifted from the spiritual deadening of the soul while in the body to the decease of the body itself. Here and here alone is the formula of understanding that recreates the psychical environment which in that direful third century transmogrified the nascent Christianity from its original character of Gnostic wisdom to a scarecrow caricature of that wisdom, a veritable fetish worship of symbols and images carnalized and petrified by literalism.

Christian theology from the start found itself impaled on its affirmation of the Biblical declaration that there was no other way to salvation than through the historical Jesus and him crucified. It was on this thesis logically confronted with the obligation of effecting some link between this Savior and all earth's antecedent dead, so that those also might meet, know and profit by the grace of salvation. Hence the avidity with which the apologists of the faith seized upon the three days visit of Jesus to the nether world. The pietistic Church Father Cyprian quotes in Latin the statement in 1 Peter 4:6 : "For in this also it was preached to the dead, in order that they might be brought again to life." The obtuseness of perception on the part of Christian scholars can be vividly sensed if one turns back to a passage in Exodus 19:10-11, where a perfect analogue of the descent of divinity and preaching "to the people" is found. Cyprian, blind to the clear implications of such a construction of esoteric adroitness pointing to the non-historicity of a similar event in the "life" of

Jesus, expressly cites it as proof of that event's historicity. The citation runs: "The Lord said to Moses, Descend and testify to the people, and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothing and be ready against the day after tomorrow. For on the third day the Lord will descend upon Mount Sinai." Quoting these verses MacCulloch asks if this means that Moses was a forerunner of Jesus to Hades, heralding the Lord's coming there, - another John the Baptist. Obviously what it means is just what the orthodox commentators have obdurately refused to see: that all such recurrences of theme are elements of the arcane allegorism of ancient writing, and not real as objective occurrences at all. Not historical as events, they are yet realities in the life of man spiritual, for they present to the mind the veridical forms of spiritual reality. As far as it goes, this little sketch of the soul's advent and incarnation on earth is item for item a parologue of the New Testament's descent and preaching of Jesus. As long, of course, as the venerable Scriptures are envisaged as literal history of one ancient people, instead of typegraphs of the form and meaning of human life, no theologian would be in a thousand years of identifying "Moses" of the Old Testament with John the Baptist of the New. Moses himself could not enter the Promised Land, but prepared the way for the full-fledged "Jesus" (Joshua) to cross the Jordan into the land flowing with milk and honey. "Moses" therefore is the way-opener in evolution for the advent of Christly spirit power, and stands to Joshua as John the Baptist stands to Jesus. It is well to point out several identities in the two constructions. God sent his "one-ly born" Son down to earth, and this mission entailed his descent to Hades; rather, be it said categorically, this was that descent to Hades. In the Old Testament allegory, the Lord ordered Moses to descend. Jesus descended and preached to them three days (two actually); Moses' exhortation was to continue for two days, ending on the third day.

Here we have an astonishing parallelism, if not patent identity, between an alleged episode in the life of the first-century character Jesus and a very similar incident in the life of Moses. This is by no means an isolated instance of such close similarity between Jesus and one or other of the prominent characters in the Old Testament, - not to overlook the one hundred and eighty such identities between Jesus and the certainly non-existent Horus, the long antecedent typl Christ of ancient Egypt. Yet - let it be emphasized to the last degree of its significance, Christian scholars have for two thousand years stood face to face with these evidences of the non-factuality, the non-historicity of the life of Jesus in the Gospels, yet continue to deny the existence of any evidence to indicate that the Christian literature was derived in any direct or significant measure from antecedent Pagan sources. Our scholar MacCulloch concludes his book with reiterations of a statement to this effect. He does allow derivation of Christian material from Hebraism, by some subtlety of classification dissociating Jews from the category of Pagans. This item of parallelism confronts Christian theology with another problem. Let it be borne in mind that in the Christian book of apologetics, the descent and the three-days preaching of Jesus was the only opportunity made available to the billions of humanity living before 33 A.D. For their salvation. Yet here is the Old Testament's recital of a precisely similar descent and spiritual sanctification, which on a historical basis of interpretation and reckoning would have occurred some fifteen hundred years before Jesus came to Hades. The people that had to be preached out of the region of darkness and sin into the blessedness of beatification in three days had at least once before (and several other like situations are to be found in the literature of old Egypt) been visited by divine messengers and had the door of salvation opened to them. All this (and many similar complications) throws contradiction and confusion into the counsels of Christian exegetics. But -

the riposte will come - we are comparing two things that have no connection or relation whatever, since Jesus' descent was to spirits in the prison of Hades, or hell, a region allocated in the purely spiritual state of being; whereas Moses was sent down to a group of living people on this earth, in Palestine or in the Sinai district of Egypt. How can we classify these two men as identical characters, performing the same mission, when they were as different historical personages as were Caesar and Napoleon. So will the argument run as long as one contends for the historical character of the Scriptures.

Two men in history are of course two men, distinct and individual. But in allegory a dozen "men" with different names can all "be" one and the same character, and "he" not a living man of history, but a type-figure of some element in man's make-up. And this, one can assert with positiveness, is what the main Biblical figures are, in both Old and New Testaments. Yes, "Jesus" descended to hell and "Moses" went down on Mount Sinai, and we venture to flout all the authority of orthodox Christian theology by proclaiming that this allegorism is one of many solid reasons why one can now positively assert that "hell" and "Mount Sinai" are one and the same place! And that place is neither under (the surface of) this earth, nor in spirit-land, nor in the territory of Egypt, the country in north-east Africa, but is just this good old earth itself! The cryptic, but clear intimation of every reference to this place to which, in all ancient Scriptures, a divine here descends, leads a discerning mind to the perception at last that the dark underworld, the hell and Hades of theology is our rolling globe.

Forever settled, then, is the early Fathers' dispute over who goes down to hell, when they do so, and who are awakened, and also where. For earth, of course, is the site of the universal school of evolutionary education for all those mind-born Sons of God for whom cosmic fate decreed a set task in the economy of life in this corner of the galaxy. Also this earth is the "underworld" of all mythology and theology, as being "under" the empyrean, or heaven, which is the undisputed point of departure for all entities sent "down" to a lower sphere of life. The first misjudgment that threw off the unschooled early interpreters was the failure to grasp this proper signification of "under". Under is always relative to what is above; and since all the allegorical depictions of spiritual situations or processes in the Scriptures were - erroneously - taken to refer to the man Jesus in his earthly historical objectivity, naturally every reference to his descent into a lower world was naïvely taken to be an account of a journey which he took from this earth into a lower limbo. Never has it dawned upon purblind religious zealotry that this descent was the transition of a unit of divine soul from a higher world than ours and down into man's constitution, not from man's station on earth into a place below our world, but spirit's descent from a heaven above us to us men on earth. We men on earth are those "spirits in prison", lying dormant, unawakened, those spiritually "dead" in their tombs of flesh. There is abundant certification of all this scattered widely over the field of ancient literature. But it is irrefutably demonstrated by the identity of the Greek words soma for "body" and sema for "tomb". For a long time the infant soul of potential deity implanted "from above" as the Scriptures have it, lies deeply buried under the weight of the lower animal nature and instincts, until these are gradually overcome and it is resurrected from this "dead" condition. In this elucidation is covertly hidden the core of significance of all theology, and its rediscovery after nineteen centuries of oblivion will inaugurate a new Reformation in all Western religion far transcending in range, depth and significance the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. It will for the first time enable the twisted scheme of Christian theology to re-establish its harmony

with that wondrously beautiful structure of esoteric wisdom from which it veered so tragically far away in the third century. The ancient light that Christianity dimmed and well nigh extinguished will be rekindled and in the clear view of truth which it will provide can be constructed that one-world religion that alone can give peace to the earth, the fervent dream of idealist humanity. For the realization at last that the consciousness of man here on earth is the arena of a potential heaven of blessedness and a very present hell of ignorance and benightedness of the spirit is the great "lost key" to the true meaning of the Scriptures, the lost clue also to the cryptic purport of all mythology. All religions will go on misunderstanding the illuminating message of their ancient Bibles until they rebase their interpretations on this rebuilt foundation.

It is only when a mind enlightened with this clearer view scans the Scriptures anew that it becomes sharply aware of the unconscionable asininity of many constructions in these venerable tomes when they are rendered as literal history. It takes bright light to reveal the grotesqueness of the bogies that bad vision has created in the darkness. For instance in the text we have quoted from Exodus the Lord instructs Moses to order the people to "wash their clothing" to be ready for reception of the Lord when he descended on the third day. Esoteric symbolism uses natural phenomena and physical objects to analogize spiritual realities, but unless the mind can lift its conceptions from the phenomena or the objects to the noumenal realities thus objectified, the outer picture will generally remain bizarre or ludicrous. Looked at realistically the scene of a general or national washday for the children of Israel can yield humorous suggestions. But, with the esoteric key to the marvelous language of symbolism it is readily seen that the "clothing" that souls put on as they descend from ethereal realms to earth is the several bodies of courser matter overlaid finally by the physical body, and that the impurity which these bodies catch from contact with the earth necessitates cleaning if the soul itself is not to be contaminated. How exalted the sense and inspiring the incentive to nobler living, when one grasps the loftier conception deftly woven into the allegory, that man must purge his lower "clothing" of its accumulated dross of animalism, sensualism and coarseness and refine it till it shines with spiritual purity. Should the moral of this situation need elaboration, it can be said simply that obviously the edifying power of this Scriptural presentation, typical of hundreds of others, would be immeasurably, almost magically, enhanced, if the sublime spiritual connotation is apprehended instead of a Monday's washtub operation. When one takes the serpent of Genesis as a snake, takes the ark as a wooden boat floating on a universal flood covering the mountain-tops, takes Jonah's great fish as a mammoth whale, the cross as two wooden beams, the resurrection as the re-animation of a physical cadaver, one succeeds only in clamping his mind down to the dead level of pure idolatry, worshipping the symbol and remaining blind to what in a higher world of conceptuality it was intended to symbolize. The literal interpreters of the Bible are the greatest of the idolaters.

01.08. Confusion Worse Confounded

CONFUSION WORSE CONFOUNDED The whole theological situation as regards the descent of deity to save man became involved in an inextricable tangle through the misreading of allegory and the confusion of two worlds where only one under two different names was intended. The confusion put in doubt the sheer matter of the direction, up or down, in which the dead were to move in proceeding to their cosmic destination, be that destination heaven, or hell and Hades. Already we have seen the muddle of inconsistency and contradiction created by the clash of ideas as to the heavenly destination of the good and the journey of the wicked to hell or Hades. One must go through such a book as MacCulloch's to gain a realizing sense of how hopelessly Christian thinking and believing over the centuries have been mired in the absurdities of the traditional tenets of the Church covering this localization of the prospective post-mortem residence of souls. If all the orthodox were to read such a work, they would be horrified to realize that, on their own Christian teaching, they will not be able to determine whether at death they will go up to a better world above, or down to a Hades below. The confusion is so unresolvable that even up and down, heaven and hell, Paradise and Hades are indistinguishable.

Then imagine how much more their astonishment will be intensified if they are told, as now they can be told, that the matter of their going either up to heaven or down to hell is not, in theological meaning, in the remotest degree related to the question of where their souls will go following bodily decease on earth. This can be stated categorically and without possible refutation, because it is now seen that the directions taken by souls in descending and ascending have no reference to what transpires at what we call death, but refer always and only to the direction taken by souls descending from heaven to earth for incarnation, and ascending from earth back to heaven on their return. If that area of non-physical existence out of which souls migrate to earth be the region which religions have denominated "heaven", and on some basis of relativity in a scale of gradation it be considered to lie "above" our world, then souls have but one place to go on departing this life in body. They must return to heaven. The seer in the Old Testament portrayed their shuttling up and down between earth and heaven under the figure of angels ascending and descending Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28:12). St. Paul makes this interpretation clear when he says, speaking of the Christ spirit: "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? (Ephesians 4:9)" If souls are to return to God, they must first have left his kingdom above and descended to earth. This certainly at once reduces the possible localities and directions of the soul's journeyings and returns to two, from heaven to earth and back again.

But, the literalist will heckle, this eliminates hell, or Hades, from the picture. Surely the Scriptures do not deceive us when they tell us of the terrors of the underworld. The logic of the situation begins to point to interesting conclusions. If there is no journeying for souls other than the shuttling back and forth between heaven above and earth beneath, logic leaves the case open but for one verdict. We have to conclude that as both earth and hell are located by all religious systems as lying below the realm called heaven, these two, earth and hell, must be one and the same place; and this same place must be the fabled "underworld". Let any intelligent mind examine the

material collated in MacCulloch's book - though it is glaring at us in nearly every book that surveys the field of early Christian writing - and it will be convinced by the overwhelming evidence that, behind the forms of a cryptic disguise, the theological hell is located nowhere else than on this earth and that the so-called "dead" are souls here incarnated.

If there is one popular and universal conception that has remained fixed in the essential simplicity of truth - among so many that mass thought has wretchedly vitiated - it is the general idea that life on this earth, by and large, is a tragic experience of hard toil, loss, pain, suffering and ultimate defeat, and that death comes as a fortunate release like that of a prisoner freed from miserable confinement. Here for once naïve popular belief agrees with the profundities of Greek philosophy. It is everywhere the instinctive religious conviction that souls thus released from the ordeal of existence in this world find surcease, rest and peace in heaven. Not only that, but nearly every better religion in the world postulates the soul's re-entry into a state of celestial bliss after enduring the strenuous hardships of life "down here".

How completely at sixes and sevens the Christian ideas are found to be will become almost ludicrously apparent when it is seen how exactly divergent the various positions are. It is at one and the same instant believed that all souls return to peace, rest and comparative happiness through death's door. Yet consistently expounded and upheld in the writings of the early Christian leaders is the doctrine that all souls go down to Hades after death. Here we see general Christian belief clashing with the tenets of Christian theology. The up-or-down itinerary awaiting their souls at death is thus a completely uncertain one for all Christians. No answer that carries positive assurance can be given even now. The misreading of Scriptural allegory as objective history has thrown the whole great debate into a battle of conflicting ideas. The Christian faith has yet no logical or philosophically grounded assurance to give its millions of devotees as to whether at death their released souls will ascend to the conventional heaven of peace and bliss, or descend to a Hades pictured in horrific colors as a region of darkness and torment. In this parlous condition does the most boastful religion in the world leave its people dangling. A light to aid the mind, whether of Christian or other faith, to discern the truth that earth is the hell and Hades of theology (and mythology) and the locale positively indicated as the point of reference of these terms in the revered Scriptures, illumines our understanding when this idea of "release" is scrutinized. Universal and instinctive is the naïve assumption, the natural belief, and indeed man's most positive source of cheer and consolation in every hard situation, that bodily death will bring life's suffering and tragedy to an end. With death the stern conflict is ended; "the strife is over, the battle done, the victory of life is won." This faith is so strong that it can support the desperate anguish of suicide. The common consolation that assuages death's sorrow is that the dread visitor brings release.

It will therefore fall as an astounding disclosure to the ordinary Christian mind that the basic theology of the Fathers of the religion directly controverts this comforting belief, robs the believer of his hope of heaven and, horrible to contemplate, casts his soul down to Hades. Only those enraptured spirits whose bodies, covered with pitch, had served as torches in Nero's gardens, or been mangled with the lion's gory claws in the amphitheatre, escaped the descent to Hades. All, both the righteous and the wicked, pass down to Hades, there to await release at some distant epoch vaguely termed the Judgment Day. What must be the consternation of the devout Christian on learning that the theology of his faith, so far from assuring him of a blessed transition at death

from the woes of earth to the glories of heaven, dooms him to confinement for an aeon in the dark caverns of hell! What must be his dismay when he finds it was the teaching of the founders of his Church that death would simply transfer his soul from one dreadful region to another still more frightful! To die was only to step from the frying-pan of the hell on earth into the fires of hell itself. It was but to exchange one "duration vile" for another presumably far more vile. If he reads the holy words of the sanctified Fathers of his Faith he will have to revise his expectations and resign himself to taking the dark downward journey to the diabolical underworld, there to agonize for unknown ages. From this dismal prospect escape is to be made only by awakening his torpid mind to sufficient sharpness to read aright his own Scriptures, interpreting them as allegories of his soul's strenuous experience in this world, which is the only hell or Hades ever contemplated by the ancient sages who indited those sacred books, and release from which will free him to enter whatever grade of a heavenly consciousness his stage of evolutionary progress will make possible for him.

Here as elsewhere, Christian doctrinism runs into a closed lane, a trap manufactured by its own misreading of ancient poetic delineation of the conscious experience of divine souls in mortal bodies. How clear it comes through to understanding now that, since souls both on earth and in Hades are pictured as spirits in prison waiting the coming of Horus, or Jesus, of Balder, or Izdubar, or Marduk or other Savior to effect their release and their transition to a higher world of light and happiness, these two places, earth and Hades, must be the one single underworld from whose gloomy chambers the Christ power lodged in their own constitution must release them. This Christ within them is the only power that can burst asunder the bolts and bars of this soma-sema body-tomb which is their prison-house until the resurrection. In the sublime language of ancient figurative genius earth was portrayed in the character of warder of souls, a place of fiery torment for the infant Sons of God, stern despot tyrannizing over the lives of those entities unfortunate enough, by their childhood waywardness to have fallen from a Paradise of innocence and halcyon blessedness down into his kingdom of darkness. Yet earth, matter being ever the "eternal feminine", was at the same time the holy Mother of those mind-born Sons of God. And a true and balanced philosophy discerned that the "captivity" and "bondage" of these celestial juveniles - the "Innocents" of Biblical allegorism - was as propitious an evolutionary situation for them as is the tutelage of a human child in the home of its mother. As St. Paul puts it in fourth Galatians, the young progeny of God in their childhood had to be put under "tutors and guardians" until the time of the perfection of their own matured powers (Galatians 3:24-25). Nature, matter, that great Goddess Isis, "the Mother of all the Living", is this stern but fostering madonna of infant souls.

It is notable that MacCulloch, the author of the important book review, *The Harrowing or Hell*, seems to have taken no notice of the singular fact that in the excerpt quoted by him from Cyprian, there was the descent of two persons, two figures. The Lord bade Moses "descend and testify to the people" so that they might be prepared to receive the Lord, who would descend upon Mount Sinai on the third day (Exodus 19:21) . How is this complication to be understood? The only plausible elucidation, in harmony with the postulates of ancient occult knowledge, seems to emerge in studying the character and office of Moses, the forerunner and way-opener of Joshua (Jesus) - for the names are identical - and discerning that Moses bears to Joshua the same relation as John the Baptist bears to Jesus. Moses in Old Testament allegory and John in the New Testament stand as the first or natural man, who himself can not enter the kingdom of heaven, but

who comes first to prepare the way for the advent of the "second man", the spiritual "Lord from heaven". Life must be established "down" here in the natural world, physis, as the Greeks called it, if it is to bear and mother God's children of the spirit. So "Moses" must represent this grade of life involved in the lower world of matter. Consciousness is under the rule of life in the physical sphere before, at the symbolic age of twelve, like the boy at puberty, it begins to turn to the "things of the Father", mind and spirit. "When we were yet children", says St. Paul in Fourth Galatians, "we were in bondage to them that by nature are no gods" but the powers of physis, what he calls "elementals of the earth" and "elements of the world (Galatians 4:3)." But when nature's preparatory work shall have made ready the physical conditions that will enable the higher frequencies and shorter wave lengths of the higher gamuts of consciousness to find expression, the Lord Christ will descend in his turn to awaken dormant capability and lead the developed soul out from under the strict motherhood of nature's fixed laws into "the liberty of the sons of God." This transition carries consciousness from bondage to the letter of the law which killeth under the "old dispensation" over into the freedom of the spirit which giveth life under the new dispensation.

Yet all this evident clarity of elucidation remains still buried in the obscurity of incomprehension because of failure to grasp the symbolic significance of "Mount Sinai". The grand meaning of this heritage of wisdom will be lost as long as this Sinai (and the six other sacred mountains) is stupidly taken to be the supposed hill in northeastern Egypt. As explained before, "mount," "mountain," "holy hill," "hill of the Lord," "mount of Sin," "mount of the moon" and indeed finally the "mount of earth," is ancient semantic usage for the earth itself. And this is the final attestation - and it closes at last the blatant mouths of crass-minded Fundamentalists and literalists - that all the Scriptural transactions, such as the temptation, the crucifixion, the "sermon," the transfiguration and the ascension, all of which were allegorically localized "on the mount," simply transpire in the life and evolution of man on this old earth. "Sinai" incidentally derives etymologically from the Egyptian seni, senai, meaning "point of turning to return," and this earth is precisely that nadir point down to which souls descend, and there turn to return to the Father above! This is an item of scholarly discovery that carries in its single implication a whole revolution in Biblical exegesis. Mount Sinai is just this world and it is indeed the valley of the shadow of death.

01.09. Is Hades Under the Earth?

IS HADES UNDER THE EARTH?

Inevitably we will be reminded that in the Genesis account of creation and elsewhere in the Bible not only are two regions spoken of, but three are clearly distinguished. The story narrates that God created things in heaven, on earth and under the earth. MacCulloch quotes Hippolytus as saying that Christ was ordained Lord of things in heaven, on earth and under the earth (Greek kata chthonia). MacCulloch's explanation of this is that Christ became man to live as and among men and thus transfigure manhood with divinity: that he ruled things under the earth in order that, as one who submitted to mortal death and thereby could preach to the dead of past time, he might overcome death by combating and defeating its dread power in its own realm. Here it can again be clearly seen that early theological thought equated death with life in the ancient representation. But here again literalism wrecks the proper sense of allegory. Any third locality apart from heaven and earth that is listed as pertaining to man in the old sacred books, is meaningless and non-existent. If it is postulated in the history of man it is a baseless figment of bad literary bungling. A region physically located "under the earth" in the sense of beneath the ground surface, can have no place in the field of man's evolutionary activity. If man lives some eighty years on earth, then has to spend a period of comparatively vaster length in the bowels of the earth, physically considered, why has not the Christian theology given due accentuation to a feature of such startling character? Christian exegesis here has been caught by a Biblical phrase, wholly missing its real import and through the fallacy of a literal interpretation entangling itself in an illogical complex. Only the esoteric approach and methodology in Scriptural reading, which it rejects with fright at every turn, can rescue it from its own disordered creedology.

Man stands at a point which might be considered about midway in the scale and gamut of being between the natural energies below him and the spiritual grades of consciousness above him. He is thus balanced between heaven above him and the subordinate and preparatory orders of life below him. As his place in the cosmos was on earth, his life had to be lived in a subordinate relation to the life of higher beings in heaven above and in a superior relation to inferior creatures below his station. A comprehensive reference to his position would have to cover, so to say, the three stories of his place of residence in the universe, his own story, the earth, the next story above, and the kingdom immediately below, or "under the earth". This lower region would extend over the three kingdoms below man in the evolution of life, animal, vegetable and mineral, and presumably the sub-elemental, sub-atomic level of life which our wondrous modern science is now exploring. But as a physical locality in which any part of man's redemptive process is alleged to take place, the region so vaguely, so indeterminately fancied to exist down under the earth in any physical sense, is again a fictional delusion of the theological brain, straining to make ends meet in carrying allegory over into literal realism.

Having seen in the Exodus passage that an Old Testament forerunner of the Jesus (Joshua) descent to the lower world, namely Moses, preceded the descent of the true divine Lord, we

should register no surprise on finding that the early Christian commentaries similarly have John the Baptist preceding the descent of Jesus to the prison-house below. Must not, then, this place of descent of deity be one and the same place? As New Testament "history" is uncompromisingly held to be fulfillment of Old Testament "prophecy" is it not entirely legitimate to assume that the locale in which the fulfillment takes place is the locale in which it did take place? Otherwise it would not be the fulfillment of the given prophecy. The great lost and stubbornly resisted truth of all this is, - *mirabile dictu* - that neither is the Old Testament to be taken as objective prophecy of future events believed to have been fulfilled in the first century A.D., Nor is the New Testament a record of the fulfillment of such alleged prophecy. All these utterances in both books, as Gerald Massey indubitably demonstrates, are allegories of man's experience in his line of march up the ladder of being, grossly mistaken in the Old Testament for prophecies and in the New for miracles. The world owes - but refuses ungraciously to requite - to Gerald Massey an incalculable debt for showing us that the same "miracles" that are enumerated in the Gospels as the demonstration of Jesus' divinity, are found ages before his advent in old Egyptian books as spiritual apologues.

Clement of Alexandria is broad and liberal enough to include "righteous Pagans", as well as the sainted Patriarchs of the Old Testament among those dead in the underworld who are to be rescued by the Lord's preaching in Hades. A chapter in his *Miscellanies* treats of a passage cited from *The Shepherd of Hermas* in which even the apostles preach and baptized in Hades. With even such a direct hint of the identity of Hades with earth under their eyes, the scholars still remained blind to the truth. Are we to take it that the apostles, as well as Jesus, descended to Hades and preached to the spirits in prison? And how could they have done so when they were still alive in body during the three days of Jesus' visit to the underworld? And if not at that time, when in their lives did they make this extraordinary visit?

Clement does divide the righteous Jews and Pagans from the sinners in Hades. "Who in his senses," he asks, would charge Providence with injustice and suppose souls of the righteous and those of sinners to be under one condemnation?" MacCulloch suggests that Clement might logically have included even the sinners themselves as privileged to hear the crucial underworld sermonizing of Jesus, as they could hardly be expected to repent without some exhortation from divine power above them. Clement seems to have held rigidly to the applicability of the "chained" and "those in prison" to Jews and Gentiles. Christians of course were not in such lowly or precarious condition. It is not to be missed in passing how completely MacCulloch fails to see a slip of logic in Clement's comment to the effect that righteous Jews were entitled to hear the precious preaching in Hades on the ground that they, too, needed the chance to repent. This is one of those numerous little traps of logic in which the inveterate prejudices now and again have caught Christian theorizers, involving them in bizarre situations. For how can it be logical to hold that a "righteous Jew" or Pagan should need to repent? When has righteousness become something that needs to be absolved by repentance? Is it not unrighteousness that calls for repentance? We are forced to the conclusion that in early Christian ideology righteousness absolved a Christian, but not a Jew. It seems that even MacCulloch's statement carries the assumption that a righteous Jew is under condemnation and needs repentance, not for being righteous, but for being a Jew! If one is not correct in an analysis of this sort, one has to wonder whether logic has a place in religious thinking at all. And if righteousness does not count on a soul's credit balance, one has to wonder what is the good of being righteous. But Christian

mentality was caught in this anomaly because in truth Christian doctrine is loud in proclaiming that one's best righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God. Not your righteousness, but only the mercy of God will save you. And in early Christian presumption, righteousness would certainly not have absolved one from the sin of being a Jew or a Pagan.

Clement quotes The Shepherd of Hermas document as saying that while Christ preached to the long-dead Jewish Patriarchs and "good" Jews in Hades, the apostles preached to the Gentiles who were ready for conversion. This Apocryphal book states that the apostles "went down with them into the water, and again came up." We have universally been told that Hades is a place where souls are tortured in the flames of an undying fire. What shibboleth in popular parlance is more common than "hot as hell?" Books on Christian theology combed the dictionary for terms adequate to picture the fierceness of hell's igneous fury. From Dante's Inferno to the modern cinema we have seen the troops of souls writhing in agony in the unquenchable fires of hell. But how different the picture we find here! The apostles are said to have gone down to this same Hades to help Jesus save the hordes of the dead, but it was water into which they plunged, not fire! So here ancient semantic ingenuity, in typifying the lower level of life, switched from the symbolism of fire to that of water. Our learned author, MacCulloch appears to take no notice of this drastic shift in the symbolism. Shall we guess that it provoked a momentary puzzlement or impasse in his mind and that, with no solution at hand, he dodged the obligation to discuss it? For owing to the theological position and attitudes of Christian systematism there is still wanting the capability of elucidating the semantic usages in Biblical writing. Nature does not limit her epiphany of truth to one objectification, one phenomenon. Emerson has said that God is present in all his parts in every moss, cobweb and blade of grass. Therefore more than one of her elements may serve to enlighten the human mind with an apt ideation of a given truth. Truly enough has the underworld into which the soul units of God's fatherhood have descended for life's benison of experience to evolve divine potential by overcoming the inertia of matter has been characterized in symbolic language by the Egyptians as the "crucible of the great house of flame," or the "fiery furnace" of Scriptural imagery. At the same time, but from another angle of poetization, this lower bodily habitat of incarnated souls is depicted as the place where souls are in imminent danger of drowning in its deep waters. For the physical bodies which souls inhabit in this underworld are composed of seven-eighths water and one-eighth earthy elements. This combination of earth and water gives the "certain mire" of Plato's symbolic depiction and the "miry clay" of the Bible Psalmist, in which the soul finds itself bogged down here in body (Psalms 40:2). The fire symbolism pertains to the spiritual energies and potencies of the soul, the water poetizes the coarser nature of matter and body. Soul's incarnation in watery body bring the two elements into interaction and conflict; the water struggles to extinguish the fire, the fire endeavors to dry up the water. Raging sense can overwhelm soul as water quenches fire; spirit can overcome rampant sense as the sun's fiery rays dry up the streams. For man this conflict, this battle of Armageddon, becomes more than poetry, for it is the actuality of every moment of his living experience in this life. It is the great aeonial battle that Genesis describes as being fought on the border of the salt marshes, or in the valley of Siddim (a paraphrase for Sodom), which it says is the salt sea (Genesis 14:1-12). When it is seen that Sodom is a cover for sodium chloride, which is the chemical name for salt, and when to this astonishing datum is added the still more amazing fact that human body blood is identical in chemical composition with sea salt water - biological evolution of life having issued from the sea, with salt water in its veins, so to say - the mind of the

Western world can at last open up to the understanding that the mighty battle between spirit and matter is fought right here in the valley of the salt marshes of the human body blood, which, being sea water and turned red by oxidation in the lungs, is the Red Sea which all souls must cross by night, when spirit is immersed in the water and the darkness of corporeal existence on earth. Should we be surprised to find that it was while fleeing Sodom that Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26)? As "history" these narratives baffle and perturb the human mind; as allegories they vividly enlighten it.

Any one knows that when the higher energies of fire are brought in touch with water they cause it to boil. They throw it into agitation and separate the oxygen from the hydrogen. Spirit duplicates this action by stirring into vigorous motion the sensual elements of consciousness and separating the hydrogen (water) from the oxygen (air), or in the psychic field separating emotion (water) from mind (air). So this salt water of our body blood, when acted upon by the higher fires of the spirit, can veritably boil with the surging energies of lust, passion, elemental animal fury and frenzy. These - be it known at last - are the fires of Tophet and all the underground hells of Scripture. This knowledge will grant to Western man for the first time the inestimable boon of releasing him forever from the religiously inspired fear of future torment in hell's fires, since he will understand that he is in those raging fires now and by wisdom he can turn them into their true power to refine the dross of his nature into the pure gold of spiritual light. (It is not strange that the words "light" and "gold" are identical or nearly so in many languages).

Clear to us also with this elucidation come the meanings of the Biblical "thrice refined in the fire" and the ordeal by water, or the baptism (Zechariah 13:9). Souls must both be baptized in the water of earthly body and thrice refined in the fires of that same life. So that the two symbols go hand in hand in semantic portrayal of our life here.

It is most interesting to note how symbolism becomes almost indiscriminately blended into seeming meaninglessness in a passage taken from Origen's exegetical commentary on Luke. Here the tree, the way, the river, fire and water are jumbled together with no evident perception of their semantic implications. But his presentments so aptly accentuate the correctness of our dissertation on the duplex association of fire and water in the life and body of man that there is warrant for quoting them. He says that there is a fiery river through which all must pass on the way to the tree of life in Paradise. As souls pass over this river, says Origen, they receive a baptism of fire. Did not the tongue of flame mount on the head of Jesus at the end of his baptism in the Jordan? Missing the solid import of all this symbolism, MacCulloch says that this baptism of fire cannot harm the righteous, but all who pass through it without being harmed, pass on to Paradise. Here the obvious inference is that if you are not righteous, the fiery baptism will harm you, and you could use this experience in it to tell whether you were righteous or not. All this becomes silly when it is known that the test of the fiery baptism is indeed the temptation under which all souls must go, the ordeal of living in a body of water, which our fiery forces of feeling and will may heat up until, as was said in old Egypt, you are "scalded thereby." It is true enough to say that the fire can not harm the righteous, but all souls are something less than righteous before they develop the intelligence and self-control to stabilize their righteous character, and its various degrees of burning are themselves the elements and influences that shape human life to righteousness.

Origen, whose discernment in dealing with the symbols and allegories was usually keener than that of the other Church Fathers, took a more rigid stand, asserting that earth retained all those devoured in Hades.

01.10. Drama in the Underworld

DRAMA IN THE UNDERWORLD

God himself in the Old Testament says: "I send down to death and I raise up again." The sons of Israel go down to "Egypt" and later make their exodus. Abraham and Moses descend into "Egypt" and again come up. In the Gospels Jesus is secreted in "Egypt" and returns (Matthew 2:13-15). Paul asserts that if the Christ is to ascend he must first have descended. Every seed, the divine as well as the vegetable, or the human sperm, must be buried in the body of mother matter if it is to have a resurrection and a new life. Water has been the universal ancient symbol of matter. As matter itself nurses within its deepest bosom (as we now so well know) the soul of fire, so water holds the electric potency of fire within its bosom, as any thunderstorm demonstrates. These two, fire and water, are the inseparable dual potencies in man's combined association of body and soul, flesh and spirit. A chapter in the Egyptian Book of the Dead is entitled "Of boiling water in the underworld and not being scalded thereby." These venerable Scriptures also say that souls were sent down to earth to "cause a burning within the sea." So earth must be Hades. In view of all this would it not be legitimate for us to paraphrase Clement's rhetorical question and ask: "Who in his senses would presume to charge Providence with the idiotic scheme of providing no natural way for the progressive education of the souls of his own beloved children over millions of years and then suddenly decide to retrieve this lost time and sad neglect by sending one only of his sons, while his body lay inert in a rocky tomb in Judea on a Friday and Saturday of the year 33 A.D., Down to a spooky Hades and through a few hours of his "preaching" redeeming a very uncertainly determined portion of hell's dead (though somehow still living) population held there over thousands of years? Are we not warranted in wondering why Clement, or why MacCulloch or a thousand other Christian scholars have not asked, then answered, this and related questions? An incidental detail brought out in many of the apocryphal scripts is that those dead in the underworld did not see the form of Jesus, but heard his voice. On the contrary, other aspects of the description assert that at his appearance his body shed a blazing light about him, illuminating the darkest recesses of the cavernous dungeons. Not only was Jesus' descent to earth's bowels heralded by a forerunner, John the Baptist, but as his advent to earth was prophesied long in advance by the seers of the Old Testament, so would his redemptive sally into the domain of the lower powers be foretold by these same prophets. Those who proclaimed his coming to earth likewise announced it in Hades. Every place, Origin argued, had need of Christ, and therefore he needed his prophets in every world he visited. This most learned of the Church Fathers, whose discernment of the profounder sense of the symbols and allegories was far keener than that of the other early exegetists, took a more rigid stand as to those who were to be freed by the Christ's preaching, asserting that the earth retained all those devoured in Hades. Language so loosely employed as this is virtually useless for definite meaning. How can souls be devoured by death or any other agency and still remain intact? Scholars have not discerned that many terms used in the ancient Scriptural language of symbolism can not carry their factual meaning into the world of abstract conception, and must be understood as the shadows of ideal things, the outward signs of

inner and invisible truths. The Bible literalists have never caught the idea that the death which God declared would be the penalty for first man's eating the forbidden fruit was a death that did not kill its victim, but let him survive. So here the devouring of souls by death and hell must be seen as meaning simply that souls have been separated from their human bodies and are thereafter in Hades's realm. In this intended sense it is figuratively true that death "devours" all humans. And could any Christian tell us what specific location is meant by the "bowels of the earth" and the "lower parts of the earth?" It can hardly be taken other than literally, but so taken it can have no recognizable identity. This region is as fatuous a chimera of theological hallucination as would be the asserted location of heaven a few miles above the earth. Literalism in such things is deceptive because states of consciousness are incommensurable with physical dimensions. The dimensions in a physical world can be merely suggestive of spiritual dimensions. As Vergil located the door to the underworld near the Sibyl's cave at Cumae in Italy, possibly Christian literalists will encourage us to believe that we may soon use space ships to locate heaven. According to all this Christian speculation of minds teased and buffeted by the legerdemain of ancient allegorism, Jesus must be presumed to have gone down somewhere in the earth's physical underground to reach and preach to the captive spirits held there. Or are we to take it that he merely descended the six feet to grave level and flitted about over the cemeteries preaching and awakening the dead? If the Christian theologians cannot tell us with specificity where we are to place this prison-house of the dead that Jesus visited, they ought to cease bandying about the terms in loose fashion. They do but mystify and confuse. Celsus, in his argument which Origen recasts in *Contra Celsum*, makes his dramatic spokesman, the Jew, remind Origen that the fabled descent of many heroes, such as Orpheus, Hercules, Theseus, Aeneas, are "juggling impossibilities," and that the Christian dogma of Christ's descent is just as hollow as the others. Origen rebuts this with the statement that Christ's descent and resurrection were not mythical; they were indeed real and factual. Celsus ridicules the Christian assertion that Jesus went to Hades to convert those sequestered there, seeing he had signally failed to persuade the living on earth. If he could not win living men on earth, how is it to be supposed that he could, in forty-eight hours, redeem all unregenerate antiquity in Hades? This assignment would indeed call for some cosmic wizardry in the doing.

Origen expressed the opinion that St. Paul, too, was in Hades after his death. Being the apostle to the Gentiles, in particular, it would be supposed that Gentiles dead would need his preaching in Hades as well as Gentiles living above.

Those accepting Christ on his preaching are translated from Hades to Paradise. Origen curiously grades the order in which those in Hades will recognize and accept the descending Lord and ascend with him: those see him first who yearningly have looked for his coming; of non-Christian believers the prophets next respond; then all the other righteous ones; then the sinners in the Christian fold; then the outsiders, the Gentiles. The theorizing capabilities of the theological imagination are well demonstrated here. A number of the ecclesiastical writers, notably Ephrem Syrus, recite dialogues between personified Death, Satan, Sin and Hades. Death upbraids Satan and Hades for thinking they could easily catch or trap and overcome Jesus as he entered their domain. He berates them for fleeing in panic at the sight of the Master entering the underworld, or cringing in fright as they see Jesus stealing away their captives. Much is made of the idea of Satan or Hell essaying to catch Jesus on a great hook which they throw at him. It turns out that the hook rebounds and impales its throwers instead. In anticipation these dark powers exult at seeing their

prospective new prey approach their province and they eagerly await the moment of his capture as that of any other mortal. But they stand petrified with terror or are thrown back as his majesty confounds them. Death is heard expressing his amazement on seeing that his powers can not enthrall the Shining One. Christ came irresistibly on, plundered the storehouses and emptied the treasuries of Hades. Death was swallowed up by Life after Life seemingly had been devoured by Death. The sublime apostrophe in the Psalms exhorting the everlasting gates to be lifted up and the King of Glory to come in, is definitely part of the underworld drama (Psalms 24:9). Christ fought for three days and nights (wasn't he supposed to be preaching?) in his battle to blast the powers of death, and when the victory is won the cry goes up for the lifting up the gates and the everlasting refrain: "O Grave, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?" The angels then inquire: "Who is this King of Glory?" And the Christ answers: "The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory; the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

St. Augustine registers puzzlement as to the nature, location and grade, so to say, of the underworld of death. He can not regard the word inferus (lower) as used in any good sense. The good people should not go down. It seems absurd, he hints, to think that the ancient saints who believed in the future coming of Christ could have been retained in places far removed from the wicked, yet shared with the inferos, or "below" ones. Doubtless he was caught in the dilemma which is clearly discerned in Christ's saying to the thief on one of the other crosses at the crucifixion: "this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise (Luke 23:43)." If "this day" is considered one of the three (two) days Jesus was to be preaching and fighting in Hades, here is an overlap which involves Jesus' presence in both Paradise and Hades at the same time. It would be resolved if Paradise and Hades could be regarded as being the same place. But this outlandishly flouts all Christian persuasion. MacCulloch elucidates Augustine's belief that Paradise can be no part of heaven (sad news to piously expectant believers), since Christ, or at any rate his soul, went ad inferos. Paradise, he infers, is then that nether place into which Christ descended. He visited the prisoners in the darkest, lowest penal section, but not those in Abraham's Bosom or in Paradise. Could otherwise capable minds be any worse entangled in skulduggery, hopelessly victimized by senseless literalism?

Augustine is greatly perplexed that Christ's descent should have completely emptied hell's purlieus. To free all the captives there would compromise God's justice in his punishment of the vile sinners of the past and the wicked generally, would nullify its efficacy and rob it of its due power. If all the past wicked were to be freed into blessedness above, how could God's just judgments be carried out in equity? Those evil transgressors whom God had to overwhelm in the flood, how could they be counted worthy of forgiveness and divine favor? On those terms hell could not be a place of everlasting damnation. Augustine denies that Abraham's Bosom - much less Paradise - was an integral part of the infernal regions. Augustine stands confounded by these puzzles.

One gleam of at least partial light flashes on the saint's mind when he speculates that the "spirits in prison" may be considered to be souls still resident in bodies, but enshrouded in the darkness of ignorance (1 Peter 3:19). And he guesses that perhaps the preaching to the dead need not refer to an oratorical presentment in Hades, but simply exhortation to those spiritual dead right here on earth. Having shared Plotinus' studies under Ammonias Saccas, Augustine could not have been ignorant of the latent esoteric sense of Scripture. Could he here have been enunciating what he

knew to be the occult truth of the matter under the slight disguise of poetic speculation?

Cyril of Jerusalem ventures so far into the allegory as to mention Jonah's captivity in the whale as typical of Christ's descent. In a document called *The Odes of Solomon* the symbolic interrelation of the baptism doctrine with the descent to Hades is brought out. The "abyss" of darkness is closely associated with water as symbol. Dramatism depicted the waters, like the gate guardians in Hades, as being terrified at Jesus' approach and their ensouling elemental beings fleeing in terror. Water of course is overcome by fire and vanishes away. But for fire to combat the water and extinguish it was the achievement of victory of spirit over matter. So the baptism meant "death", then resurrection from its thralldom. We see how clearly this relation of the soul's "death" to incarnation in a watery body is shown in St. Paul's statement, referring to Christ: "We suffer death with him in his baptism (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12)." In a so-called *Gospel of Peter*, Docetic in character, there is described a scene that has suggestive semantic implications. Two men descend in the night from heaven and all radiant with light, enter the sepulcher. They emerge carrying a third body, and a cross follows them. The heads of the two men reach to heaven; that of the third even extends beyond. A voice out of heaven is heard asking: "Hast thou preached to them that slept?" And from the cross a voice is heard in reply: "Yea." What can all this mean but that the two powers of life, the radiant spirit and the equally radiant light of atomic matter, descend onto the field of lower creation, symbolized as the tomb of death for the cosmic light, and in the end of the cycle emerge with their product and progeny the Christ consciousness, which is greater than they? If these ancient constructions are not to yield meaning that is related to reality, but otherwise have to be "explained" as miracles, what are they but worthless rubbish? In another document, *The Epistle of the Apostles*, the Christ says: "I descended to the place of Lazarus and preached to the righteous and the prophets." Is the raising of "dead" Lazarus in John's Gospel presumed, then, not to have been enacted in Judea, but down in the theological after-death underworld of Hades?

Another old book, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, tells how Isaiah is conducted by an angel through the seventh, or highest heaven, and, beholding the blessed righteous there, is told that although these are now in possession of their "garments of the upper world," they will not be given their crowns and thrones until the Christ descends into the world in the last days. He will not be recognized as divine, but taken as a man and crucified. When he has despoiled the powers of death he will ascend on the final day accompanied by many righteous, who will then receive their garments of glory. A feature notable in this is that it is a precise copy of the transactions allocated always elsewhere to Hades, but here clearly enacted on earth. It is another hint to those of open eye and mind that the allegorical Hades is earth itself.

MacCulloch reveals that baptism was known in the early Church as "illumination" (Greek *photismos*), and from this hint guesses that references in certain apocryphal documents to "enlightenment" may relate to baptism. The association of two things so elementally distinct as illumination, a purely spiritual development, and baptism, a physical performance, has proved too bewildering for the theological acumen of centuries. Water extinguishes fire and its light. How, then, can it be a suggestive symbol of illumination? The challenge to our semantic sense should not be too overpowering. The sense is readily apprehended when one closely considers the elements entering into the problem. Baptism clearly connotes immersion of the soul's fiery nature under the water of the body. Experience in that watery habitat eventuates in the soul's spiritual illumination. As out of watery clouds flashes the lightning, so out of the watery baptism comes

illumination. St. Paul (1 Corinthians 15:29) indeed refers to baptism "for the dead." Frequently in the old writings the effects of baptism have been equated with the experience of the descent. Baptism took place on Easter Eve, intimating that renewal of life which incarnation brings. Christ's coming into Hades always shed a great light, and the advent, the entry of spirit into and under the water of body, is the baptism. In The Ascension of Isaiah, this prophet hears the Father commission his son, the Christ, to descend to the firmament and to this world and to the angel in Sheol, but not to Hagucl, which is a Hebrew variant for Gehenna itself. This could be very significant, seeming to say that the soul should go no lower than the earth. MacCulloch suggests that this Isaiah document may be a work of Gnostic influence. The Gnostics had not fallen into the trap of literalism, and this fact makes their writings taboo to the orthodox Christian scholar. But MacCulloch is frank enough to say that when one reads many of these texts "in the Gnostic sense," one gathers the impression that the word "Hades" would seem to mean this earth! Here for a moment the biased Christian mind caught the tail of the truth, but could not hold on to it. The light was rejected, and simply because it was - Gnostic. Having been pronounced heretics, the Gnostics must be disparaged at every turn. MacCulloch also admits that there may have been influence exerted upon these constructions from the side of mythology! How extensive this influence surely was he would be more than surprised to know. He states that Marcion could not have been a true Gnostic because he did not believe in a descensus ad inferos. It has never come to his discernment that true Gnostics certainly believed in the descent of deity into the underworld, but were sagacious enough to know that they were in it right here in this life and therefore did not look for it in some sub-terra region.

01.11. The Tree and the Cross

THE TREE AND THE CROSS

Origen's poetic fancy that there is a river through which all must pass on the way to the tree of life in Paradise holds intimations of deep symbolic meaning for the discerning mind. The association of the tree with the river in the Scriptures is a common feature of naturographic literary art of the ancient day. The righteous, says the Psalms, shall be like a green bay tree, or a tree planted by a river of waters, and his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Furthermore the simile enhances the analogical suggestiveness by having the tree planted on both sides of the river of waters. For the soul in the flesh draws the vigor of its life from both the matter side and the spirit side of the stream. The Christian Fathers were here dealing with Pagan symbolism whose esoteric and mystical significance completely eluded them. In Genesis we have the river of life, which is a poetization of the radiation of God's creative energies, proceeding from the throne of the universe, where at the fountainhead of creation there stood the tree of life in the garden. There was the source-spring of all life and the tree of generation by the spring. The tree and the river are kindred symbols. If one takes the tracing of the branching arms of a river, such as the Mississippi, on the map, the design looks so like the branches of a tree as to be almost identical. Like a tree the stream of living creation issues in one primary conduit or channel, then divides and again sub-sub-subdivides precisely like the structure of a tree. The idea is simply that of a line of force emanating from one source through one mouth and then branching out into multiple streams. The Norse mythology represented the Lifetree, Ygdrasil, first as rooted in heaven and extending its branches downward; then with its roots in matter below, growing upward and spreading its branches out in heaven. This is a true symbolic picturing, because the stream of creative life proceeds from heavenly source above and flows downward toward matter. Then, having rooted itself in matter, it begins an upward growth that will return it, bearing its ripened fruit, to its source in Paradise. What life sends out and plants as seed in the springtime of each cycle it will bear back to heavenly source a hundredfold in the autumn.

Emphasizing the tree symbolism the ancient sages poetized that as it was the same river that bore life potential out at the start and returned it in manifold measure, so it was the same tree that grew up beside the head-spring of the stream which was to bear for man the end fruit of his evolution. Hence there are many allusions in the allegoric literature to the salvation of man through his partaking of the fruit of the same tree whose eating in the Genesis scenario was to plunge him into the throes of this underworld "death". Doubling up on the symbolism of man's involvement in "sin" through his first progenitor's eating of the "forbidden" fruit of the tree of natural life, and his being saved by a spiritual rebirth through the sacrifice of the second-man-Adam on the tree (cross) of Calvary, ancient semantic genius formulated the legend that the tree (cross) of Golgotha had sprung from a shoot of the primal tree of life in Paradise. As man fell through the agency of the tree, so he would be regenerated and saved by the same tree, when its seed had evolved to the point of producing its fruit. The symbolism is perfect; it is only the theologism of stupid literalists that has distorted and blurred the picture till the beauty of its design can not be seen. Poetic

legend asserted that the wood of the cross on which the Christ was crucified was cut from the tree of life in the garden, or from one of its distant descendents. "Tree" is used for cross with great frequency, the two being interchangeable. A close parallel to this figurism is that of Christ's birth being a new and late budding from Jesse's stem or rod, that put forth new shoots at Christmas, like the Glastonbury thorn at the Yule, in English tradition.

If this seems far-fetched, it is singularly attested as genuine by an odd fact in the Christian Bible itself. This Scripture both begins and ends with the tree of life. It is the heart of the Genesis account of creation, as all know. Not so well known, however, is the fact that the last chapter (Revelation 22:1-21) of the Book of Revelation directly asserts the right of all to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, which, it declares most interestingly, shall bear twelve manner of fruits upon its branches, and that by eating of them, man may "enter in through the gates into the city" of heavenly felicity.

Through the counsels of folly generated in the theological mind by the twisting of Scriptural allegory into ostensible history, the true meaning of the cross, as well as that of the tree, has been flagrantly misconceived. In fact the meaning as purveyed in ecclesiastical systematism stands as practically the reverse of its true significance, turned just about upside down. It has been made the symbol of death, whereas its connotation positively is life itself. The gruesome Christian imagery of the man-Christ dying in agony on the wooden cross, has stamped the emblem on all minds as the insignium of (physical) death for man, its bitter repulsiveness being little assuaged by the promise of resurrection glory soon to follow. To the Christian mind the crucifix carries the reminder of Jesus' death, his paying the penalty, the ransom, for man's sin. In eighteen centuries of Christian preaching there has not been one hint that this death of Christ on the cross was death in any other form or significance than the bodily demise of the man Jesus. So far from carrying the connotation of life, this was the death that put an end to life. Living hardship and final extinction of life is the suggestive emblemism of the cross in Christianity. The grim reaper had his victory and his ghoulish triumph.

It was not so understood in pre-Christian Egypt. Certainly one of the most ancient forms of the cross, if not the very most ancient, was the great ankh-cross, the crux ansata, of ancient Egypt. It was the plain capital T, capped by the circle of the sun. It was the upright straight line I and the circle O conjoined in the relationship of living polarity, the union of positive and negative, and as such it symbolized not death but life. The truth of this elucidation is irrefutable, for the ankh symbol is the old Egyptian hieroglyphic word for life. It is also the word for "love" and "tie," since life is generated only when positive and negative energies are tied together by a binding power, love. The blunder which led to the Christian mistake of making the cross the sign of physical death instead of life is an amazing one and has not been clarified hitherto. As indicated in the early part of this essay, our life on earth was dramatized by ancient mystic semanticism as the "death" of the soul as it proceeded from on high and poured out its lifeblood for the sake of the animal entities whose bodies it was to ensoul. Theologically, on the esoteric side, the soul's descent into body entailed its initial "death" on the cross of matter, for the very purpose of giving life to the body. This "death" figurative and relative to be sure, but real in the esoteric sense, was to be ended "in the fullness of time" by the soul's new cycle of growth and ultimate resurrection out of the body, bringing to an end the necessity of further incarnation in bodies of earthly type. It is all to be understood in simplest form by analogy with the grain of wheat which the farmer sows in the

autumn and sends down to a winter of "death" in the soil. It lies there "dead," but in the turn of the cycle to spring it bursts out of its tomb and rises to new glory of life under the power of the sun. For the descending incarnating soul it is the same process. The twelve aspects of man's potential divinity go down into matter in the embryonic form of seed. Old Testament symbolism denominated the material ground-level of life "Egypt," since this country lay just immediately south and west of Palestine, the two directions in which the sun moves from summer zenith to winter nadir. In the turn of the cycle from "death" to rebirth the twelvefold divinity makes its exodus out of "Egypt," crossing the "Red Sea" of the human body blood, and returns above. The symbol of the cross has only the most incidental relation to death, its significance bearing solidly on life. It is the relative "death" of soul while entombed here in the flesh that led to the intimate association of the cross with death. It can be seen now that in the esoteric sense the cross does indeed symbolize death, but it is the relative "death" of one part of man's being for the very purpose of giving life to another part which can have no existence without it. Divinity must "die" that humanity may live in the flesh. Spirit must "die" if matter is to have organic being. Yes, the cross is the symbol of death, but it is a "death" that is the very core of life. Spiritual death and physical life play seesaw with each other, likewise spiritual life and physical death, the one rising as the other sinks in their interrelation. This has been expressed with singular clarity in the statement of John the Baptist in comparing his status and function with those of Jesus: "He must increase, but I must decrease." Thales, the first Greek philosopher, put it that the one component of life, spirit, "lived the death" of the other, matter, and vice versa. Does not all religion assert that spirit lives more abundantly when body dies? This side of the equation has survived in general thought; but long forgotten is the equally true dictum that body lives more abundantly as spirit pours out its lifeblood to ensoul it. We die daily unto the body, says St. Paul, that we may live more fully in the spirit. "For me to die is gain," the apostle says.

It can now - at last - be seen that this failure to read "death" in its proper, but deeply esoteric connotation, pointing its reference to the soul instead of to the body is the factor that has involved Christian theology in the hopeless entanglement and irrationality of the ideas carried by the words crucifixion, cross, tree, grave, burial, and resurrection. The true inner meaning never had anything to do with a death by physical crucifixion on a wooden cross, and burial in and resurrection from a rocky hillside grave in Palestine or anywhere else. Its positive sole reference was always to the "death" of soul, and that "death" comparable analogically to the "death" of organic life when it subsists only in seed form. Life must start each new cycle afresh from seed, and in a seed the "soul" of the potential development lies, relatively, "dead". It will awake to the renewal of its life at the spring turn of the winter cycle. The soul in humans is precisely related to its body as the seed is to the soil; it lies inert, awaiting the new springtime, summer and autumn harvest time of its appointed course. The mistake of reading our bodily death for the soul's seed-stage torpidity has been the single greatest and most tragically ruinous misconception in all the history of humanity's religious culture.

Reverting a moment to the significant symbolism of the tree we are surprised to find this item of typology connected directly with another of the most general symbols of the divine element in man. This symbol is "oil," and this substance is the base of the great and exalted title given to the central figure in all the Mystery dramas, in Greek the Christos, in Hebrew-Egyptian the Messiah. Both words mean "the Anointed One." And oil was the substance for the anointing.

01.12. The Oil of Gladness

THE OIL OF GLADNESS The occult appropriateness of oil as symbol of divinity seems not to have been recognized and certainly was never made generally known. To be anointed in Christhood was to have the spirit of love and truth lighted up in human consciousness in a benignant celestial glow. In the first place oil is, as it were, the inner essence of a vegetable, extracted by pressure under proper conditions. The spirit matches this in being the innermost holy of holies of man's organism and it is also brought out to manifestation under the stresses and pressures of bodily experience. Again oil is the fuel for fire, and the anointing of the head with it prefigures the lighting up of the fires of consciousness to burn with the clear flames of love and beauty. Lastly, oil when it lies thin on a flat surface, displays the seven colors of the spectroscope, the natural reflection of the glory of the Lord. With still other analogies to demonstrate its appropriateness, it would be hard to find another substance so aptly analogizing the idea of our radiant divinity.

Now it turns up that in the Gospel of Nicodemus in a section dealing with the Descensus to Hades, the allegory runs that Seth goes to Paradise to seek the oil of mercy from the tree of life. The story is said to have been taken from the Jewish Apocalypse of Moses. There are many references in archaic literature to the oil or ointment drawn from the tree of life. This was a commonplace symbolism in the old books. And MacCulloch tells us that the contrast of the tree of knowledge with the tree of the cross was frequent in early Catholic writings. The abstract conception behind all this emblemism is that as man became channel for and wielder of the living energies flowing out from the heart of God in the branching river-tree of his creative effort, he was to extract through karmic pressure the innermost and most dynamic power of life, the flaming fire of divine life and the God consciousness.

Oil extracted from the tree of life, equivalent symbolically to the juice of its fruit, the intoxicating "spirit" pressed out of the grape, honey gathered from the flower blossom, the exquisite color of petals distilled out of the sap of the green stem of the rose bush, all these and other natural processes that dramatize the generation of a unit of spirit's conscious power in a long material evolution - like an ounce of radium distilled out of tons of coal - analogize the unfoldment of the Christ nature out of the first-man-Adam stage of physical evolution. First that which is natural, says the apostle Paul, then that which is spiritual, with the spiritual supervening upon the natural as its topmost product. To anoint man's head with the "oil of gladness" is to enact in ritual the transfusion into his human nature of the higher and more luminous powers of deific consciousness. An object "anointed" with oil presents a shining appearance. Is it too much to expect that even modern concreteness of conception should see the relevance or catch the exactness of the analogue between making one's head shine with the sleek sheen of oil and causing one's mind to be enlightened with the brightness of God's more beauteous spiritual radiation? The figure uses the outer physical shining of oil on the head to adumbrate the head's interior shining with the glow of divine consciousness. Are we such dull children that we must have some geni explain to us the semantic aptness of the simplest natural analogies? In the Gospel of Nicodemus the drama

represents Hades as asking Jesus as he appears in the underworld: "Who art thou that pourest thy divine light on those blinded by the darkness of sins?" One must be crass indeed not to see that such a question would apply with infinitely more aptness to mental darkness of souls right here on earth than to absence of sunlight in underground grottoes. In dissertating on the story in the Gospel of Nicodemus MacCulloch says that Christ's advent in Hades is a reduplication of his first coming on earth. Even this hint fails to enlighten closed minds. He commends the author of this "apocryphon" for cleverness in the use of literary artifice in a highly imaginative construction, crediting him with mastership of true dramatic power. He speculates as to how the book's author gained knowledge of events in Hades. One would have to wonder about this. But no wonderment need have been felt had it been known that the spiritual poets of olden time gained knowledge of Hades simply by observing the world under their eye, since this world is that Hades. MacCulloch even asserts that this author presents the descensus story in such concise and integrated form as to make it a treatise on the philosophy of history, with the Christ as the central figure, making the history understandable as the demonstration of Christian theological structure. But where would philosophy have a history, on earth or in Hades? Certainly not in Hades if that realm is somewhere below the earth. But it could have its history in both earth and Hades if they are the same one place. MacCulloch calls the author of the Gospel a writer of fiction, and says that he concocted his story out of the floating traditional material and the Bible to produce an original narrative, one, he asserts, that must have greatly influenced contemporary and later writers. In expounding the doctrine of baptism as a part of Christ's preaching and ministration in Hades, it is repeatedly affirmed that he not only baptized on earth, but did also in Hades. It is probably scurrilous to reflect that if he did much baptizing in the three days in Hades, he would have had little time left for preaching, and again vice versa. Also one might wonder where he would procure water for this rite in hell, where Christian ideology insists that the heat is a thousand times hotter than any on earth. Allegory can make folly of its literal counterpart indeed, and fools of its literal interpreters.

Also in the Gospel of Nicodemus a bit of symbolism is introduced that again has gone all unredeemed to intelligence. The light that Jesus' advent shed through all Hades is said to have shone at midnight. In the New Testament allegory of the five wise and the five foolish virgins the cry announcing the bridegroom's appearance arose "at midnight." Even the birth of Christ has been in hymn, carol and legend put at midnight. The sense back of this lurks in the natural poetry that symbolized the period of soul's immersion in the water of bodily life, or its "burial" in the earthy body (the first man is of the earth, earthy, says St. Paul) as its night time or its winter time. These are both times of darkness and therefore emblemize the period of the soul's occlusion under the cover of the flesh. "When half spent was the night" is the poetic dating of the birth of the Christmas rose in old English caroling. It also happens that in the entire round of the soul's cycle of incarnation and resurrection at the cycle's end, the Christ nature comes to its birth in the middle of the lower arc of the round, or at midnight of the evolutionary day-night.

It is most interesting to note the play on the mind of an orthodox scholar like MacCulloch of the persuasions and biases engendered by conventional Christian indoctrination. He several times touches upon aspects of the Pagan esoteric philosophy, which in general furnished the true source and background of the many garbled, literalized and distorted Christian versions and variants of these representations. In the end, with the real lost light and the gold of truth right under his eye, he invariably rejects this stone which could be the head of the theological corner of the

temple of religion discarding it as Pagan heresy. He says (p. 276) that the Jews of Alexandria, doubtless influenced by Greek views, believed that souls liberated from the bondage of the earthly body, went directly to a higher sphere which might be named "heaven." Souls at death had no need to go down to Hades, for they had been there all life long, and it was, on the contrary, the place from which they were liberated by the good evolutionary offices of death. They needed not to descend to some lower limbo as an intermediate place of waiting, as it was in body on earth that they had been waiting for release. All common religious sentiment in the world testifies to this conviction as being the natural view our minds must take. And by comparison with this innate and wholesome reaction of souls to the life they consciously experienced here it becomes glaringly evident how corrupted, how weird and grotesque were the guessings and maunderings of the Christian misconceptions even down to the modern day.

Finally our author, MacCulloch, comes to grips with the question whether the idea, so prevalent in the early Christian literature, of the rescue of souls from Hades had its origin in the Pagan mythologies. He decides that it is not easy to find close parallels. A difficulty in the way of matching the Christian renditions with the myths, he reasons, is that in the latter it is only one character, as Eurydice, Alcestis, Tammuz or other, who is rescued and restored to the upper world, whereas in the Christly rescue mission all souls bound in the underworld - or at least all righteous ones - are liberated. This is a feeble, in fact a ridiculous, argument because in a myth the modus of writing makes one character representative and typical of a group, class or collective multiplicity. If the orthodox mind was open to the truth of the matter, the fact would be clearly discerned that their own Biblical Son of God is such a typical figure, one man in the allegory, but the type-figure of the sons of God collectively.

Secondly, he asserts that the descent of Pagan heroes is made by a living hero of the myth, and not by the soul of a human person deceased. This point can be dismissed as equally irrelevant and empty. Since when are we to think that a mythical hero is to be taken as a really living person? The very soul of a myth is its freedom to create both characters and incidents entirely mythical, yet typical of reality. Its hero is understood to be no living person. A living human could not be the hero of a myth, for the simple reason that he would not be mythical. If in the myth Orpheus goes down to rescue Eurydice, the sense intended is the very thing that MacCulloch asserts it fails to mean (and that he claims the Christian versions do mean), namely, that souls do descend to Hades, known, however, to the mythicists to be this world. The Pagan wise men did not take their myths literally; it is the Christians who have fallen into this trap.

MacCulloch contends that contemporary Judaism embodied no legends or doctrines of a Messiah who would preach to the dead, nor does it reveal any evidence of influence from the myth of Ishtar. Can it be possible that this modern writer has never suspected that the Esther and Mordecai characters in the Old Testament are actually Jewish modifications of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar (Astarte, Ashtaroth) and her consort Marduk? And is he oblivious of the fact that Solomon himself built a temple to Astarte, as well as his great edifice to Jehovah? Even without these two glaring rebuttals of his opinions, it is wholly unreasonable to suppose that the religion of any nation in ancient days could have developed in isolation from the influences of the universal Pagan religious modes and the literary media of the time. He several times rebuts the theory of "borrowing." To suggest that it is unlikely that the Jews borrowed Pagan ideas from Egypt, Chaldea, Greece is somewhat on a par with protesting that Californians did not borrow their use of

the English language from Pennsylvanians. As California and Pennsylvania alike shared with all the other states a common heritage of English speech, so Jews, Egyptians, Greeks, Babylonians and the other lands in that section of the world shared distributively the great heritage of a primeval revelation of truth and wisdom, which, it must be said in truth, Christianity appropriated and badly mangled. One nation or another in time twisted it out of its primal true sense, distorting it by dull incomprehension into fantastic untruth. And because the resultant deposits in different nations in the end failed to carry much of the original identity, a presumably learned scholar feels he stands on sure ground in concluding that some one religious group, hugging to its bosom its own distorted version, did not "borrow" its system from any of its neighbors. Of course it did not borrow it; it merely clung to its own corrupted rendition, as its neighbors did to theirs, with perhaps slight accommodations resulting from association and interchange. But any astute mind, fortified now with the recovered lost keys to a universal esoteric-symbolic code of allegorism, can, with the display of a modicum of semantic or analogical genius, still reconstruct the dismantled bridges between all of the national systems of ancient religion, and reintegrate their original unity and continuity. For the scholarship of many dark centuries to have lost the primary recondite base of the ancient drama, that this earth is that dark gloomy underworld of "Egyptian bondage", and the human body that tome of "Death" into which the Christ-soul of divinity descended to "lose" its life that it might win it back more abundantly, at the same time raising on the cross of matter the serpent power of the natural energies to the next level of consciousness above them, has been in all conscience the most tragic of all errors in the area of man's religious history.

01.13. The Gnostic Position

THE GNOSTIC POSITION

MacCulloch does say that spontaneously in the order of human thought there arises the certitude of soul's salvation from the doom of existence in a dark underworld. Instinctively, too, the human mind revolts against the inevitability of the conquest of life by a death that means extinction. He follows this admission by declaring that therefore the presence of the doctrine of deliverance from the underworld in Christianity need not be traced back to antecedent alien origins. But why insist on the isolation of either the Jews or the Christians from their natural and inevitable participation in the great universal religious heritage of their times? A sounder scholarship should now come forth, competent to demonstrate how the ideas shared by many nations do trace back to a common ancestry. The odd excrescence from literalism in Christian doctrinal history known as Chiliasm should find mention here. The name is from the Greek word for "thousand", *chilia*, and designates the belief of Christians, based on the Biblical text, which says that Christ's kingdom shall supervene on earth for a thousand years of halcyon blessedness. When this age of serenity comes on earth, it is expected that the dead saints will arise from their graves, or emerge from Hades, to exult in final release and exaltation to heaven. The exigencies arising in the effort to harmonize the literal sense of many texts with canonized doctrinism bring up a point of much logical difficulty in connection with what is stated in Matthew 27:51-53. There it is set forth that the earthquake which occurred at Jesus' death rocked open the tombs of the dead, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep arose and, emerging from their tombs after his resurrection, entered into the holy city and appeared to many. One must wonder what happened in the opened graves in the three days between Jesus' death and his resurrection. One writer, Pfeleiderer, thinks it irreverent to suggest that the reawakened dead should have resurrected two or three days ahead of their Lord. They would from courtesy to their master have had to be held in some suspended status until Easter morn.

How the difficult matter of the physical rehabilitation of those saints so long dead and certainly in a state of corruption was managed is intimated in a text from The Odes of Solomon (22): "Those who believed in Him God's hand chose from the graves, separated them from the dead, took dead bones and clad them with bodies." Ephrem Syrus thinks that the graves were shattered by Christ's voice as it reverberated through Sheol (the Hebrew Hades), releasing the dead saints. This definitely puts the saints in hell. In popular creedology, this is an ill fate for sainthood.

Clement and some other writers appear to hold saner ground when they say that the risen dead appear not in earthly Jerusalem (the holy city), but in the heavenly Jerusalem." Jerome, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Epiphanius and Rufinus agree. They stand with St. Paul, who speaks of the "Jerusalem which is above" as being free. St. Ambrose solves complications by saying that of the resurrected dead some were led to heaven in spiritual bodies, while others rose in their physical bodies.

Bartholomew, ventures the suggestion that Jesus vanished from the cross during the darkness, descended to Hades, released the captives and returned to the cross. The apostle says that he saw him return, saw the dead arising to worship him, then returned into their sepulchres. In The Ascension of Isaiah the righteous dead are already found in the seventh heaven.

Giving a passing glance at a tradition that souls had been raised bodily from death, MacCulloch says that this was credited by some theologians, but that many treated it as allegory. Yet he must express the thought that to render these accounts in a mythical way is to register a gross miscomprehension of the real meaning! And what is to be done with the predicament which so impiously disenchants the glamors of "miracle" belief, implicit in the question whether those who were resurrected to physical life died again later - or still live on. Of what good is a resurrection in physical body if one is to die shortly again? In his chapter 18, MacCulloch examines the "Gnostic version" of the descent doctrine, as expressed in a "famous" Hymn of the Pearl in the Syriac version of The Acts of Thomas. Some have regarded this as a Gnostic allegory, with "Jesus" as the human soul descending from heaven to this gloomy world, vested there with material and quasi-material bodies (coats of skin) and having through trial and suffering to regain his lost Paradise above. Our author even suggests that this has a certain attractiveness, but argues that if the precious Pearl is the Gnosis, or divine knowledge, why should it have fallen under the power of the serpent? What other answer is needed for this than the plain reminder that God sent his own Son (collectively Sons) out into the desert of this world to tread down the serpents and scorpions of man's lower nature, a task which necessitated the seed implantation of the divine units in and under the life of the body and its elemental forces, the lower nature being typified as the serpent. Why did God permit his most righteous servant, Job, another type-figure of our divine nature, to be tortured by the lower powers? A philosophy is deficient that does not have a rational answer to the basic question, why man is in this dark underworld at all? The esoteric philosophy has answered this and the other fundamental questions, but Christianity has discarded and lost them. MacCulloch decides that the early Christian movement had harbored some reasonable elements of the otherwise insupportable Gnostic theology. Gnosticism, he affirms, carries some taint of Pagan ideology, while on the other side it has some orthodox Christian affinities. But when one speaks of the possibility of Gnosticism borrowing from Christianity, it is somewhat like saying that a father derives some salient characteristics from his son. If borrowing was done here, it would have had to be done by Christianity from the earlier Gnosticism.

MacCulloch refutes the contention of Bousset that the legend of Christ's descent to Hades and breaking the hold of the underworld demons on the dead was the essence of a myth which had really nothing to do with the Gospel Christ, or Jesus. He backs this strong assertion by the statement that the Christians had the narrative of the descent in their own Scriptures and did not need to borrow it from outside Pagan sources. But does he ask us to believe that those "Christian Scriptures" themselves owed not a thing to antecedent Pagan springs? This assumption has been refuted - and the present discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls accentuates this truth - by scholarship generally. Bousset doubtless based his assertion on a consideration of this and other obvious data.

MacCulloch concludes that Gnosticism and its view of the descent story stood somewhere between Pagan mythology and Catholic Christianity. But its version lent strong testimony to the prevalence of the Christ-descent in the early Christian world. No one denies this. Only it is clear

from wide study that the descent doctrine was more Pagan and Gnostic than Christian, as being much earlier. He then makes the fatal blunder of saying that the Gnostics took the theme from Christianity - a most unlikely thing - and converted it from the descent of Christ from earth to the Hades somewhere below into his descent from heaven to our earth. But this exactly reverses the direction of the actual historical conversion of the legend, for it was the Christians who took the original Gnostic-Pagan form of the story and transformed it into the literal-historical-personal descent of Jesus to some nether world beneath this earth. He asserts that the alleged Gnostic transfiguration of the story shows poverty of conception. The intellectual impecuniousness is, however, all on the Christian side. Our scholar is bold enough to venture the statement that the Gnostics showed no theological concern about what happened to those living antecedent to the time of Christianity, which brought the first chance at salvation to humanity somewhere around 24 to 26 A.D. (The date of Christ's birth and life now having been moved back by Catholic authority some five years). He thus insinuates that the Gnostics were less humanely responsive to the need to provide a way by which the world inhabitants since the advent of Christ might assuage their pity for the uncounted billions of souls lost in heathen darkness by having lived too soon, than were the Catholics, who, he declares, at least contrived a theological formula which made their ultimate salvation a possibility. But does this author not see that in the infinitely profounder Gnostic postulation of recurrent lives for souls on earth, no souls would have been left in the position of deprivation of endless opportunity to win all that life can offer its children? It was not Gnosticism or Paganism, but Christianity, that robbed the souls of antecedent humanity of their chance at salvation. Pagan philosophy had opened out the road to salvation for all mankind; it was Christianity that threw up on this highway to divinity the roadblock of no divinity to save humanity until 26 A.D. In his final chapter MacCulloch climaxes his argument that the descent doctrine could trace no derivation from Pagan sources. He discounts heavily what he calls the passion with many writers to trace Christian formulations, doctrines, rites to Pagan myths. He accuses such writers of not being competent to make authentic comparison between Pagan and Christian data. This is to say that these writers "see" resemblances, correspondences, identities where none really exists. The shoe that this accusation fits is again on the other foot; it is the Christian comparative religionists who so consistently fail to see the endless similarities and identities that most assuredly do exist between these two bodies of literary expression. If the scholars he is accusing see too much parallelism that is not there, the orthodox Christian party stands blind to the parallelism that is there to be seen by any who will look, - with unprejudiced vision. The similarities are not too easily caught by shallow reading, but their number and their significance increase as study probes deeper and deeper. Such profounder study is now veering to the verdict that Christianity drew practically everything it published to the world from antecedent Pagan sources. The blindness of Christian insight or disingenuousness of motive in ignoring or blanketing this immense testimony of comparative religion - along with comparative mythology - is coming to be seen as one of the most inexcusable, if not fully reprehensible of recalcitrant bigotry that cultural history records.

Then our author leaves us breathless with astonishment commingled with puzzlement when he declares that this class of writers have never seemed to consider that after all those Pagan myths may actually depict living truths. And, he speculates, what if the conceptions dramatized in the myths may have been really fulfilled in factual Christian history. With this one sudden volte face MacCulloch vindicates the very position of those whose stand he is attempting to refute. What an

argument! What a wild flourish of logic! The Pagan myths represented a deific power as coming to save unregenerate humanity; Christianity declares that in Jesus this divine salvation did come, fulfilling all antecedent prophecy. Therefore, argues our debater, Paganism could indulge only in baseless mythology, whereas Christianity supplied, or at least built on, the living reality that became history in the person of Jesus. But does MacCulloch not see that, instead of disparaging, discrediting the myth, the Christian claims for Jesus actually vindicate the inner connotations of the myths? The very message that is sealed cryptically in the myths is just about what the Christians say has been fulfilled in its theses based on the Gospel narrative of the Jesus life. The difference is that the myths never presumed on the fulfillment of their structures of meaning in one given set of historical events such as those which the Gospels allegedly narrate, while Christian systematism builds on that very assumption. The myths outlined and dramatized the pattern and meaning of the historical process; Christianity alleged that the Gospel events fulfilled that pattern once for all time. If it is true, as more scholars are coming to think, that the Gospels are spiritual allegories, Mystery dramas, and in this sense non-historical, it suddenly becomes permissible to say that the Gospels, the foundation of all Christian historicity, are themselves true only as myths, and not true as history. So it comes out that if Pagan mythical formulations may have had their pattern of meaning fulfilled, as MacCulloch ventures to surmise, than all the endless narrow slighting and scurrilous disparagement that Christian writers have cast on Paganism, mythicism, Gnosticism and related systems of the esoteric presentation of truth has been an egregious miscarriage of intelligence and human brotherhood alike.

01.14. The Truth of Mythology

THE TRUTH OF MYTHOLOGY The nub of this whole debate is the failure of modern scholarship to comprehend in full truth the nature and function of the myth. Through stolid inertia of mind and the process of insensible shifts of conception that in time twist the primal sense of words over into some secondary or subordinate aspect of relevance, the modern mind has come to read into this word "myth" the meaning of untruth, something imaginatively conceived, fantastic, bearing no relation to reality. By myth a modern writer now means a story that is not true. This meaning falls so far out of line with the true original connotation that it now stands as the exact opposite of the primal significance. The ancient myth was the truest of all stories. It always carried more truth than history. Modernity worships the barren record of objective history and derogates the myth; the sagacity of the ancient day worshipped the myth and derogated, in fact virtually ignored, the objective history. Being admittedly imaginative and fictional in outward form and content, it made no pretence to factual objectivity. The story, with actors, characters and incidents, never happened as narrated. And nobody was supposed to be so naïve, so stupid as to "believe" it. But into the story the genius of dramatism inwove the design of conceptual structure, the pattern of a truth, the plot of an ideogram, concocting situations that gave the mind a veritable picture of some aspect of truth that history in the large was telling or was destined to unroll. The myth wrapped up in a fiction the meaning, the structure of history that was, is and is to be. It was a brilliantly ingenious methodology of presenting in the frame of a human story the idea-forms which, as Plato shows us, were the grand bases of speculative philosophy in his day, as also in old Egypt, and which he demonstrated to be the thought-forms over the pattern of which the creative Mind of the Logos framed the universe. So the myth, it might be said, was a cosmic ideograph in fictional disguise. Apollo really did not let his son Phaeton drive the chariot of the sun across the sky and scorch the earth; but the conceptual structure dramatized by the story is a truth of vital import. Theseus did not penetrate Minos' labyrinth, slay the great bull and follow Ariadne's thread to find his way out. But, at the level of intellectual insight the story tells the great truth that man's soul must enter an underworld full of devious intricacies, find and slay the fierce and doughty animal nature and by the thin light of a divine intuition make his way back to the light of an upper world. The day in which modern superciliousness bred by the presumption of superior knowledge can belittle and deride the majestic structures of classical mythology is fortunately close to its evening dusk. When we catch enough of the spirit of the ancient mythicists to begin to interpret aright the myths and release the glowing intelligence hidden in those recondite constructions, the world may at last emerge from its "Dark Ages" of religious superstition. When MacCulloch, therefore, contends, as he persists in doing in face of a mountain of research data establishing the contrary thesis, that the descent narrative in early Christian literature is to be accounted for without admitting any derivation from prior Pagan mythology, he is both defying evidence and merely venting the force of an inveterate Christian or modernistic prejudice which has steadily dominated Christian scholarship over the centuries and still obsesses Christian psychology. The theme of the hero descending and freeing souls bound in an underworld limbo comes close to being the central and pivotal feature of ancient religious philosophy. The evidence back of this statement is voluminous

and clear. But it has to be examined to be known. No doubt it has all seemed to Christian mentality so bizarre, so childishly grotesque, so unrelated to reality as to be dismissed with contempt. But this is because the Christian mind has been conditioned that all Pagan religion, with all its literature that ran so strongly to mythicism, was nothing better than puerile naïveté of mind, the wild conceptions of child-minded primitive peoples. The myths were condemned as fantastic nonsense and this attitude occluded the possibility of discerning their meaning and their importance.

Finally, that the descent tradition, couched in the language and forms of mythology, was a structure that carried the meaning of not one single man's descent from the cross of this earth life down into some nameless limbo called Hades, hell, Amenta, Sheol, Tophet, but the descent of hosts of divine soul units, sent out from heaven to be the child-deity that is cradled through infancy, roused or resurrected in his youth to conscious functioning of his divine genius and finally grown to the fulness of the stature of the nature of Christhood within the temple of every mortal's heart and mind, is as clear to capable scholarship as any such abstrusity can be. It happens to be irrefutably, incontrovertibly true.

MacCulloch assumes to conclude his case with the statement that the Christian movement did not pick up the descent tradition from Pagan mythology; they could and presumably did devise their own myths. How devastatingly true that statement is our author could hardly have guessed or believed. The ancients devised their great myths, every feature of which betokened some facet of sublime truth. The Christians, in the form of their weird misinterpretation of these creations, or out of their own misguided conceptual efforts, also devised the "myths" that, parading in the false disguise of truth, have derationalized and enslaved the Western mind. The tragic word that has to be spoken in the summary of this theme is that these concretions of the Christian mind that constitute Christian theology are myths in the bad modern sense, things fantastically untrue. It has to be said that they do not dramatize truth, but wildly caricature it. The true myth has two aspects, literal falsity (that deceives nobody) and inner subjective truth. Paganism kept the two phases entirely distinct; but Christianity confused the two, mistaking the outer falsity for truth. Therefore its presentation of these ancient formulations has been untrue and harmfully deceptive. The affirmation of their literal-historical truth, which at once becomes untruth, practically kills the power of their inward verity. By obsessing the believer's consciousness with such a story, for instance, as that of the bodily crucifixion of one man on a wooden cross, and offering this as the Creator's device for the salvation of his earthly children, the Christian system of pious faith has so enfeebled the message of man's true spiritual regeneration as to have reduced it almost to a moral and intellectual nullity. In persuading the West's millions for centuries that thrice dousing the head with water, along with the recital of the names of the triune deity, will insure the individual's sanctification in perpetuity, the Church of Christ again robs the devotee of the dynamic knowledge that the immersion of the unit of his soul power in the water of the body will give it the experience required to consummate a truly deific beatification. And by the inculcation in generation after generation of the belief that in partaking of the bread and wine in the physical celebration of the Eucharist, the member partakes magically of the actual body and blood of the man of Galilee, the psychological forces that might enrich the spirit are dissipated out in an empty fancy. Without exception every doctrine of this folly-ridden system has thus been distorted from truth and illuminating power into palsying falsity of alleged history.

Almost every traditional faith of peoples the world over rests on a central story of the son of a heavenly King going down into a dark lower world, there suffering, dying and rising again and returning to its native upper world. The failure of Christian intelligence to see that their basic theology is just a gross stolid literalization, and then the conjured historization of this universal legend in the hypostatized biography of just one of the many dramatic type-figures, who was no more a living man than some thirty to fifty others similarly delineated - and all antecedent to him in time - must be seen ere long in its true light, as the most colossal demonstration of intellectual ineptitude in all history. As has had so often to be said in the treatment of this chapter of religious development, it has held the mind of Western humanity under the spell of a hallucination that has strewn the path of Occidental history with the sad wreckage of life and happiness. It is by no means an overstretching of the truth to assert that it has hypnotized the Western mentality.

It can almost certainly be said, and with truth, that no religion in the world has ever put forth the belief that the demise of the physical body has ended the existence of the soul that animated that body. Likewise no religion has ever taught or conceived - except in the grossest mental depravity - that the decaying cadaver of the deceased human is reassembled after corruption, reintegrated and restored to former physical existence. Therefore the Christian linking of the resurrection doctrine with the death and restoration of their hero's physical body wrecked the doctrine utterly. The death that was overcome on Easter morn is soul's "death" and that not of one man's soul, but the souls of all men that live, which "he" typified. And finally, that the traditional allegory of the Christ-soul's descent from heaven into a dark nether region to awaken the hosts of the earth's former dead could ever have been sanely made relevant to any other locality than our good earth itself, is again the incredible miscarriage of Western intelligence. When this benighted condition can be ended by the dawn of understanding, when it is known in what we call the scientific manner that every intimation of the allegories has immediate pertinence to our own life in this dark underworld, and that the Scriptures are all sheer poetic dramatization of the deep ignorance we yet struggle through toward the day of our glorious transfiguration into sons of God, then will our sacred Scriptures become once again shining lamps lighting our path up the heights of wondrous being.

Then can the truth and the beauty of the resurrection ritual enlighten our reason and truly sanctify our spiritual minds as we hear the thrilling strains of the Easter choral.

02.01. THE RED SEA IS YOUR BLOOD

THE RED SEA IS YOUR BLOOD By Alvin Boyd Kuhn, Ph.D.

Version 1.0 (Most references to scripture tool-tipped, and a few references to other ancient sources have been added). The next update should have all references to scripture tool-tipped, and more references to other ancient sources added.

Justin Gunther

02.02. Preface

Preface A lifetime devoted unremittingly to the study of the ancient backgrounds of our modern Western religion has established beyond all possibility of error the conviction that the great Scriptures of antiquity on which our Occidental faiths have been built up have had a remote Egyptian origin and they purveyed their profound message of truth and wisdom in a language of semantic crypticism that has first baffled, then deluded the minds of all the theological savants, both Jewish and Christian, who have endeavored to interpret their esoteric significance, for full two thousand years. The present treatise is an attempt to justify the truth of this statement by the revelation of the recondite significance covertly adumbrated in one of the most prominent of such archaic symbols found in the Bibles of both Judaism and Christianity, -- the RED SEA. At the moment of publication it is believed that never in all the centuries since the days of Egypt's ancient glory has this occult meaning, involving, as it does, the stake of the historicity of the Old Testament, with repercussions even for the narrative of the New Testament, been known or published. It may therefore rightly lay claim to being certainly one of the most significant revelations in the area of religious intelligence in twenty centuries at least. Almost alone in its single power of truth it threatens to subvert the main theological supports of Judaism first and then Christianity. Such at first sight would seem to be the effect of the tremendous implications of its disclosure at the present epoch in world religion, particularly in Judaism and Christianity. This, however, would represent a narrow and myopic view of its significance. Studied through the lens of a larger vision and a deeper understanding, it should, and eventually will be seen, to release the power of a new and far more vital message for the two religions that have harbored, all unsuspectingly, the hidden dynamic of this archaic construction of semantic genius. This revelation of the cryptic significance of the Red Sea in its Bible usage could inaugurate another, and the most thoroughgoing, reformation in Judaism and Christianity since the ancient days of their origin. It could engender a New Enlightenment in the life of religion and spiritual culture not only in the West, but in the world at large. The arcane profundity of the divine wisdom vouchsafed to early humanity by gods or at least by sages and seers of advanced human development, "holy men of old," as the Scriptures themselves rate them, was considered to be a treasure fit only to be preserved in a casket constructed of the golden material of transcendent imagery and jeweled with gems of the sublimest and most majestic symbolism. Minds open to the vision of its truth and beauty designed that it be expressed in recondite forms and semantic devices, which, while they obscured its purport for the immature and undeveloped masses, intimated its dynamic significance and released its cathartic power to the intelligent and the initiated. These devices were such literary "genres" as allegory, myth, drama, poetry, legend, epic fiction, imaginative tropes, number structures, star groupings and movements, and above all, nature symbols. The outer world of nature, which the seers knew to be the language of God's own expression of true being and which lay concreted before our eyes, was looked to for all the expressive types needed to body forth the archetypes of eternal verity. Nature spoke the one language which could never utter falsehood. Hence the sacred literature abounds in naturographs, with such elementary natural objects employed to dramatize meaning as the tree, grass, earth, sky, water, air, fire, the stream, animal,

bird, insect, reptile, stone, wood, metal, storm, wave, tide, rain, snow, desert, mountain, flower, bee, grape -- and the great sea. These natural objects and the phenomena of their living existence constituted a veritable language, and one need not hesitate to pronounce it the most completely meaningful language available to man. It is the tragedy of world culture that this semantic idiom has, like Latin, ancient Greek and other tongues, become a "dead language" and the books written in it stand as tomes of fast sealed mystery. As a result the whole enterprise of theology and Scriptural interpretation has, for centuries, been befogged in intellectual confusion.

It is the purpose to deal in this essay with just one of the nature symbols that has found such general use in the Bibles of antiquity, and the attempt will be made to bring to light the pure gold of meaning esoterically hidden in its cryptic intimations. There is said to be gold in the chemical composition of sea water; it is possible to say that there is also intellectual gold of precious truth in what sea water was intended to present to thought in the Scriptures. It is believed that one is fully warranted in prefacing the effort with the observation that the revelation here to be made constitutes one of the most astounding disclosures of occult knowledge to be found in all the realm of the archaic religious literature of the world. The Red Sea. In the very same century in which Christianity took its rise, in fact born almost in the same year as that claimed for the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, lived the Hebrew scholar and philosopher, Philo Judaeus. The statement will hardly be contradicted now that he had formulated a systematic code of interpretation of ancient sacred writings, which, if it had been followed closely by scriptural exegetists, would have saved the science of theology from the confusion into which it has fallen ever since his day. It might even have prevented the schism between Judaism and its ungrateful daughter, Christianity, which was destined to drench the pages of two thousand years of religious history with needless rivers of blood. It would likewise have obviated the causes which led both religions to break up into numberless sects and denominations, thus perpetuating the reign of sullen hatreds and bigotries of every sort.

He elucidated the principle that the tomes of sacred writing bequeathed to early humanity by the gods or by men of far advanced evolutionary stature were susceptible of interpretation at four different levels of understanding: (1) the literal-physical; (2) the moral-sentimental; (3) the allegorical-intellectual; (4) the anagogical-mystical. That is, the books of Holy Writ could be read as historical events; as moral instruction; as intellectual conception of truth; as the incitement to the most exalted spiritual mystical transports. Even before Philo's day the great and learned Jewish scholars and interpreters of the Torah, the Tana'im and Amora'im, had expounded the principle that he who reads the Scriptures only at the level of their surface meaning will never grasp the truth of the living Word of God, that only he who pierces the coarser veils to grasp a far deeper sense and experience a more vivid illumination of consciousness will receive the cathartic purification of his nature. They went so far as to say that he who was content with the surface meaning of the words was a fool and a simpleton. As long as religions cling to the lower rungs of the scale of interpretation of their Scriptures, there will be endless points of difference between them; if they will lift the sense to the upper third and fourth levels, the apparent outer grounds of difference will dissolve in the unity and harmony of a lofty conceptual enlightenment. The later philosophers Kant and Spinoza were to arrive at about this same basis of understanding. Philo himself so well succeeded in elucidating Scriptural meaning at the highest level that he was able to make a synthesis of the Hebrew Pentateuch, or first five books of the Old Testament, with the

rationalistic systematism of the Platonic philosophy of the Greeks. It can with a great degree of plausibility be asserted that had his interpretative achievement been used as the basis of Biblical exegesis from that time, the catastrophic divergence of Christianity from its parent Judaism would have been avoided, and the world spared the gruesome horrors of two thousand years of persecution and slaughter. The key and instrument for apprehension of the more exalted sense of Scripture was of course the allegorical approach to understanding. When one understands that one is reading a volume of spiritual truth expressed in the guise of allegories, one looks beyond or beneath the common connotation of the words to discern a transcendental significance that can be apprehended only mystically, or at least with the power of abstract conception. In the late second and early third centuries the two great Christian expositors of Scripture, Clement and Origen, successive heads of the leading academy of Christian doctrine, the famous school of Alexandria, endeavored valiantly to exalt the principles of Biblical exegesis to the highest Philonic level. Every historian of Christianity has had to devote a chapter or section of his work to an exposition of what is spoken of as "Origen's allegories." To the detriment of all Christian history the historians almost with one accord, belittle the importance and significance of this chapter of the early life of the faith. On the contrary, it will some day be seen that the religion's failure to cultivate and perpetuate and further develop the methodology employed by these two great Fathers has been the saddest dereliction and most costly fatality of Christian history.

02.03. The Return to Allegory

THE RETURN TO ALLEGORY

It is evident now that a keen recognition of this unfortunate eventuality in the early development of Christianity has taken place quite recently in the Roman Catholic branch of the Christian establishment. The hierarchy of this great ecclesiastical system has obviously arrived at the decision to open the doors of Bible study to the allegorical approach and method for interpretation. Recent public utterances have voiced the policy of the Church of Rome that, since the Bible authors resorted to a wide variety of "literary forms," such as allegory, myth, drama and symbol, readers are free now to put their own interpretation upon the textual material. Allegory is bound in the end to convey to each reader the special sense which each is able to grasp, hence the attempt to confine the meaning to a stated and uniform exposition is futile at best. This move leaves every one at liberty to extract from the reading of Scripture the particular grade of conception of which each is capable.

Few realize the epochal significance of this strategy of the Catholic Church. It is a virtual confession that it was a mistake to have failed to follow the lead of Philo, Clement and Origen. The deeper meaning of the great Scriptures is after all only to be caught by each reader in proportion to his receptive capabilities in the way of spiritual-mystical realization. The pressures impinging upon intelligence today from the side of a more enlightened scholarship have made this recognition and concession necessary. To contend any longer that the Bible is to be taken with Fundamentalist literalism, and as in all parts factual history, would leave Catholicism stranded high and dry on the banks, while the stream of a more intelligent, more meaningful and dynamic Scriptural exegesis has swept on by, carrying the world of culture with it out of reach of the old method. Lately, too, the trend back to allegorism has manifested itself sensationally in the Protestant wing of Christianity, especially in the Episcopalian denomination. As this essay is to reveal a series of astounding items of lost knowledge, it might as well detonate its most explosive datum right at the start, with the positive declaration that the Red Sea is not now and never was in the Bible! This is folly! This is crazy! One can hear readers protest. Yet the statement means exactly what it asserts, and it is true! Any one can pick up an English Bible and point to the words: R-e-d S-e-a. But if one picks up and opens a Moffatt translation of the Bible, those words will not be found in it, for this learned translator had the intelligence and the courage to take those two words out. Because he knew that they never had a right to be there! And all other learned scholars knew that they had no right to be there, yet suffered them to remain. No modern translation has a right to inject into its version something the equivalent of which never was found in the original document. And no original ancient edition of the Bible ever contained the Hebrew equivalent of the English words "Red Sea." But the original Hebrew editions did contain two words which translators, or some translator at some given period, found reasons for translating into English as the "Red Sea." The interested reader is by now probably eager to know what those two Hebrew words are. It is no secret; here they are: lam suph. lam, sure enough, means water, sea; but suph never meant "red." On the contrary it means something decidedly green. Any Hebrew dictionary

carries the information that *suph* means sedge, marsh grass, swamp grass, in short, reeds! *Iam suph* then means the Reedy Sea, Sea of Reeds, the Reed Sea! And ancient Egyptian literature did call it the "Great Green Sea." We shall see how it became red.

Suddenly, then, we are faced with the realization, quite staggering to all in the aura of what we were told in Sabbath Schools or read in Bible treatises, that no Bible ever said that the children of Israel once crossed -- two and a quarter million in one night -- the geographical and very wet Red Sea lying between Egypt and Arabia on the map of our physical globe. If that Red Sea is not even so much as mentioned in the Bible narrative, how can it be asserted that these people crossed it, wet or dry? And what then, we dazedly begin to speculate, becomes of the whole epic of the Israelites in Egypt and their miraculous midnight flight out of it?

It is to be interjected here -- since the suspense may be irritating -- that, true enough, the hosts of the true Israelites (when one knows who they really were) did cross the Red Sea (when one knows what that truly is), and the story comes alive with tenfold more luminous significance than the alleged physical miracle of passing across between two walls of water ever meant or could mean. For, as now we are staggered by the wiping away of the meaning we had attributed to the thing as presumed history, we can be even more happily staggered by the revelation of a veritable radiance of sublime significance which, as spiritual allegory, it was certainly designed to convey to minds attuned to logical reasoning and mystical apperceptions. But now that we have washed the "Red Sea" completely out of the story, and put in its place the "Reed Sea," we are -- momentarily -- more "at sea" than ever as to what this green sea can mean. Where is it located? What is the hidden significance of the Israelites crossing it to escape from Egypt's reluctant Pharaoh?

Pff! -- the orthodox, the Fundamentalist scholars will exclaim -- why make all this exaggerated fuss about a mere change of name? We should not let a little quirk of literary usage like that disturb us or shake our faith in the Scripture. The narrow section of the real geographical Red Sea, where the Israelites picked their passage, was a place of low water and reedy character, and the Bible says that the Lord raised up an "east wind" that pushed the shallow water off the bottom, so that the people crossed while the wind held the water back. To a Fundamentalist nature's laws and elements present no obstacle to belief when God is working a "miracle." Therefore it means nothing to him to reflect that if an east wind blew the shallow water off the bottom, it would pile it all upon the west shore of the channel, exactly where the Israelites would have to start their crossing! Nor does he pause to take into account the inches of mud on the bottom. Even with a modern highway across the strait, and equipped with all modern vehicles, an army of trained men of that number could not cross the Red Sea in a week. Imagine over a million women, children, camp followers, flocks and herds, making the crossing in one night! In too many circles in religion it is still considered a sacrilege to let natural law stand in the way of a divine miracle. If God has staged a wonder and prodigy of his arbitrary power, it is for humanity to stand agape. The next startling disclosure in the context must wait until sufficient preliminary elucidation had been made to render it intelligible. An allegory -- at any rate ancient Scriptural allegory -- was a literary device designed to pictorialize a spiritual or anagogical reality in man's subjective experience in the form of an earthly physical narrative of fictitious events. So we are quite warranted, without further demonstration, in assuming that the story of this crossing is designed to carry its meaning into the area of our subjective life to work there a proper "miracle" of understanding at the two higher levels of Philo's scale. As to this it can be said at once that virtually all Scriptural allegories and other

semantic modes of representing exalted truth and noumenal realities have but one basic theme to dilate upon -- the incarnation of souls in mortal bodies here on earth. That is the ubiquitous omnipresent theme at the heart of nearly all Biblical writing. This basic event, the essence of human life itself, is treated, enlivened, illuminated by a great variety of imaginative constructions, and this is possible because all living forms manifest the basic principle from one angle or another and can be dramatized by one typology or another. Life everywhere speaks the same language and harps upon the same chords. This Red Sea episode of the sacred allegory was formulated in order to transfix the more capable human conceptual faculty with the reality of the spiritual fact that the divine seed-soul, a unit of God's mind-generated being, a true Son of the Father, had in incarnation to escape from a bondage to the lower nature of the animal body in which it was housed for its journey through this mortal life, by crossing a place, state or condition of existence symbolized most fittingly by a body of water. This typism is found universally in the arcane wisdom literature. Very many instances of it could be cited, -- and have been in our other works. If one says that in life after life, or in the complete cycle of incarnate life, the soul has to wade through the "sea of life" eventually to land on that "farther shore" of celestial delight and radiance, the poetic figure sinks deeply enough into the average mind to register the general sense of the incarnation experience. If, however, the language of symbolism had been continuously cultivated since ancient days the figure would release upon consciousness the vivid force of its real significance. But it must be forcefully asserted at this point that those sages of old who indited our sacred Scriptures were not merely indulging wayward fancy in light touches of poetic imagery. Artists they were of the highest genius and adept in the faculty of analogical representation as none others have perhaps been since their day. Every image they conceived to pictorialize metaphysical verity was a construction that carried the receptive mind into the heart of a living truth and impressed it upon reflection with the dynamic of what the Greeks called a spiritual catharsis. In the Platonic philosophy these poetic figures stood as archetypes of the divine thought, and deep reflection upon them awakened realizations of the mighty transfiguring power of noumenal truth that is the very bread of life for man's soul. The sagacious scribes of the archaic wisdom, then, were talking of a sea which all souls must cross, and cross without sinking too deep in its waters; in fact a sea on whose surface we must learn to walk without sinking, or getting our feet enmired in the mud of its bottom; a sea again whose waters must figuratively be dried up by the power of God so that we may pass over on dry land. Or perhaps, under a variant figure, a great fish might catch us up and transport us across after a three days' journey in its "cabin." Is all this just light poetic fancy, or is there in truth and in fact such a sea that we must cross to escape a miserable slavery and reach a delectable land flowing with milk and honey? Is the soul actually brought in contact with real water that might extinguish its divine fire and drown it?

02.04. An Ocean on Fire

AN OCEAN ON FIRE

It is next to inconceivable how blind the intellect of a world has been! How obtuse to a reality that the allegory pressed upon it in the plainest terms! So close to us is this red sea over whose storm-tossed billows we must swim to reach a happier land that it could not be brought any closer to us.

Closer is he than breathing,

Nearer than hands and feet,-- sang the poet Tennyson of the divine Self within us. And just as close to us is this very red sea of life. For, far down into the depths of an actual body of water, incarnation has plunged these souls of ours that are as oblivious of the watery element they swim in as they are of the air they breathe. So true is this, both as allegory and as fact, that ancient poetic genius typified the soul as a great fish swimming about in the sea, the soul of life immersed in water. Early Christianity still carried this symbol, as both Augustine and Tertullian said that the Christ was the great fish in the sea and his Christian followers were the little minnows. The fish, as symbol of divinity, was universal in the arcane typology and in mythology. And when souls had descended into incarnation they were aptly likened unto fish in the sea. In actuality, souls are immersed in a vessel of living potential that is seven-eighths water, and it is sea water! And, open a vein and let it out and the oxygen immediately turns it red! The Red Sea! At last the astounding truth strikes home to the mind of a surprised world: this "Red Sea" which all Sons of God, the only "Israelites" ever spoken of in the Holy Scriptures, have to cross -- is the human body blood! With a clear, sharp sense of understanding will any deep-thinking mind now realize the dynamic force and literal truth adumbrated by the allegorical figure of our souls having to sink down in, wade through, swim across or be transported over a body of water, which on the side of a poetic figure, the Red Sea, is green, but on the side of physical reality is actually red. Every life of eighty years entails an immersion of the fiery element of soul in these bodies of water and crossing them to the farther shore. Eventually, in the war between the fire of soul and the water of body, which incarnation precipitates, the unquenchable fire of soul must dry up the "moist elements" and permit the soul to cross without "getting its feet wet." So we have the beauty of the divine parable which could not be caught as long as allegory was mistaken for alleged Jewish history, most of which, if it is looked at closely and realistically as presumed actual event, is seen as preposterous and impossible.

If a skeptical reader insists upon challenging the truth of the declaration that the human body blood is sea water, and not only in poetry but in chemical constituency, the authority back of the statement is that of science, of biology, of anthropology, of evolution, of chemical analysis verified in the laboratory. The human blood is ocean water, declared so by chemistry, salinity and all, so that analysis can find no essential character difference between the two. One could logically infer this fact even without verification by chemical analysis, from a basic knowledge that the stream of biological life in its evolution came originally out of the oceans. For a long, early period confined to

the sea, it later became transferred to the land; the sustenance of bodily energy through the chemical properties of water was replaced by the elements in air; gills were exchanged for lungs. Yet, the lymphs, plasms and humors in the organisms retained the primal character of what they had been from the start, -- sea water. The action of oxygen on substances tends to give them a red coloration. Indeed we do retain the original heritage of the sea in our veins. Our blood is this "Red Sea." The ocean is our common mother; and half of the goddesses of mythology and the Scriptures actually perpetuate their identity with the sea in their names, most prominently Thallath (Greek word for "sea") and Mary (Latin for "sea," Maria).

Language is the deep mine of occult meaning which must be worked constantly if one is to bring up the precious ore of living truth in the arcane science of old. If the writers of the Hebrew Old Testament had wanted to speak of the Red Sea explicitly, instead of the iam suph, they would have written iam adom, for "red" in Hebrew is adom. The Hebrew word for "blood" is dam. Adam'dam means "reddish," admoni means "red-haired." The word for "ground, earth" is adamah; hence, as adam is the word for "man," but was included in the word adamah, meaning "ground, earth," the name Adam was given the meaning of "red earth." And in one way that is exactly what man is, his earthy body mixed with red blood. By a mere switch of vowels, adam became Edom, and Edom is the patronymic of Esau, who was "red, hairy." We find that connection of Edom with red in the first verses of the 63rd chapter of Isaiah: "Who is this that comes from Edom, with his garments dyed red from Bozrah? Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat (Isaiah 63:1-2)?" But this is only the beginning of what etymology, philology can do for us in this green-red symbolism. It is no wonder, incidentally in passing, that green and red are the two colors typical of the Christmas season and its symbolism, as green stands for the natural man, and red, as the color of fire, typifies the spiritual man, and it is the ultimate marriage of these two components in man's nature that gives birth to the Christ consciousness.

Back there in ancient Egypt we come upon another precious nugget of language revelation. In fact it becomes the basis of the gist of this treatise. We find there the origin of the word "sea" itself, a most illuminating item of knowledge. The fundamental predication of the great Egyptian wisdom structure was the interaction of the two polarized energies of spirit and matter, on a web of force suspended between which the axis of the universe is conceived as turning. The Egyptian spiritual or cosmogonic mythology traced the generation of the two universal creative energies of life in a semantic structure which said that the God Tum (in one version, Kepher in another) with his hand produced from his generative power his seminal seed, "and from the drops of blood which fell upon the earth, were born the gods Hu and Sa" (in another version Shu and Tefnut). And these twins, god and goddess, brother and sister, Hu and Sa, became the progenitors of mankind. These two short names stood to the Egyptian seers as Hu for spirit, and Sa for matter. And as fire was the universal symbol of spirit, so water, its chemical antagonist, was the symbol of matter. This gives us the association of the word sa with water. But in the Egyptian system of hieroglyphics the tonal symbol of fire was the letter of the alphabet, sh. The evidence of this, beside many other items, is that the Hebrew word for fire is esh. As the unit of conscious being, what would be the ego-consciousness, or I-consciousness, was alphabetically embodied in the capital letter "I," and this self-consciousness was embodied, as far as this earth is concerned, in the creature man, the Hebrew word for "man" combined the "I" of divine consciousness with the

"sh" of fire, so that "man" in Hebrew is ish. As "Hu" was the unit of spiritual life, man thus became the Hu-man being. And since this Human entity tenants a body of water, we have a suggestive ground for the words humid, humidity and the "humors" of the body. We shall now look at the words derived from the Sa stem and shall find them interesting and illuminating indeed.

Immediately it seems indubitable that we have here the true origin of the word "sea" itself. Since Sa was matter, and water its symbol, the great water mass on the earth was the s(e)a. Possibly some one introduced the "e" into the Sa to hide its derivation from the latter, in the esoteric spirit which motivated all ancient religious literature. This ruse was often resorted to, the "Red Sea" itself being an instance of it. But what is that element in the composition of sea water that is most directly associated with it? Salt, of course! And salt is sodium chloride, no less. Sa,sea,salt! And salt is used as a preservative. In man's constitution, say all the great Scriptures, is an element, a divine principle, that is described as the "salt of the earth," and hence is that which saves man and is the rock of his salvation. So we have the words save, safe, salvation, salvage, (probably) saliva, sane, salud (Spanish word for "health"), salute, salad, salubrious, salutary, salacious, and by a poetic stretch, sail (over the bounding main, as the old school song has it), and others. As salute is to hail, sail equates hail, and in fact "s" and "h" interchange places between words in different languages or even in the same language thousands of times, as in the Hindu Asura and the Persian Ahura. It is quite a likely fact that the presence of salt in the world oceans maintains chemically a balance between elements that keeps the world atmosphere "salubrious." All the muck of the continents is carried by rivers into the briny deep, and it is that saline component of our seas that preserves the purity of our air, one must suppose. So then, if salud (health) and salute (generally an inquiry about a person's health), and sail and hail are kindred in original meaning, we have at once a connection of hail with hale, and also with heal and the German heil (hail) and heilig, "sacred, holy". Doubtless this chain extends further. At least two allegorical constructions in the Bible introduce this element of salt and they now become most significant. Could it be pure "coincidence" that the strange incident of the turning of Lot's wife into that pillar of salt (which Josephus said was still standing in his day, the first century A.D.!) occurred at a city called Sodom (Genesis 19:26)? Here the hint thrown out above comes in for consideration. Are we stretching things too far if we identify Sodom with sodium(chloride)? When it is remembered that in the ancient Hebrew manuscripts and the original Egyptian scripts back of them vowels were few and virtually nondescript and almost indistinguishable, there is nothing authoritatively to be introduced against the identity. (Vowels only later in the Greek came to distinctness, and the Greek has the full complement of seven.) If, in passing, the question of the esoteric significance of the pillar-of-salt allegory is raised, perhaps the interpretation is that if on the soul's "fleeing" from the condition of embodiment in bodies composed mainly of sea-salt water, it does not continue straight ahead in its evolution toward spiritual heights, but turns to look back and seek again the attractions of life of body, it will be drawn back for further incarnations in salty bodies, the body being poetized as this pillar of salt. If this is not the significance, the real meaning must lie much deeper indeed.)

Then in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis the first verses tell of a battle between five kings on one side and four on the other, waged in "the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea (Genesis 14:1)." (Another version has it, "at the salt marshes," -- the Reed Sea.) Not only do we have Sodom connected with the salt sea, but now Siddim, and vowels not to be considered of any decisive

importance. Nor does the doubling of the "d" make any difference, as consonants were constantly being doubled, according to certain euphonic principles. Sodium, Sodom, Siddim, and all very saline! Can one be simply in error in affirming, then, that all these allegorical flourishes are ancient semantic devices hiding in their cryptic methodology the flat meaning that the great battle of life, the war between the carnal and the spiritual elements in man's nature, is fought out right here in the sodium chloride in the blood of these bodies of ours? There is, indeed, reinforcement for the idea in the Bible's repeated statement that "in the blood is the life of the soul (Leviticus 17:11)." A piquant phrase of universal usage in referring to strong character and sterling quality as being in a person's blood, is seen to have a basis here. And ancient Egypt speaks up in this connection, too. In referring to the universal duality of spirit and matter, it poetizes the two polar energies as the Pool of the Sun and the Pool of the Moon; the Pool of the North and the Pool of the South; and again the Pool of Natron and the Pool of Salt. This natron is intriguing; for it starts with na-, and the chemical formula for salt is NA-CL. Obviously the na is for sodium. Chemistry might tell us of some connection here that would again assure us that these ancient Egyptians knew more occult truth than we have ever given them credit for. Some one could tell us more about natron and its properties. Na- is significant as beginning both "nature" and "name," and, oddly enough, in Scriptural usage, name and nature were close to identical in meaning. The patriarchs always called upon the name of the Lord. One's name was an intrinsic part of one's identity, one's nature. A new name was always given when the candidate in the Mysteries was assumed to have put on the new nature of divinity. This is directly stated in Revelation.

Turning from Egyptian to Latin, we find this na introducing us to a new range of striking significance. In this language it is the base of one of the shortest verbs, whose stem is simply N- in the "A" conjugation, -- that is, its accompanying vowel is "a" and not "e" or "i." This verb built up on the na stem, nare, means two things that at first do not suggest any kinship or connection. It means both "to be born" and "to swim." From it on the side of "born" we get name, native, nature and natal; on the side of "swim" we have navy, naval, navel, natatorium (a swimming pool), and probably our natron also. And how are being born and swimming connected? Any mother should know, or any physician: all birth is out of water, even that of all life on the earth out of the sea. "Moses" means drawn "out of the water." The Egyptian word for "birth" was mes. We find it in such Pharaonic names as Thothmes ("the born Thoth") and Rameses (the born god Ra) and others. But more to the point, we have it in the word Messiah, the born lah (Jah), the three letter name of Jehovah. The human babe comes forth swimming in a sack of water. That Na speaks very clearly to our intelligence indeed. Jesus said that the "natural man" is born of water, while the "spiritual man" is born of air, as the Latin word "spiritus" means "air." How faithfully nature matches this spiritual history in her procedures! For the soul of life on our planet was born out of the water into the air, and the human foetus at birth steps out of water into the air! This transition was by the ancient sages made the type-figure of the regeneration of man, when evolution brought him to the point of graduation from the reign of animal instinct, under the influence of natural as distinct from spiritual forces, over into the realm of mind (always symbolized by air); and this becomes brilliantly illuminating if we keep before us the symbolic relation of the na of natural to water, and that of spirit to air, in the Latin verb spiro, I breathe. And if we seek the absolutely first origin of this na's connection with water, we have it, beyond all controversy of grammarians, back there in ancient Egypt's wondrous symbolic creations, in the hieroglyph that means water. In this archaic and arcane symbol-system, right in the Egyptian alphabet, the letter N is written in the form of seven

wavelets of water, one might say it pictures the ocean agitated by the wind in seven waves, -- And the primary name attached to the divine ego-soul incarnated in matter-water-body was this letter thrice repeated, -- NNN. Also the primitive name of the cosmic soul of being immersed in matter was Nu. This was the masculine form of the name, while the great universal mother-matter form of the name was Nut, and the form that indicated the universal undifferentiated essence of primal being at the start was the Nun. When the Palestine religionists reformulated the body of their religious concepts, which they drew from ancient Egypt, they switched the alphabetical sign of water from N over to M, and just about all words signifying water-matter begin with M ever since. The reasons for this transfer the present writer has not discovered anywhere in his research. But there is no gainsaying the fact of it. Our own written English M still represents three of these original seven waves of water (printed form only two), and our written and printed N still represents two waves. While the Hebrew word for water in the sense of the sea is *iam*, the Hebrew word for water as such is *mayim*, which, being a plural (ending in *im*) would really be waters or waves. And how vividly instructive this pursuit of meaning in the construction of words can become is well illustrated here when we consider the Hebrew word for "heaven." The first chapter of Genesis speaks of the general concept of heaven in the phrase translated "the waters of the firmament (Genesis 1:6-8)." But the firmament, that is, the underlying indestructible first essence of all creation, was always represented as dual, divided into the firmament above and the firmament below. The Egyptian savants had divided the creation into the Upper Nun and the Lower Nun. This would refer to the division of the primordial undifferentiated homogeneous matter -- the NUN -- into the masculine (spiritual) NU and the feminine (material) NUT, in life's universal polarity in the periods of manifestation, when it is not dormant in its phase of unmanifestation, called by the Hindus *pralaya*. This would give precisely what Genesis does give in its very first verse: "In the beginning God created the heavens (the Upper Nun) and the earth (the Lower Nun) (Genesis 1:1)." Now all things pertaining to the material or Lower Nun side of life's eternal duality, were symbolized by the two "lower" elements, earth and water; likewise all things pertaining to the Upper Nun side were symbolized by the two "higher" elements, air and fire. How clearly nature both sanctions and typifies this is seen in the fact that on the earth below we have earth and water, while above we have air and (the sun's) fire. Also we have fire in the upper air in the form of lightning, in a thunderstorm.

02.05. Fire on Heaven's Hearth

FIRE ON HEAVEN'S HEARTH

Water, however, is not confined solely to earth, but in the forms of vapor, visible as cloud, or rain, and invisible as rarefied water vapor, pervades the earth's upper regions. But here we have, in the Hebrew concept of the heavens, the idea of heaven as the place where the waters of the Upper Firmament are associated with fire, -- sun or lightning. Hence to the word for water, mayim, they prefixed that great letter of their alphabet which is the symbol for fire, the letter shin, and this gives the word for "heaven" as Sh'mayim. This would convey all that range of meaning which flows from the idea of the original fiery power of the divine mind or spirit of God, interfusing itself in the essence of water-matter, to beget the universes. The waters of the Lower Firmament would be mayim, those of the Upper Firmament would be sh'mayim. How astonishingly these basic concepts find both illustration and corroboration in nature is seen when we reflect that the sound of this dynamic letter SH, meaning fire, is actually produced when one introduces fire into water; the hissing, sizzling sound. Actually in this naturograph we have in vivid pictorialization the basic idea involved in the creation itself, that is, the projection from God of the fiery power of his creative energies and their being injected into the innermost core or womb of matter. This is what is meant by the statements found in Hindu religious literature that the birth of creation took place or began with the shooting of the cosmic ray of Purusha, eternal Spirit, into the womb of Prakriti, or matter, the eternal universal Mother. With an explosive bang that the human mind will never forget modern science has demonstrated the fact of staggering significance that all matter is, one might say, on fire with energy. And, trembling with a wondering anticipation of the next even more staggering discovery that will forever rock the human mind, and end forever the age-old controversy between materialism and idealism, over the question whether the primordial energy that created the universe is merely physical force, or the power of thinking mind, the intellect of man approaches closer and closer to the recognition that the ultimate and original force that generated life and being must be Mind. Science has now resolved matter back into pure force, into energy; matter is energy that has somehow cooled down, and like anything gaseous or fluid that cools down, it has "jelled," become static, grown hard. It has crystallized and settled into concrete state. And having demonstrated this stupendous fact, now the speculative prying mind of man awaits in trembling suspense the confirmation of the next world-shaking idea, that energy is itself the potency of Thinking Mind. A phenomenon of modern life that has forced itself on our attention in the midst of the endless panorama of scientific discovery and achievement is the surprised recognition that much of the substance of our latest attainment in knowledge seems to have been in the possession of certain of the ancient peoples, more particularly the Egyptians, from whom it is evident that the sagacious Greeks derived the principia of the philosophical systematism which they developed to such grandiose heights in the Periclean period, some four centuries B.C. Hardly less brilliant was the rekindling of that light of the Platonic age which flared up after the dimming of the great flame following the fall of Athens, in the movement of what is known as Neoplatonism, about the second century A.D., when Ammonias Saccas established his school of "esoteric

wisdom." This effort produced Numenius and Maximius of Tyre, after whom came four giants of the philosophical world, Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus. Running like a thread of fire all through the master works of this group, -- to which a little later Plutarch may be added -- is the idea that the primary protyle, or first essence of which the creation is composed, the "stuff" of which all things are made, is, as modern thought suspects may be the very miracle of truth, -- is in very fact Mind!

Yes, affirm these profound thinkers, not only is matter crystallized force, energy; that energy in turn is fluid Mind. Buried for these many centuries in the forgotten books of these great philosophers, to be specific, in the magnificent work entitled The Six Books of Proclus on the Theology of Plato, there has stood a sentence, which had it been brought out and kept in recognition, might well have saved Europe fifteen hundred years of its Dark Ages, and brought modern science that much sooner: "The light of the sun is the pure energy of Intellect." No one can fail to see the redoubtable challenge of this pronouncement out of the wisdom of the long past. It makes pertinent the question whether, with all the present incredible scientific marvels, we have yet caught up with the acumen of ancient Egypt and Greece. For there is evidence that those sapient Egyptian priests, as likewise the Chaldean "astrologers," had at least a theoretical knowledge of the nature and constitution of the atom, though, so far as we would judge, no cyclotrons to demonstrate the physical actuality. The profundity of Platonic and then the Neoplatonic philosophy is an undiminished marvel in universities, where they are still studied. If these, and perhaps even Hindu thinkers had knowledge that the fiery force of Mind flamed on the hearthstone of every atom, they were theoretically in advance of where we stand today. We have made the discovery that the thinking process in the human brain generates both heat and light, or electric energy. Experiments conducted by attaching to the heads of students a sensitive electrical device registered the generation of small quantities of force sufficient to light up a small electric bulb and run a tiny motor. The Scriptures have analogized the mental creation of the universe in the Biblical phrase: "God spake, and the worlds sprang into existence." But back of all speech is thought. So it might be said that "what God hath wrought is what God hath first thought." If the evidence for this connection of creative energy with creative Mind is conclusive, we have a final -- and welcome -- settlement of the eternal squabble over the question of the nature and constituency of the universe; and the laurel wreath goes to idealism. The universe is the expression of the supreme divine Intellect, its majestic ideas having become concreted in what we have called matter. By an omnipresent instinct of reflecting intelligence, men have universally thought of one tangible thing in the realm of life as the appropriate symbol of all mental intelligence in the human area of consciousness -- the thing we call LIGHT. And we have found Proclus asserting that the light of suns is the pure radiance of Intellect. What a concept this gives us as we gaze into the "heavens" of a clear dark night, and see the infinite hosts of those suns twinkling through the dark of space! For if Proclus is right, those infinite points of light are the scintillating brain cells of the Mind of God! It is declared that a normal human brain has four quadrillion brain cells. We can generously allow God a few quintillions at least. We can see some billions, even if we can not count them. We have now proved that brain cells are very, very tiny -- on our scale of relative proportions -- units of the same energy that glows, seethes in flames of thousands of miles dimension on the surface of the sun, yet we know that in proportion to their size they are as far apart from each other as the suns in the spread of space. Here is perfect analogy, and if the Scriptures do not speak utter nonsense when they declare that man is made in the image of God, they mean that our brain cells match his, and his match ours, in function and in kind.

Man is declared in the secret wisdom of the ancient sages to be the microcosm, but still a full duplicate of the macrocosm. And Hermes of Egypt, probably the sagest of earth's great sages, called by the Greeks "thrice-greatest," put this basic principle of understanding clearly before us in his ever-memorable statement: "True without falsehood, certain and most true, that which is above is as that which is below, and that which is below is as that which is above, for the performance of the miracle of the One Thing." And the Sophists of Athens said: "Man is the measure of all things." He has to be; for if he is the universe in miniature, he has to gauge all things by himself. Hence the Greeks adjured us: "Man, know thyself, and thou wilt know all things." Hence also the ancient seers warned men of the folly and the danger of worshipping any supposedly divine power outside their own being and nature, since all the power of the creation was already impounded in the confines of a human life, needing only development to bring it to "the fullness of the Godhood bodily (Colossians 2:9)."

Water below, and fire above, in the cosmos, in man, is the manifest order of things. As for man, the below is his body, composed seven-eighths of water; the above is the fiery energy of thinking mind in his quadrillions of brain cells. In the phrase of the poet, in the being of man "heaven and earth have kissed each other." More than that, under the stress of polarity, they have entered into a mutual relationship in which they are destined to woo, win and wed each other, and in generation after generation give birth in their wedlock to new stages of the creation. In the mass of legendary fable concocted by the semantic genius of those sages of olden times was the tradition that when Messiah appeared, he would come up out of the sea. Truly enough now, with our eyes conditioned to a sort of new infra-red power to pierce the darkness in which the arcane cryptic figurism has been enshrouded, we can see how clearly this form of legendry tells the truth. For of course, since the "life of the soul," as the Scriptures tell us, "is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11)," the divine power that will rise to deify us must come up out of the sea-water endowed with the electric potency that is found to reside in the ocean waters. It should be realized that the blood is electrically charged, is itself dynamic with a measure of the magic of the suns. Were it not so, the mere physical forces of the heart's pumping could not drive it out through the fine channels of the veins and draw it all back again. All cells of the body share the life that animates the whole, and it is certain that the veinous and arterial channel walls furnish some pumping power, some constriction and expansion in rhythm to push the blood along, in aid of the heart.

If viewed from the purely mechanistic or purely materialistic standpoint man is just a machine. The mistake of materialistic thought is in supposing that he is just a machine. He is a machine that is alive and is in every cell, to its degree, a thinking machine. We will approximate a truer view of man if we think of him as we might of a great printing press, every part of which, not dead but consciously alive, keeps feeling, thinking and voluntarily exerting itself to perform its function in the economy of the whole operation of printing. Had the world held on to this living conception of man, which it inherited from the occult legacy of a Golden Age in early human history, when, it is the legend, the gods still mingled with earth's inhabitants, a rosier cinematograph would have been the panorama of the last two thousand years of the world's dark record. The mechanistic, that is, the dead mechanistic concept of man's nature, has been the index of the world's, most particularly the Western world's, degradation of man's own concept of himself. As far as it can go, this concept takes no account of the inner spontaneous and unconquerable instincts and feelings welling up within the human consciousness, a hard cold posture of mind which tends to chill, to freeze and

deaden the dynamic free-acting forces generically innate in the human constitution. The influence of the conscious mind upon the operation of the unconscious processes of the body, such as breathing, digestion, assimilation, heart beat, is not accurately known, but it must be unquestionably great. Therefore the thought that one's body is a machine of purely non-living parts, which work by purely physical, and not by biophysical laws and chemistries, is itself a force that will tend to slow and deaden the body's living activities. How potently a philosophy that pours into the body the power of a mental conception of its free-flowing, self-initiating mind energies would affect well-being for the human organism has been well attested by the more or less "miraculous" cures and healings registered by the upsurge of faith, confidence, hope and other positive attitudes of mind. Perhaps the most efficacious conception that the human individual can hold with regard to his own life and well-being is the idea that he is a dynamo of vibrant intelligent energy, a quantum of the conscious thinking Power that has generated and eternally activates the creation. If his thought lacks this element of the efficacy of spirit, he hardens his life and tightens around himself the prison walls that confine the free forces of his soul within the habitation they have built for their expression in the incarnation process. They are turned into a rigid, cumbersome incubus on the soul instead of being the plastic adaptive instrument for the soul's free expression. As Browning put it, "wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in." And another poet has spoken of the soul as "cribbed, cabined and confined" in the body. In fact this aspect of the soul's life received such emphasis in the great Greek philosophy that always the body was dramatized as not only the prison-house of the soul, but even its grave and tomb, since, when the soul descended into body, its subjection to the slow, sluggish tempo of the fleshly vehicle threw it into a torpor, a coma, a kind of actual "death," from which it had in the final outcome of its evolution to be resurrected. The Greeks in fact used practically the same word for "body" as for "tomb," the former being soma and the latter sema.

One can see the aptness of this symbolism when resort is again had to the typology of water for the body element and fire for the soul force. For naturally water extinguishes fire, kills it. St. Paul (Romans 7:1-25) says that the incarnation of his soul in body killed him (Romans 7:24). But, he added, he will regain his life, have his resurrection, through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, which will overcome "the body of this death" and grant him life eternal (Romans 7:25). The ancient wise men, those Egyptian priests, always thought of soul entering body for its life work under the figure of fire plunging into water, or soul crossing the "Red Sea," meaning by this sea the body's blood. Such conceptions and figures held thought in fluidity and tended to keep the body plastic, so as to be responsive to the impact of the thought power of the central brain intelligence upon the nerve life of all the cells of the body. Whatever possibility man has of living a radiant life inhered in this sort of mental attitude, which a materialist philosophy chills to inanity.

One will find a strange face of momentous significance in this connection right in the dictionary. It is that the great body of verbs indicating the initiation of movement begin with the letter "s" or its equivalent "sh." These are the letters which start, shove off all kinds of movement, such as strike, slap, stamp, smite, speak, slide, streak, skate, send, shoot, spear, slip, slump, spit, stride, step, sneak, steal, scrape, scream, sing and scores more. That this is no happy fancy of ours is confirmed by the definite fact that the ancient Egyptian language prefixed "s" (or "sh") to words denoting a state or condition, to make them mean the act of producing that state or condition. One example is maat, truth, from the stem ma, true, which when "s" is prefixed, becomes sma,

meaning to confirm, establish, i.e., to "make true." This must have come from the fact that the introduction of soul into body (water) in incarnation, producing the "s" ("sh") sound, started all things off, set all things going for the life of the soul. That is, the letter's sound suggested the initial step in life. The extent to which the ancient sagacity resorted to poetic tropism of this kind would not be believed generally.

02.06. Turning Water into Blood

TURNING WATER INTO BLOOD

All this analysis may have seemed to take the theme far from its base in the Red Sea. But as this symbol represents the human body, or its blood, and this constitutes the very basis of human life, and the body is inseparably linked with the soul, the Red Sea may be said to be the chief ingredient in all human problems, whether physical, religious, philosophical or psychological. If the human body is not an essential element in all man's problems, it would be so only under the conditions that Hindu religion seems so strongly to suggest to us mortals, that we may so spiritualize our consciousness that we may release the soul completely from the incubus of the flesh. We need to be reminded here of St. Paul's pointed assertion of the connection our souls sustain to the body, when he says: "For God, who has caused the light to shine out of the darkness hath shined in our hearts,...but we have this treasure in earthen vessels (2 Corinthians 4:6-7)." This can be taken also in close connection with the statement of Greek philosophy: "I am a child of earth and the starry skies, but my race is of heaven alone." Yes, heaven is our true, original and basic home; but the Father sends us forth periodically from "that imperial palace whence we came," since it is the function of spirit or soul to impregnate matter with the dynamic of the divine Mind, so that all life, all the universe may reflect the thought of the creative brain. The Judeo-Christian Scriptures -- the "Bible" -- do not contain material elaborating the semantic potential of the Red Sea symbolism comparable to what we find in the Egyptian, and doubtless other, literature. Yet there are touches which are decidedly significant, which, when taken in connection with those found especially in the great Book of the Dead, go far to corroborate the thesis herein developed. The most direct and surely a most cogent affirmation that the human body blood is sea water, in fact a most astonishing confirmation of it, is found in Revelation 8:8. Here indeed is a positive statement to the effect that the divine fire of soul went down into the sea "which is on the border of the earth" and did two things to it that should have meant far more to our slumbering cognitive faculties than they have appeared to do. First, it set the sea on fire; and, second, it turned the sea into blood.

Perhaps one of the most direct allegorical references to the expulsion of the Sons of God from heaven and their incarnation on earth is found in the eighth chapter, fifth verse of Revelation: "And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar and cast it into the earth (Revelation 8:5)." This was the sending of fire from the empyrean (pyr means "fire" in Greek) down to earth in the form of the host of angelic beings that were born of the mind of God, thus "immaculately conceived," that is, generated purely by spirit or mind energy unixed, "uncontaminated" with gross matter. This is matched in the Old Testament by the first emanation of the Ab-ra(m) power, the First Light out of Ur, the "city" of the Chasadim, and his going "west then south" into earthly incarnation, or "Egypt." Both Ra and Ur means "fire," the first an Egyptian spelling and the second Babylonian. "Ur" is the original Chaldean word for "fire," becoming pur (pyr) later in Egypt. (Pur is the Greek word for "fire" still.) These heaven-conceived, mind-born Sons of God were called in Hindu systems the Agniswatha Pitris, fathers of the fire emanations, as agni is "fire" in Sanscrit.

They have become immemorally poetized as the "Divine Flames," "the Divine Sparks." Man's soul is a spark or ray of the divine creative Fire of Mind, as all profound religion declares.

"I come from the Sea of Flame," exclaims the soul in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, "from the Lake of Flame and the Sea of Fire; and I live." Speaking in the Egyptian drama the soul declares: "I am the Great One, son of the Great One; I am Fire, son of Fire, to whom was given his head after it was cut off." (The symbolism here represents the idea that, even as Plato depicted it, the soul, as it were, loses its head, its higher dimension of consciousness, when it descends into incarnation, and has to recover it by evolution here -- Paradise lost, Paradise regained.)

We have all the legends of fire flaming forth out of the mouth, or the nostrils of God, consuming his enemies. This is often poetized as the "wrath of God" devastating all things. In Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 32:1-52) we find the Deity telling of the awful power of his mind energy: "My wrath has flared up, flaming to the nether world itself, burning up the earth and all it bears, setting the roots of the hills ablaze (Deuteronomy 32:22)." And again: "From Sinai came the Eternal....blazing in fire from the south." We remember how his presence on Mount Sinai was accompanied by lightning, smoke and flame. The seven golden candles in Revelation typify the seven rays of the divine emanation as it poured forth to create a seven-branched tree of life. The old English ritual of burning the Yule log on the hearth was to symbolize the lighting up and final transfiguration of the natural body and nature of man by the transforming power of the divine flame of spirit. The ropes binding Samson's arms, when "the spirit of the Eternal inspired him nightly, became like wax that has caught fire, the bonds melted off his hands." The Egyptians called the watery body of man "the Pool of the Double Fire," the dark, murky, smoky, smudgy fires of low sensualities; and the pure, clear, beautiful flame of compassion and love. The lower flares of the animal passions, it need hardly be pointed out, were the fires of hell. Happily no one need fear the prospect of being tortured in the fires of a post-mortem Hades, as we are living in all the "hell" we will ever experience right here on earth. That fire in our blood is all the hell we will ever have to dread. But we had better dread it now. All we need to do is to transmute those fires that burn in the blood with smudge, soot and smoke into the pure flames of a beautiful life. "For wickedness burneth as a fire. It shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forests." These are the coarse underbrush of the hatreds, greeds and evil motives of our lives. If reason and discipline will not burn them out, pain eventually will.

Says the Greek philosopher Heraclitus: "Man is a portion of cosmic Fire, imprisoned in a body of earth and water." John the Baptist said that whereas he will give us the lower baptism of (earth and) water, the Christ coming after him will baptize us "with the Holy Air (spiritus, Latin, means "air.") and with fire." Jesus said: "I come to scatter fire upon the earth;" also "I beheld Satan like lightning fall from heaven." All these are references to the angelic hosts, God's own Sons, whom the Father dispatched to earth to do his work with his earthly children. "He hath made his angels messengers and his ministers a flame of fire." Spirit was universally symbolized by the element of fire, as was mind by air, emotion by water and sensation by earth. Our souls are sparks of the divine Flame. The fiery nature of spirit is indicated in the symbolism by the figure of incense and the censer, the latter being the miniature "stove" in which the heavenly fire burned and gave off its pleasing incense for God's delectation. The censer, as a vessel which could contain and transport the fire of soul to earth, must refer to what St. Paul calls our "spiritual body." Within man's outer physical body all religions of the arcane wisdom asserted that he has several finer bodies of

sublimated essence, still in a sense material, but not of the gross physical matter familiar to our senses. Science now knows of the existence of matter in many ethereal-spiritual forms, impalpable and invisible, yet quite literally real; and these inner bodies hold or convey the central nucleus of soul when the outer physical body is thrown off, or not yet assumed. The intimation of the text of Revelation, then is that the "angel," the power of God, having packed the soul in a finer spiritual body, whisks it off the altar and transports it down to earth.

Then two verses later on in that eighth chapter of Revelation the text says that the seven angels (creative life energy is always projected forth from the hearth (altar) of God's fire in seven impulses) "prepared themselves to sound." "And the first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth." Here is the first mention of the divine fire's connection with blood. But once these sparks, or units, of the fiery mind essence were ensconced in the bodies of animal creatures here on earth, they became in a very real sense the fiery power of the body blood, the generators of the electric dynamism found in the blood. "For in the blood is the life of the soul," says the Scripture. Drain out a person's blood and the spark and fire, the dynamo of his life, is gone. The fire has gone out on his hearth. But then in the next (eighth) verse comes the crowning statement of the truth we are enunciating: "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood." The second century Christian protagonist, Justin Martyr, says that at the baptism of Jesus by John, "a fire was kindled in the waters of the Jordan." The actuality of the meaning hinted at by such poetic figures can be caught in quite realistic form when one says of some outrage that "it makes one's blood boil with indignation." Through the avenue of beautiful conceptual imagery we can come to a realization of what ancient poets meant when they speak of a fire blazing within the sea, and, as fire always does to water, converting it into steam or vapor and so enabling it to rise in the air. The tenth verse rounds out this phase of the incarnation symbolism by saying: "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the foundations of water." The fifth angel's blast also brought a falling star to earth. This is the lightning streak of Satan falling to earth which Jesus says he beheld. So the divine fire of soul migrating to earth, says the great allegory in Revelation, set the sea on fire, made it glow all red and turned it into blood. Will the Fundamental literalist, who insists that every word of the Scriptures is to be taken in its bald physical sense, protest to us that the Pacific Ocean is blood? A thing of this sort is quite happily available to reduce the claims of literalism to their proper category of ribald nonsense. But because such a construction of poetic fancy collapses into preposterous fol-de-rol when its literal actuality is insisted upon, let no one think that it therefore is to be discarded and put out of court as irrelevant and valueless. Its dynamic value only emerges when its claimed actual factuality is dropped and a truth structure is revealed to discerning vision deep within the frame of the outer allegory. Such was the form and method by which the ancient wise men depicted truth by symbol and allegory. Hence, truly enough, not in the seven seas of our globe, but on the very hearth of the life of mortal men, the heavenly fire conveyed to earth by God's own Sons, does dip down into the sea which is the watery essence of these mortal bodies of ours, and does set them aflame with a fire of life and soul and does turn them into blood. Who has not read over and over those mystifying verses of Revelation's flaring allegorism and wondered what those words really meant? Here at any rate is one luminous key that can turn on the light of intelligible, rational meaning. But it is when we turn to old Egypt's prodigious tomes of hoary wisdom that we see the symbolism

more openly and clearly at work. In commenting on Chapter 176 of the Book of the Dead, Budge, the noted Egyptologist, writes: "As fire and boiling water existed in the underworld (our earth) he (the soul) hastened to protect himself from burns and scalds by reciting these chapters." For the titles of these several chapters are: "Of drinking water and not being burned by fire in the underworld," and "Of not being scalded with water." Showing how closely Old Testament material must have related to its antecedent Egyptian sources, we find this symbolism very closely matched in Isaiah 43:1-28 : "When thou passest through the waters I shall be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on thee." The imagery here, drawn straight from nature, from chemistry and physics, tells us in effect that when the celestial fire of God's mighty spirit is, by incarnation, introduced into the natural watery elements of the body, this fire is going to heat up this water, cause it to boil and seethe, so that we see a man in passion burning with hot zeal over some injury or affront. A burning within the sea, sure enough; the ocean on fire; the bush all aflame, yet was not consumed. If the soul, the god himself, who himself contributed the fire that heated the body blood, was not sufficiently in control, he stood a fair chance of being "scalded" by his own fiery rage. So the allegories represent the god-soul as being able to allay the storms on this sea of life, and fittingly enough, represent the tempests as raging when he, the power within the ship, lies fast asleep down in the "hold." So the Manes, or "shade" of the person in this underworld, prays in the Egyptian Ritual that he "may have power over the water and not be drowned." Emerging from his dangerous journey across the sea in victory, he chants: "I am the being who is never overwhelmed in the waters." Sargon of Assyria, who was picked up out of a wicker basket floating in the reeds (the "Reed Sea") by the river's brink by the king's daughter long before the same legend was repeated with Moses, exclaims: "My mother gave me to the river, which drowned me not." "Moses" means "drawn out of the water." The Scriptures were found to give authoritative support to the symbolism of the sea being turned into blood, but it seemed unlikely that they would be found stating directly that this change came about as a result of the transfer of the stream of the earth's biological evolution of life forms from the oceans to the land. Yet even a direct statement of that effect was encountered in the course of recent searching for the data supporting the theses of this essay. Modern biological science and ancient fanciful semanticism find themselves in amazing accord in some verses in the early chapters of the book of Exodus. The fact of the change coming from the shifting of the evolution chain from sea to land finds absolutely astonishing literal confirmation in Exodus 4:9. The ancient allegorist -- or perhaps it was the translator -- substitutes the word "river" for "sea," but that in no way alters the sense. It is still the earth's great water-body that is referred to. Speaking to Moses for the children of Israel, the Lord directs him to "take of the water of the river and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land." The idea is hinted at again in Exodus 7:17, the Lord speaking: "I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood." Again in Exodus 7:19 the Lord commands Aaron to stretch out his rod and his hand over the waters of "Egypt" "that they may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt." (Most high-ranking scholars regard this "Egypt" of the Exodus narrative as a glyph for the earth and the human body, being the nadir point to which souls descend for incarnation, and also as the fabled "underworld" of mythology.) As it is obvious that the Pacific Ocean has not turned to blood anywhere else than in the human bodies of earth's people, one must realize that the piercing vision of the seer of old had hidden a salient truth of

biological evolution beneath the allegory. If our Bible is found to be talking about this kind of truth we had better read it a bit more closely and with an eye alert to pierce semantic veils for the discovery of more cryptic reference.

Then there is (in Exodus 7:21) the statement that the catalytic power of the "rod" of spiritual fire so changed the water of the river that the Egyptians could no longer drink of it, because it "stank," which is obvious enough reference to its unpotable brackish taste. So then "the Egyptians dugged round about the river for water to drink." If a spiritual interpretation of this last symbolism is sought, it may be perhaps found in the idea that, as the sea water stands for the basic natural life of man, this life of sense, animalism and lower appetencies will in the course of time and evolution become repugnant to the soul and it seeks refreshment from the purer aspirations of the spirit. Could anything in the sacred writings be more significant and illuminating than the announcement that man undergoes two baptisms, and as it were, two births, first that of water, then that of fire? (Ancient insight always assigned two mothers to the Christ figures.) As water not only typifies, but virtually is the body, the first baptism depicts the experience the soul undergoes when its divine fire of spirit is submerged in the waters of the Lower Nun, that is, incarnated in earthly watery body. This phase of the incarnational ordeal involves all the forms of experience that can accrue to man through the intermixture of the two sides or segments of his dual being, his body and his soul, and could only be symbolized adequately by all the phenomena that are generated when fire meets and combats water. For a long time the "watery" elements of consciousness, sense and emotion (earth and water), predominate and rule the individual's life. But gradually, and all too slowly, the pure and more powerful flames of reason and love gain the ascendancy. Inevitably in the end the more powerful element must win out, and this at once introduces the great symbolism of fire drying up the water. And here we have the ground of all those allegories of the God-power drying up the waters of a sea or river in order that the Sons of God (in the Old Testament the Israelites -- who incidentally are not the Hebrews as a nation or race, but purely a spiritual grouping) may cross over without being drowned. When the "sea" starts to burn, it will in the end be dried up. And with this comes one of the most startling revelations of esoteric significance in all the realm of symbolic depiction of truth: the truth as to the conversion of sinful man into man sinless and divine. For as the "sinning" nature of the first and unredeemed Adam is symbolized by water, and water by nature falls, the action upon it by the application to it of the fiery power of the divine soul, which will vaporize it, converts it into a state analogous to steam, a form in which it, too, like fire, shall rise again. What moral lesson could be more cogent than the realization that if man lives in the realm of base passion, he will continue to fall; but that if he will purge his carnal sensualities of their gross selfish character, he will arise! So St. Paul descants endlessly on the theme that the indulgence of the interests of the flesh means death, whereas the cultivation of the interests of the spirit means life and peace. To descend into and remain bound under the "watery" nature of the body and its sensual instincts is, in the great theology of the Greeks, a virtual death; to "dry out" these heavy, sluggish motivations by the superior power of the rational soul is to achieve the resurrection. The Scriptures speak figuratively of the power of God as "rebuking" the sea and "smiting the sea," confounding the sea. This depicts the spirit's power to check, change and ultimately destroy the force of the lower motivations of the "flesh," the "Old Man of the Sea." Doubtless this is the origin of the poetic phrase, "to suffer a sea change." Translated into terms of modern psychology, this typism would have relevance to the function of the superconscious power of the great "unconscious" in man to check, control and redirect the energies of the conscious part

of his psychism. When the interpreters of the Scriptures can show that the meaning so cryptically disguised under glyph and symbol has immediate pertinence to the psyche and the spiritual life of all mortals, the great legacy of ancient Holy Writ will be able to reassert its benignant influence

02.07. Ichthys, The Great Fish

ICHTHYS, THE GREAT FISH As all parts and elements of the natural world were instinct with symbolic intimations for the discerning mind of ancient semanticists, that which the sea so voluminously generates, its living product, the fish, could not escape the search for meaningful signification. How prolifically we have the great symbol utilized in the archaic representations! Mythology teems with the recurrence of the whales, the dolphins that transport the heroes across the waters, the sea-serpents that attempt to strangle infant deities, monsters of the deep and plain common fish that serve as food, or one that turns up with a gold coin in its mouth. The intimations of symbolic meaning of the fish typograph are among the profoundest in the realm of ancient semanticism. A few of these must be examined.

Striking indeed is it that we find the fish to be the monographic symbol of the Christ himself in the initial stages of the inception of Christianity. There was much reason for the Church leaders, such as Augustine and Tertullian, to speak of Jesus as the Great Fish in the sea, and his followers, the Christians, as the little minnows. For in Greek emblemism the Christ figure was typified as the great fish, Pisces of the zodiac. This was inevitable when one knows of the addiction of the inspired religious mind of the ancient day to the custom of making the zodiac serve as the graph of all esoteric significance. This is itself a vast, complex and deeply recondite study, seemingly fathomless in the profundity and cogency of its implications for understanding the religious life of man.

Most simply defined, the zodiac is a figure depicting the journey of the sun through the cycle of the twelve sections of the heavens, both in the period of its earthly annual revolution, or in that of the full cycle of the precession of the equinoxes through the whole twelve houses of the sky in 25,868 years, known as the Great Cycle. The smaller annual cycle was a miniature of the great precessional cycle and served equally well for typology. In the spirit of this symbology it was the custom of the ancient sages of the divine wisdom to typify and designate the power of the coming Christos under the name and nature of the sign of the zodiac in which the sun stood for approximately 2160 years of its stasis in each house. For instance, in the sign of Leo the Christ power was, in the region dominated by Jewish religionism, the Lion of Judah. Under the Cancer sign the Egyptians dubbed it the sacred Scarab, Cancer having been the sign of the beetle before it was that of the Crab. With the sun in Gemini, the divine nature was the dual force of good and evil, the twin brothers, symbolized by the stars Castor and Pollux in the sky. In Taurus, the Egyptians, Chaldeans and even the Israelites worshipped the divine power under the symbol of the sacred Bull, the Golden Calf, the Cow of Isis and other goddesses. In Aries, the Ram, the great symbol of the Son of God was of course the sacrificial Lamb, and in Greek mythology the Golden Fleece. And when Christianity was taking form, the sun was making the transit from Aries into Pisces, the sign of the two Fishes. Hence the Ram and Lamb symbolism still prevailed, but the Piscean figurism was being introduced, and its presence in the Christian literature and even in the religion's early iconography is surprisingly in evidence. The astute-minded Greeks, dealing with the Christos concept in this intriguing fashion, therefore portrayed the divine Avatar for the Piscean

era as the Great Fish, and a myth like the Jonah-whale fabrication was inevitable. The ancient Sumerians, ancestors of the Babylonians, had spoken of the Fish incarnation of Vishnu, and the ancient eponymous hero of the Chaldeans was Ioannes, the Fish Avatar, under the name of Dagon. And dag is the Hebrew word for "fish." But the Greeks ingeniously took their word for "fish," which is Ichthys (Ichthus) and, using each letter of the word as the initial of a word, coined the sentence-phrase: IESOUS CHRISTOS, THEOU UIOS SOTER; which reads: Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. It is known as the Ichthys monograph of Christ, the "Fish Avatar" of the Greeks.

Such was the general vogue of this fish-image of divinity that, using a Latinized form of the word, the Greeks in the early years of the Christian movement, habitually referred to the Christians as the Pisciculi (Latin: piscis, "fish"), meaning the "little fishes." It was just a popular exploitation of the figurative flourish of the zodiacal symbol, with a touch perhaps of slight derision. It could be that the appellation was flavored with a bit of scurrility or mild contempt, as the Christians were universally regarded, in the inception of their fanatical upsurge of ignorant pietism, as pitifully deluded religious zealots. In fact the very name -- Christians -- was first fastened on them at Antioch, the book of Acts states, as a term properly ridiculing people who were so unintelligent as to believe that the Christos, yes, even the Logos, the unthinkable power that created the galaxies of the cosmos, was walking around down here on earth ensconced in the body of a man said to have been a carpenter in Galilee. They claimed that this obscure and obviously deluded countryside preacher and prophesier of the swift coming of the Kingdom of God, in which he was to sit in glory perpetual on the right hand of the Eternal God, was the "Fish Avatar" of the Absolute Deity. To philosophical Greeks this idea that the infinite power predicated in their great concepts represented by the cosmic Trinity, could be compressed in the body of a man of our human order was incredibly crude, naive and preposterous; and the cultured Greeks, as also the Romans, held them in supreme contempt as pitifully ignorant pietists, as we think of certain sects in our civilization today who continue to predict the immediate coming of the Christ, and the "end of the world." But perhaps the most telltale evidence of the astrological symbolism connected with Christianity is the pointedly significant fact that the Galilean Messiah's twelve disciples were declared to be "fishermen." Christian theological lucubration has never once had the candor to face the devastating challenge which this obvious link with zodiacal symbolism presents to the claimed historicity of the Gospels. If there were in historical actuality twelve men attached to the Judean claimant for the mantle of Messiahship, they would have "inherited" the designation of "fishermen," no matter if they were farmers, herdsman, tradesmen, or as Matthew was, a tax collector, a publican, simply by virtue of the semantic spirit of the religious traditions of the age, for the Sabaeen constructions of Chaldean astrology, projected in occult circles almost as a pictorial Bible, were universally rife among the Mystery groups, the Gnostics, Manichaeans, Essenes and other associations of mystical-occult bent. Under Aries symbolism they would have been "shepherds," and under Taurian, "cowherds," under Capricorn "goatsherdsmen."

Then the Christians themselves adopted the two fishes of the Piscean sign as their own emblem. In the catacombs of Rome the dual fish monogram was everywhere in evidence, carved or pictured in many ways, even on the forehead of the images of the Christ, and on the walls and altars. And Jesus instructed Peter to find the gold coin wherewith to pay the tax levy in the fish's mouth; and he said: "I will make you fishers of men;" and his last wonderwork was the miraculous draught of fishes that broke the net. The fish's bladder, in Latin the Vesica Piscis, was utilized as a

symbol of the presence of mind (air) in the body (water). Fish also was a symbol of the presence of air in the water, intimating the presence of mind (air) in the body (water). Fish also was a symbol of divine food for man, since his soul, once it was immersed in the "sea" of incarnation, would find fish his most natural food. The great religious Ritual of Egypt (Book of the Dead) dramatizes the god as declaring: "I am the great and mighty Fish which was in the city of Qem-Ur." And a statement is that he shall in the end be freed from the great Abtu fish, meaning that he, like Jonah released from the whale after three days, would be liberated from the necessity of further incarnation. Likewise the Egyptians pictured the goddess Neith (whose name Gerald Massey equates with "net") as fishing Horus, the Christ, out of the sea, as the Pharaoh's daughter fishes Moses out of the waters among the reeds. At least two of the prominent goddesses of the Eastern Mediterranean region, Atergatis and Semiramis, were called "Fish Mothers." And on the head of Neith, an earlier form of the goddess Hathor, there was inscribed a perch. Neith carried the shuttle or knitter, for the weaving of her fish-nets. The emblem of the goddess catching the Son of God as a fish in her net would dramatize the simple fact of incarnation, to begin with, as the feminine is matter (its symbol is water) and matter catches the incarnating souls in its meshes. But as the ordeal of life in the sea of matter eventually lifts the captured souls out of this realm of incarnate life into the world of spirit (air), even so also the act of fishing emblemated the release of souls from their captivity in the body, the "Red Sea." The fish floating about in the water is the most forceful symbol of organic life immersed in inorganic matter, and that is precisely what the fish symbol most cogently portrayed. A fish in the sea almost shouts at us the fact of our being divine souls, the product of organic evolution, immersed and floating about in the sea of inorganic atomic matter. A phrase from an archaic formulary, expressing concisely the basic idea of souls incarnated in matter, referred to them as "suffering under the dense sea" of matter. Perhaps the future stability of the edifice of the Christian religion may be severely shaken from the startling revelation that the Greek word for "sea" is *pontos*, and for "dense" is *piletos*, which would take the form in Latin of "Pontius Pilate." We can only ask: can this etymology be the origin of the creed's phrase: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate?" But another line of research leads us to further amazing disclosures in this "fishing expedition." It has been shown earlier that the ancient original Egyptian short name of the primordial undifferentiated sea of being, so to say our "empty space," was NU; its masculine (spiritual) manifestation was NUN; and its feminine (material) polar opposite, was NUT. It has just been said that the primary symbolism of the fish floating in the sea was the image of units of divine spirit-souls (always masculine) immersed in the water of incarnation. The term NUN, then, would by sheer emblemism represent spirit in matter, and at man's level and station in evolution, the soul in the body. The cosmic NUN being the great Father spirit, we surprisingly find that in Chaldean and Syriac NUN means the Great Fish, symbolized in the heavens as the constellation of Cetus the Whale! The Sons of God, his little "fish" children, would be the offspring of this Great Fish, or Sons of NUN. Following this guiding thread we run into such an amazing correlation of ideas and symbols as fairly to stagger our minds with the marvel of it all.

First of all, and almost an immediate knockout for us, we find that all ancient astrological formulations represented the Christ characters as being born in the house or sign of Pisces; all were sons of the "Fish Mothers." This was inevitable from the fact of semantic science that the first or natural man in our dual nature, being the son of the Virgin, had to be represented as being born in Virgo. But the spiritual man, his direct polar opposite would then have to be born exactly across

the zodiac from Virgo, and that brought the second or spiritual birth in Pisces, six months later. And in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel Jesus, the Christ, is declared to have been born just six months after his natural-man forerunner, John the Baptist! In all symbolism, as has been shown above.

What, then, on top of that, is our astonishment when we find that there was another Jesus away back there in the Old Testament; yes, a man with the Jesus name, one of the dozen or more variant spellings of this name Jesus, but still Jesus, -- namely Joshua! And whose son was he? Joshua, son of N U N! Here was Jesus by name, and this time connected with descent from the fatherhood represented by the Great Fish!

Still further heightening the wonder comes the next datum: in the Hebrew alphabet every letter has a corollary designation, a "nick-name" so to say, which gives some recondite intimation of its function in the canon of sounds and signs which make up the alphabet. Aleph (A) means, for instance, ox; beth (B) means house; gimel (G) means camel; dalet (D) means door, etc. When we come to the middle of the alphabet, which point represents the lowest level of matter into which the fire of soul descends before it turns to return back to the heaven of spirit, and is therefore the place of water, matter's eternal symbol, we find that M is the Hebrew hieroglyph for waves of water, as N is in Egyptian, and its alphabetical name is mem and means water and that N -- brace yourselves for a jolt -- has for its nick-name fish and, of all things wonderful, is called NUN. M is mem; N is nun. It is well to see what we have together here: Joshua (Jesus) born in Pisces, even in Christianity, and son of Nun, the Fish! Jesus, Son of Nun!

Virgo was called the "house of bread," that divine Bread that Jesus said came down from heaven and was made man, as Christ, the God in man. Pisces was the house of the Great Fish, or the dual fishes. Bread and fish were therefore made the symbolic dual food for man, the one physical and the other spiritual nourishment. Most wonderfully in old Egypt's semantic science, the cities were often named from some function of the deific life. A city in which it was symbolically said that Horus, the Christ, was born and died, was Anu, which becomes Any when transferred to English (the Greek "u" always turning to English "y".) A very significant item mentions it as "the place of multiplying the divine bread." The birth of the Christ soul in all men surely multiplies that heavenly Bread, broken for all souls at the Eucharist. So, through association with Virgo and its symbolic name, the house of bread, the opposite house of Pisces, house of the fish, merged its emblemism with its polar opposite, and the two symbols, bread and fish, became the twin forms of man's divine food. Should we be, then, too stunningly struck with amazement when we find that our New Testament Gospels themselves contain the allegory of the Christ character feeding a multitude of people, enhungered after three days, by miraculously multiplying bread and its companion symbol, fish? And where did this multiplication of the divine food take place in the Gospels? Yes, at this same town, Any (Anu), to which the Hebrews had at some date prefixed their word for "house" (beth) simply to give its astrological reference as the zodiacal "house of bread," and thus it became -- Beth-Any, Bethany! So both in ancient Egypt and in the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures the Christ figure dramatized the miracle of feeding the multitude of mortals in this symbolic city of Anu by multiplying the divine bread and fish. Are we ready, then, for the next flash of realization of great discovery which darts out from the philological intimations of this name, the "house of bread?" It flashes upon us when we simply ask how one says "house of bread" in Hebrew, ordinary Hebrew. For the answer to that is none other than the astonishing word -- Beth (house),

lehem (bread) -- Bethlehem! Bethlehem is Bethany, house of combined bread and fish. For the Christ, as Jesus says positively, is the product of two births, the one natural, of water; the other spiritual, of spirit (fire); or of bread (Virgo) and fish (Pisces). "Ye must be born again," he said; born of water and the spirit-fire. Virgo is the first great Mother of life, formless inchoate matter, the Virgin Motherhood; and her name was almost everywhere a form of the name for sea or water. Pisces in the zodiac represented the second Mother of life, organic matter that has been impregnated by the rays of the divine sun of life, or divine spirit. Virgo can give birth only to natural man; Pisces gives birth to the spirit-soul, which matter inorganic could not do. Pisces is the Fish, the symbol of organic life born out of the sea, so that its Christly offspring, the Christs themselves, are all fished up out of the sea. (Recall that a legend said that the Messiah was to come up out of the sea.) In one facet of ancient symbolism all life was said to have emanated from the Fish's mouth. In the uranograph, or chart of the heavens, the stream of life was pictured as flowing forth from the constellation in the southern sky called the Southern Fish, to correspond to that of Cetus, the Whale, in the northern sky. Thence it flowed north and emptied its stream just under the foot of the constellation of Orion. This great cluster of bright stars seen in our sky of winter was, in ancient astrological portrayal, the representative of the Christ. Orion was the mighty hunter, followed by his dog -- the great Dog Star Sirius -- by which was meant that the power of the divine mind, seeking to stamp the shape of its creative ideas upon all matter, led the way of evolution, while behind it trailed the animal, the faithful dog, the body! Mythology had it that Orion was pressing on in pursuit of the Pleiades, that cluster of six stars some little distance ahead of him, called the Seven Sisters, but with one star missing. The subtle intimations here can be only that spirit must seek to express itself through the agency of the natural world, nature being feminine always, and also eternally structuralized upon the basis of the creational number seven. That one is as yet missing is likely to intimate that, since all the cycles of evolving life manifest six formations of physical substance, or planes of existence for the expression of their creative forces, the spiritual mind-power which this structuralization of cosmic energy is destined to express, not being physical, but spiritual, is not manifest in visible form with its six-fold basis. Let us remember that creation covers six days, and not seven, God resting on that cosmic Sabbath from his labors. The physical universe is always the visible side; the cosmic mind power that each cycle demonstrates by the work it produces at six levels, is invisible.

If imagery of this sort seems overly subtle and a bit thin in spots, it must be realized that the religious mind of the ancient day disported itself, so to say, in sallies of fancy of this kind; and if one will follow them closely, they will be found to adumbrate the soundest and unassailable truth. And the truths thus intimated are always deeply related to man's inner life and experience, are in fact the deepest truths that the human mind can grasp.

Well, then, if the fish is the symbol of organic life generated out of the inorganic, the ancient starry drama would represent that the stream of organic life emanates from the substrate matter of the physical universe, from the very womb of matter, as the sages like to phrase it often, when evolution has developed it to its supreme organic unity of function, and thence it proceeds up the path of growth and development until it reaches the state of godhood symbolized by Orion. In brief it says that the stream of organic evolution, arising out of the sea, reaches its high goal of godhood in Orion. It is to be noted that the astrological depiction does not give it as arising out of the water directly, but out of the Southern Fish, itself the product of a long evolution of organic structure

arising out of the inorganic virgin matter. It is important to clarify this double-stage procedure of the drama of creation, for inorganic matter could not generate self-conscious mind in creatures starting at the bottom of the scale of manifest being. Inorganic matter was the "Old First Mother," and could give birth only to organic matter, considered as her daughter. The daughter, then, in turn, since she through the instrumentality of her highly developed specialized functionism such as brain and nerves could give birth to mind, reason, will and love in her creatures, would thus be the second mother and her child the Christ. In zodiacal terms the Virgo -- Mother energy of matter, could not herself birth the Christ, but could produce her own daughter, Pisces, who representing the organic universe, could bear the Christ consciousness in the brains and hearts of her offspring. Virgo had first to bear Pisces, and Pisces in turn bore the Christ. All ancient Sun-Gods and Saviors were "born" in the house of Pisces, the house of (fish and) bread, Bethlehem. This item has been elaborated at length for the reason that, though few realize it, it is all found in the Gospel narrative in the New Testament. All the ancient Christs were said to have two mothers, the First Old Mother, and the Second or spiritual Mother. In the Egyptian system they were the goddess sisters and twins, Isis and Nephthys. The myth said that Isis conceived the divine Son Horus and Nephthys gave him birth. Changing the figure, again it stands that Isis bore him and Nephthys suckled him. In the Gospels the two appear in the persons of Anna and her daughter Mary. Anna gives birth to Mary; Mary gives birth to the Christ. Some scholars assert that Anna, the name, means simply "year," from Latin annum, "year." If by "year" is meant the annual round of nature's cycles, the origin may be credible. Mary in this case would be, not the Virgin Mother (that would be Anna, as the first or inorganic matter is the virgin form), but the Fish, or Spirit-Mother, and her son, born in Pisces, would testify to this character. However, it is only necessary to realize when ignorance followed intelligence, there was confusion in the precise handling of the symbols, and, as we have seen, both bread and fish symbols, as well as Virgo and Pisces features, have been combined and interblended.

02.08. Iaru-Tana, Eridanus, Jordan

IARU-TANA, ERIDANUS, JORDAN The name given by the Hebrews to the stream of evolving life was of course the Jordan River, for they had named their one great river with that designation of the stream of evolution, taken from the sky charts of the earlier religious systems. The spelling of this name Jordan was derived from the name which the Greeks had given to it, the River Eridanus. And that, going back a step, was derived from the original name it bore in the Egyptian system, namely, the Iaru-Tana. Iaru is the Egyptian source of the Greek hieros, and of the Hebrew Jeru (in Jerusalem), both meaning "sacred," "divine." But Tana was actually the name of the geographical lake out of which the great Nile River had its source, the celestial lake or sea of source. It was localized in each country reformulating the archaic religious tradition to suit its geography as the main river or lake available on their map; in Egypt, the Nile, in Palestine the Jordan, in Babylonia and Persia the Tigris-Euphrates, in India the Indus or Ganges. The fish as symbol must then be thought of as the system of organic material evolution that carries the nucleus of divine mind forward to its goal of the consummation of natural life in its final blossoming out into spiritual godhood. Whether discerned in its full spiritual significance or not, enough of this purport clings to the symbol in the primary motivations of Christianity to have been embodied in a feature of priestly attire, the Bishop's mitre, which is shaped in the form of the fish's mouth. The evidence for this is found in the Latin name of *os tincae*, or the tench's mouth, the tench being a fresh-water European fish, which, the dictionary says, was noted for its tenacity of life. The door of life was figured in the shape of a fish-mouth at the western, or feminine end of a church. The zodiacal Pisces is the house of the birth of Saviors; Jesus, Horus, Ioannes and other divine Avatars came as Ichthys, "fish" in Greek. As has been seen, the fish's bladder denoted the presence of air in the water, and the stream of bubbles which one sees rising from the fish's mouth strengthens the suggestion as to the power of the natural world to generate and bring to the surface the power and function of mind (air) in the material conditions of physical life, symbolized by water.

Vividly, then, the fish as symbol holds before our minds the idea that just as bubbles arise from the bottom of a pot of water when heat is applied beneath, so when the fire of divine spirit, through incarnation, is brought down under the watery elements in man's lower psychic nature, which are sense and emotion, the power of thought, reason, intelligence and understanding is generated and rises to the surface of consciousness exactly like the bubbles arising from the fish's mouth. Nature furnishes no end of these images of the forms of divine truth, but it seems we are too dull, blind and obtuse to discern them. The fish symbol thus gives us the image of spirit-mind in submergence, or the god power buried in matter. In spite of its burial, however, it does not die, because it still can breathe under the water. Several chapter-titles of the Book of the Dead speak of "giving air to the soul of Nu in the underworld." Therefore ancient constructions of enlightened fancy, finding analogues ubiquitously in nature, pictured the god-soul in incarnation by the semainograph of the great fish transporting the divine unit of spirit through, across or under the sea of life and landing it safely on that "farther shore" of heavenly bliss and glory. Here is the core of all the meaning that could ever be attached to the Jonah-whale allegory. For, -- do not doubt it --

"Jonah," along with Joshua, Joash, Josiah, Jesse, Jehoash, Joram and others, is the same Jesus -- and therefore conclusively allegorical -- as he who in the New Testament was also tossed on a ship in the tempest, and, till aroused by the distressed sailors, was lying fast asleep in the lower part, or "belly" of the ship. This Jesus nature likewise lies long, all too long, asleep in the "hold" of the human ship, these "Red Sea" bodies of ours, until in the perils of the swirling tempests of our emotional and sensual life, he is aroused and bestirs himself to take the tiller of our barque in his hand of reason, conscience and his own divine impulsion, and allays the virulence of the storm by the strength of his mind and his will to righteousness. The implications of the fish sign could be extended much further and some of them would yield rich essence of meaning. Enough has been presented here surely to indicate the graphic force of its suggestiveness for any reflecting mind. The central and cardinal significance is that of the watery confines of the human body of the units of divine fiery essence of God-soul that can not be quenched even when submerged in the waters of the sea of life. The fish should be a trenchant reminder and assurance to us that even in the midst of the overflowing of our higher spiritual genius by the lower appetencies and the glamors of sense life, the fire of soul deep within us is unquenchable. Not to be missed, also, is the emblemism of the mythic creature, the mermaid. The sign of Pisces does represent the feet of the human entity, as Aries, its neighbor the head. We have seen that the Eridanus River of life, emanating from the mouth of the Southern Fish, flowed right up to the foot of Orion. As the stellar type of the Christ in man, the star, or constellation of Orion is thus represented as standing in incarnation at the point where the upsurging stream of evolution of matter and form pours at his feet the forces and energies of the physical world, and it is for him to gather them up and utilize them. In this exertion and service he fulfills the purpose for which his heavenly Father sent him out to stand on the border between spirit and matter. So poetic imagery gave this creature of philosophical fancy, the mermaid, to typify man as the dual creature he is, combining the body of a natural animal with the soul of an embryonic god, in sea imagery a human with the feet or tail of the fish. It simply testifies with a charming figure that the base of man's life is immersed in the sea. The very throne of the great God Osiris was set over a symbolic tank of water. "The Lord sitteth upon the flood," says Psalms 29:1-11; and the majesty of Psalms 24:1-10 declares: "For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods (Psalms 24:2)." The Greek myth pictures Zeus as wading through the sea, and from the foam stirred up by the movement of his legs was born the Goddess of Love, Venus. Foam is a mixture of water and air and these spell emotion and mind. Love is the supreme blending of these two elements.

02.09. The Great Green Sea

THE GREAT GREEN SEA

It has been shown that the proper translation of the Hebrew *yam suph* as the Sea of Reeds, or Reed Sea, makes a drastic change in the great sea's color. The ancients sought for nature symbols in all directions. We do find it spoken of as the Emerald Sea. We are not surprised, then, to find that the Egyptian seers definitely poetized it as green from one line of metaphorical fancy, while from another image it is red. In the great Ritual of the Egyptian religion the supreme spiritual power, Ra, gives to Teta (one of the type names of the divine soul in man) "the power to journey over the Great Green Sea." Then it is said: "Thou sailest over the Lake of Kha, in the north of heaven, like a star passing over the Great Green Sea...as far as the place where is the star Seh (Orion)."

It has been elucidated above that the stream of life, Iaru-Tana (Eridanus, Jordan) issued from the mouth of the Southern Fish and flowed north to the feet of Orion, the Christ. So here again the star of soul, circuiting in its cycles the great sea of life, reaches at last this same star of Christhood, Orion, called by the Egyptians "the great star Seh." But we need not go so far back as the Egyptians to find the imagery of this Great Sea, be its color red or green. In the fourth chapter of our Book of Revelation the metaphor presents this figure in resplendent glory indeed. "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal." The "crystal sea" has ever been a symbol for spiritual mystics, hymnologists and rhapsodists to conjure with, as presenting some outward hint as to the pure radiancy of a more heavenly grade of consciousness than the one we normally experience on earth. And oddly enough, just as in the first chapter of Genesis this same river of life flowing forth from the throne of God divided into four heads, Gihon, Pison, Hiddekel and Euphrates, so here in Revelation, what is said immediately upon the statement of the presence of the crystal sea before the celestial throne is that "round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." It turns out that these four "beasts," the lion, ox, man and eagle, represent four signs of the zodiac, Leo, Taurus, Aquarius and Scorpio; and these in turn represent sensation (earth), emotion (water), mind (air) and spirit (fire), the elements of the "vials of wrath" which the seven angels later pour out upon the world. How significant it is that "lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts ... stood a Lamb, as it had been slain; having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." If we can visualize, if we can penetrate obvious outward symbolism to catch the meaning in the conceptual world, we have here the picture of all that one needs to know, as the glyph and graph of the meaning of all sacred Scriptures. For we have the throne-power of God, the sea of glistening pure matter before it, the diffraction of God's creative power into seven rays of energy dispersion to activate the creation in space (with four of these energy forms bringing their products into visible manifestation, the other three still in the invisible world) and our own life manifesting the four grades of psychic consciousness, sensation, emotion, thought and spiritual will. A most arresting detail of the picturization is that the clear glass of the crystal sea reflected the divine light of spirit which brooded over it. The watery field of life is pictured as a "crystal sea wherein the fire was reflected,

and upon it there stood those who had overcome the influence of the Beast, who had not worshipped his image nor borne upon them the mark of his number." This reflection of the heavenly fire of divine spirit in the sea of life down here is most enchantingly intriguing. It is in complete accord with the main statement of the great Hermes, the mouthpiece allegedly of the body of the mighty Egyptian occult wisdom, when he says that "that which is above is as that which is below, and that which is below is as that which is above, for the performance of the miracle of the One Thing." Yes, nature, the lower world, the visible universe, reflects in its manifestations everywhere the creative forms, the archetypes of the divine Mind. Any body of still water reflects the heavens. "If thou wilt know the invisible," says Hermes, "open wide thine eyes on the visible." The frequency with which the sea is mentioned in the Scriptures would indicate that it played an important part in the symbolism of the incarnation, as it obviously stood as a glyph for the human body blood. Some of these references to it in this meaning may be scrutinized. For instance, in Exodus 14:2, the Lord speaking to Moses, instructs him to tell the children of Israel that they "shall encamp by the sea." As these children of Israel are the hosts of his own Sons, whom he has sent to earth to live in immediate contact with this sea water of the animal bodies they must tenant here, the poetic expression of camping by the seaside would be quite felicitously apt to the situation. This will not appear at all strained or far-fetched when we consider that the great Jewish autumn festival of Succoth, tabernacles, booths or tents, in which they are ordered to live before they reach the Holy Land, are likewise a reference to the physical bodies in which they will be incarnate, as being a temporary and natural tenement for a temporary sojourn before they attain to their permanent spiritual bodies at the end of the incarnation series. For there is that spiritual "body of the resurrection" of which St. Paul speaks. The fleshly body is emblemized by more than one symbolic type in ancient allegorical depiction and in mythology, such as the well (of Beer-sheba), the cave (of Machpelah), the tomb, the pit, the prison, the desert and the wilderness.

Then it is said that the Egyptians overtook them as they encamped by the sea. Naturally this would be the case, as the Egyptians are the instincts, proclivities, habitudes and impulses of the bodily nature, and to say that they overtook the Israelites as they encamped by the sea is only poetically to say that these things caught them here in incarnation. And most significantly appears in this same chapter the Lord's injunction to Moses, who is, of course, the figure of man spiritual, to "lift up thy rod and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it," so that the Israelites would be able to walk through it on the dry ground, holding off the water. The "rod" in this drama is a definite symbol of man's inner soul power, his miracle-working force, and to stretch out the hand holding this rod over the sea was a vivid representation of man's developing and using his inner divine Self, in the exercise of which he is able to "subdue all things unto himself" and "put all things under his feet." the idea of the spiritual "fire" in man's nature drying out the moist nature and crossing a river or sea is very common in the ancient typology. The division of the sea into wet and dry portions would refer, by every inference, to the gradual separation of the soul and its interests from the first long subjection under the tyranny of the body and its instincts.

Very striking in its import can be the statement that the Israelites "came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water and three score and ten palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters." Universally the archaic Scriptures represented man's divinity as coming to full unfoldment through the development of twelve aspects or attributes of his Godhood; and the physical universe is actually founded on the number seven, as nature everywhere reveals. A ruse of the esotericists to

hide occult truth from the "vulgar" masses was the adding of a meaningless cipher to the cardinal number, making the seven into seventy. The name Elim is composed of el, Hebrew for "God," and the masculine plural terminal -im. So the stage at which the Israelites became full-fledged gods is indicated by twelve wells of water and seven palm trees. As the palm is a product of hot tropical lands, it suggests the ubiquitous symbol of soul, namely, fire, branching out in seven rays. The imagery employed by the Bible author indicates that the Lord raised up an east wind as his means for drying up the sea. The symbolism of east and west is too clear to be easily missed. The sun setting in the west was the nature-basis of souls sinking below the rim of the horizon of evolution into incarnation and, as it were, being immersed in the sea of life, under the picture of the sun setting in the ocean. In this state souls were overwhelmed in the body's watery life and nature and lived in what theology conceives to be "carnal sin." Passing around the cycle -- represented by the six lower signs of the zodiac -- they reach the point of rising above the horizon on the eastern side, and thus return to heaven, to spirit, to divine life. So the Egyptian Book of the Dead declares that Pepi -- one of the synonyms of the human Ego-soul -- "cometh into the eastern side of heaven, where the gods are born." The east, of course, carries all the intimations of the Easter resurrection of divine soul so long buried in the fleshly "body of this death," if we may use St. Paul's strong phrasing. And so runs the thrilling saga of the sea. It is understandable why the sapient sages of the past named the goddess Mothers after it, Thallath, Meri, Mary, Maya, Miriam, Mylitta and the rest; for the sea is our universal Mother. We were all born out of her capacious bosom. And, being a true mother, her infinite care will abide with us forever. When through the deep waters I call thee to go,

The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;

For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless,

And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"Deep calleth under deep at the noise of thy water-
spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me."

"For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of
the seas; and the floods encompassed me about;
all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

The waters compassed me about, even to the soul;

the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

I went down to the bottom of the mountains;

the earth with her bars was about me for ever;

yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God."

The Sea is his and he made it. Psalms 95:5 And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. Exodus 7:20 And the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. Exodus 4:9

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