

Sifting the Cinders of the Cathars IV

Chivalry and Solar Heroes

Troubadours, Chivalry and Courtly Love

The *chansons de geste* were the old national epics, meant for the hall, for Homeric recitation after supper. The French romances were dedicated to noble ladies, and represented everything that was most refined and elegant in the life of the twelfth century. The old French poet's well-known division of stories according to the three "matters"—the "matter of France", the "matter of Britain" and the "matter of Rome the great"—imperfectly sums up the riches and the variety of French romantic themes, even when it is understood that the "matter of Rome" includes the whole of antiquity—tales of Thebes and Troy, and the wars of Alexander.

Arthur was a manifestation of the suppressed Christianity of the first century that had a transfusion of blood from the related myths of the Celts and the Germans. Lady Charlotte Guest rendered a service to Celtic sources and Celtic influence, with her translation of the Welsh *Mabinogion*. Arthur's knights are a collection of Celtic gods known already in the *Mabinogion*. Further elements appear in Provence also in the tenth century, suggesting a link, however unlikely, between the Celtic lands and Languedoc. In the eleventh century, it exploded in Languedoc with the troubadour chivalric image expressed in poems and songs.

The troubadours were poets of Languedoc, a country then separate from France, and closer to Catalonia, northern Spain, and northern Italy, who wrote in the Language of Oc (Occitan), the *lingua Franca* of the time, from the end of the eleventh century to the end of the thirteenth. The troubadour's deity was the Lady, the idealised woman, in whose service the aspirant won the prize of the Rose—chivalric or courtly love. Maureen Duffy tells us of the eleventh century manuscript poem kept at Canterbury which describes "the Spring wherein everything renews save only the lover", written in the first person feminine. Troubadour lyrics were often written from the woman's viewpoint. Establishment Christian fanatics had scraped other similar poems from the pages but had somehow missed this one. Christ, the son of David (the Lover), loved the earth and that renewed all. It is sun god mythology, with Christ being Balder or Mithras, showing the roots of a primitive Christianity that became Catharism.

The troubadour was a poet, whether a poor wandering minstrel or a king. An early and prominent troubadour was Pierre Vidal who wrote about hospitality. The places he mentioned were all Cathar cities and fortresses. Troubadours reviled the clergy and their protectors, the feudal lords.

They liked best to lead the wandering life of the Cathars, who set off along the road in pairs.

David De Rougement

The Roman Church had supposedly set moral standards for almost 1000 years but morals were at the level of the gutter, and the emerging class of nobles, keen that their inheritance should not go to other men's sons, wanted a more reliable moral code than the Church offered. It seems they found it in the Christian heresies that had lingered among the poor for the whole of this time. In the south of France, the local nobles found the heresy worth adopting.

Amour courtois, first appeared in the country of the Cathars around 1100. Out of it came an amazingly open society so soon after the Dark Ages, with standards of good manners and honour that made the lord's job of handling the small but confined town, that his castle staff was, less oppressive. The lord and lady were the father and mother figures of the whole household—"mi don" and "ma dame". But the lord had duties beyond the castle, to the rest of his estates that were often dispersed, and to the king, hunting and fighting, and so the lady was in charge for much of the time, and she it was that had to be treated honorably and respectfully by all. Do not imagine that the lady was necessarily an old dowager. "Ma dame" was often still young and attractive, having married for title or wealth often in her low teens. Thus, Eleanor of Aquitaine married Louis VII at fifteen, had a child but divorced him at thirty and married Henry II of England, being thus a wife to a long serving English king and mother to three others, with nonconformist consequences that are never recognized.

The staff of the castle consisted of the court itself—a body of young men and women of noble blood in their own right placed as apprentices with the lord from the age of about twelve to learn the noble skills of warfare, hunting and management. The youths were learning to be knights and the girls, as attendants to the lady, were learning the skills of household management. They were training to be rulers, and were not expected to marry for romantic love but for political reasons and for the betterment of their family and prospects.

Yet in these narrow confines, pubescent boys and girls had to live together for many years without spoiling their future chances of success by having love-children. The adolescent sexuality of the young princes and princesses had to be controlled. Christianity never had any high regard for women, as we can see in its origins in Essenism, but the established Church had written them off as beneath contempt, whereas it seems that the primitive Church treated women with respect, perhaps out of fear of their powers of temptation. This respect of women proved a better way of controlling adolescent sexuality than the disdain of the Church. After all, disdain of women invites rapage, and that was not what the feudal lords wanted within their own demesnes. Cathars had accepted women as equal to men. Their souls were equally certain to be saved. Hildegard of Bingen thought people would rise to be angels, and directly experience God, a Cathar belief in so far as it was certain. So, respect of women had to be conditioned, and young men were taught a sense of their own honour as knights and a respect for women that made them hesitate to be dishonourable.

The ideal of courtly love is that it is true yet it is unrequited, and so is given as selfless and adoring service. All the young men could aspire to love the lady of the house, but it was a love they knew could not be returned in a personal way, and to expect particular requitement of it was dishonourable. All Cathars sought the ultimate spiritual union with God, so God was loved spiritually, but it could not be a singularly requited love because God necessarily loved everyone, and no one could be singularly loved by Him. God loved every soul equally and therefore none in particular, unlike the personal and mutually self-congratulating image that modern Christians have of their God.

The Cathar ideal was one of chaste love, and this it was that the troubadour celebrated. When the object of your love loves everyone equally, then your own singular love is unrequited in the same singular way. The best love was therefore unselfish, given freely, but not demanding any personal response. The troubadour ideal was this platonic love. Practising it helped them touch the spiritual goal that Cathar Perfects sought in their ascetic existence. The squires could woo and flatter the lady and her attendants, but it was an elaborate game that had no physical outcome for the honourable knight—it was training for heaven—the Holy Grail. Like Cathar *Croyants*, honourable knights extolled chastity even if they did not always achieve it as knights errant!

The young ladies in waiting simply had to resist temptation, seeking help from the older ladies and praying to God on her knees in the chapel if necessary, but should she yield, the honourable squire would not take advantage of her weakness. He could notch up a victory for his charm and—in his refusal to take advantage—for his honour, and, if he still felt frustrated, could turn to a village wench. Chivalry was restricted to the nobility. There was no dishonour in having bastards among the lower class. The two levels of lovemaking distinguished, were like the distinction between *Croyants* and *Parfaits*, a worldly level and a spiritual level. The latter was the ideal, requiring no physical love at all, but was much superior.

The women of the court were much flattered by this new ideal, having been generally treated as sex objects or drudges by their men since Christianity triumphed. Troubadours popularized the chivalrous idea by which women were all treated as a lover who was unreachable. All of them were the Holy Virgin—Maid Marian in the Robin Hood sagas. Such love was the fount of all virtue and nobility. In *Ancren Riwe* (c 1200), a rule for Anchoresses, Christ courts the human soul, but it is an unresponding lover. In *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight*, Gawain is tempted by the Grene Knight's wife but is too moral to accept, and finds that it was a test.

The system mainly worked. Love was romantic but unattainable with anyone that the young knight might truly desire among his equals. Courtesy and chivalry grew up to restrict wantonness among the ruling class. The troubadour and minstrel were to remind them constantly in poetry and song of their duty and honour, and how nobles should behave towards each other.

The point of these stories for the feudal courts was that they canalised the hothouse sexual atmosphere of the feudal household into harmless “gestes”. They released sexual tension, permitting sexual fantasy while reinforcing through it a code of sexual morality. Notionally, courtly love was fantasied adultery. Real adultery was dishonourable, but many of the lays of the minstrels and storytellers were about adulterous relationships, naturally often seeming wonderful but ending unpleasantly or sadly. Adultery *per se* was not condemned but it had to be external to the extended family of the lord and his retinue, and would end in tragedy otherwise. Even then, it was only at the invitation of the lady, not the wish or whim of the honourable knight. He wins her by being worthy. The separation from home is signified by a journey which takes the hero away beyond a shore, a river or the edge of a forest. Only at a suitable distance can he accept a maiden's advances.

Among the heretics, more even than the Roman Church, the human soul was the “Bride of Christ” and sexuality was sinful, but heretics accepted that the soul had to learn not to sin and to aspire to God, and could not be forced to, as the Catholic Church did. For the heretics, force and ritual magic could never make a wicked soul good. The wicked soul would have to undergo reincarnation to give it chance to learn righteousness. Chivalry was therefore training of the soul, and a serious matter, but a lapse could atoned for by greater endeavour. This was the original Zoroastrian idea. Good works were all that could balance out wickedness at Judgement Day.

Chivalric Lays and Romances

In France, the twelfth century witnessed a change of taste in stories which spread all over Europe. By about the year 1200, French literature dominated Christendom, not only sending abroad the French tales of *Charlemagne* and *Roland*, but importing into France plots, scenery and so forth, from many lands, Wales and Brittany, Greece and further east, and giving new French forms to them, which were admired and re-adapted by foreign nations. The *Song of Roland* was almost as popular in Italy, where the hero was Orlando, as in France.

Legend and love were the two main themes of the twelfth century literary revolt against earlier religious traditions, and they were the themes of a new creation—the romance. The idea of courtesy spread throughout France and England and then into the rest of Europe. William, Duke of Aquitaine who died in 1127, had the reputation of being the first troubadour, yet courtly love was already widely known. Women had come to be regarded as of more importance than ever in the community. The literary tendencies which made for love-tales found their counterpart in the striving towards higher ideals of conduct in relation to woman. Manners became more refined and a code of chivalry was evolved. Heightened sensibility was revealed in the increased appreciation of the beautiful—the beauty of womanhood, the beauty of nature, the beauty of noble conduct. And the refinement of fancy made fairyland seem possible.

Many romances fall outside the classification into the three “matters” of France, Britain and Rome. The movements of the crusaders brought the west into closer touch with the east. Before *The Arabian Nights*, the east began to affect western imaginations. The romance, *Flores and Blancheflour*, could be found there—the adventures of the two young lovers cruelly separated. The favourite story from the French epics was that of *Oliver and Fierabras*, where the motive is the opposition between Christian and infidel.

The relation of the romances to popular ballads is not easy to understand. The ballad is essentially a lyrical form, and has its own laws, independent of all forms of narrative poetry in extant medieval English. The two forms of lyrical ballad and narrative romance were independent through all the Middle Ages. The romances, as a rule, end happily, but there is no such law in ballads. The question is made more complicated by the use of ballad measure for some of the later romances, like *The Knight of Curtesy*, a strange version of *The Chevalier de Coucy*. *Robin Hood* and *Adam Bell* and such might be ranked with ballads or with romances.

The *Ipomedon* of Hue de Rotelande competes with Chrestien de Troyes. Its theme is the proud young lady and the devoted lover, the true love beginning “in her absence”, before he has ever seen her. It relates his faithful service in disguise, his apparent slackness in chivalry, his real prowess in three days of tournament. It is not set in the court of Arthur, but in Apulia and Calabria. The knight is a gallant if capricious lover. Marriage having been proposed between young Ipomedon, prince of Apulia, and the beautiful queen of Calabria, he determines to woo her for himself. He arrives *incognito* at the court of the queen, wins her favour by manly exploits, and then just leaves!

Hearing that a tournament is to be held of which the queen herself is to be the prize, he returns, but loudly proclaims his dislike for tournaments, and goes hunting on the days of the contests. Actually, he goes to a nearby hermitage, changes and returns for the tournament clad, on successive days in red, white and, black armour, a favourite medieval method of disguise adopted by Sir Gowther and others. He wins every joust and then rides off without claiming his prize nor revealing his identity.

Soon afterwards, the queen is troubled by a neighbouring duke, and the hero appears again in her defence, this time disguised as a fool. After more adventures, he declares his love with a happy result. In this romance, the knight-errant pursues his quest of love. Assumed slothfulness and fondness for disguise were frequent attributes of the medieval hero—the one added interest to actual exploits, the other assured that the love of the well-born was accepted on merit.

The Norman clerk, Wace (1100-1174), in 1155, was the first French writer to use Geoffrey of Monmouth's chronicle. According to Layamon, Wace wrote up the stories (*Roman de Brut*, 1155) for the Norman court of Henry II (1154-1189) and “gave” his book to “the noble Eleanor, who was the high king Henry's queen”, emphasising the courtesy and chivalry of it.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was, from the age of fifteen, the duchesse of Aquitaine, a prosperous duchy in France. She married the King of France, Louis, but they separated amicably until she then married Henry of Anjou, who soon was to become Henry II of England. Since Henry, with this marriage ruled half of France as well as England, Louis was not pleased. Eleanor and Henry did not get on well and even though they had five boys and two girls, they finished up estranged, with Eleanor more or less confined while Henry pursued his amours. Two of the sons were Richard the Lion Heart and King John, who signed the Magna Carta.

A daughter was Marie Countess of Champagne, and both she and her mother were fans of the troubadours, and their philosophy of courtly love, and, perhaps too, the Cathar theology of it. Eleanor of Aquitaine was the grand daughter of Duke William IX of Aquitaine, he whose soubriquet was “the Troubadour.” Marie encouraged Chrestien de Troyes, who wrote some of the main courtly love stories in the Arthurian cycle. Troyes was the chief town of Champagne, a major center for trade and hosiery, and a city for travelling troubadours and escaping Cathars. The counts of Champagne at Troyes, had set up under Cathar influence a school of Jewish and eastern studies, which had flourished from 1070 AD. The Council of Troyes, in 1128 AD, set up the Knights Templar, and the city remained important to the Templars afterwards. Marie’s son, Richard the Lion Heart’s nephew, Henry of Champagne, became King of Jerusalem, so the grail romances must have been recited by the crusaders about 1200. Chrestien died around 1188, before he could finish his work. Gautier, Manessier, and Gerbert continued Chrestien’s tale in their “continuations”.

Wace was a courtly writer, and Arthur appears as the ideal knightly warrior of the chivalric imagination. He adds picturesque detail and colour all his own, and had access to romantic traditions unknown to Geoffrey. The Round Table is first heard in Wace, who says, “the Bretons tell many a fable” of it. It was made by Arthur to settle all disputes about precedence among his knights. Geoffrey’s account of the passing of Arthur is expanded. The British king is not merely left in Avalon “to be cured of his wounds” but is still there, the Bretons await him, and say he will live again.

Layamon (c 1200) emphasized the other-worldliness of it, introducing many of the strange features of the Arthurian myths such as magic weapons, Merlin, Arthur taken by the Elves at birth (whence the fairies present at Christenings in the French fairy tales), and the death of Arthur. He describes the birth of Merlin:

Then came before me the fairest thing that ever was born, as if he were a tall knight, arraigned all in gold. This I saw in a dream each night in sleep. This thing glided before me, and glistened of gold. Oft me it kissed, and oft embraced. Oft it approached me, and oft it came to me very nigh. When I at length looked at myself—strange this seemed to me—my flesh to me was loathsome, my limbs unusual.

This is plainly enough meant to be the Cathar Christ, the archangel Michael:

There dwell in the sky many kinds of beings that there shall remain until Domesday arrive. Some are good and work well. Therein is a race very numerous that come among men. They are called *Incubae Daemones*. They do not do much harm but deceive folk. Many a man in dream oft they delude, and many a fair woman through their craft have no children, and many a good man’s child they beguile through magic.

Layamon seems to be trying to make his tale acceptable to the Catholic Church which had started to persecute heretics. So, the fairy lover is an incubus, a demonic spirit but one which does no serious harm. The Church did not hear and before long those who had demonic lovers by

night were being tortured and burnt at the stake. S Theresa, a few hundred years later, was lucky not to be burnt as a witch instead of worshipped as a saint.

What the English wanted was adventures—slaughter of Saracens, fights with dragons and giants, rightful heirs getting their own again, innocent princesses championed against their felon adversaries. They were purveyed by popular authors, who took from the French what suited them and left out what the French authors liked best—ornamental passages. The English romance writers worked for common minstrels and their audiences, and were not particular about their style. Their style is popular and hackneyed. The authors were well enough pleased to have it so. They did not attempt to rival their eminent French masters.

Layamon is much nearer to the robust singers of the Old English period than to the courtly French poet, although he takes most of his material from Wace. Arthur was restored to his rightful place as the champion of Britain, and the great Christian king, but Elfland claims him, both at his birth and at his death. Elves received him into the world. They gave him gifts, to become the best of knights and a mighty king, to have long life and to be generous above all living men. At his passing, Arthur says he will go to Argante (Morgan la Fay), the splendid elf, who will heal him of his wounds, so that he will return again to his kingdom. Arthur's byrnie (coat of mail) was made for him by Wygar, the elvish smith, his spear by Griffin of the city of the wizard Merlin (Caermerdin). Caliburn, his sword, was wrought in Avalon with magic craft, the Round Table by a strange carpenter from beyond the sea.

The Romance of the Rose

Next come the metrical romances—of which the works of Chrestien de Troyes are at once the typical and the most successful—concerned with the exploits of the separate knights of the Arthurian court. But first an apparent digression. *The Roman de la Rose*, an encyclopedia of love, was begun about 1240 AD by William of Lorris and finished about 1280 AD by John Chopinot (Jean de Meun). The science of the static world of the middle ages could only be the collection and categorization of the order of creation ordained by God. The Scholastics tried to cover every aspect of philosophy and theology, and poets tried to cover everything else in long detailed poems celebrating such as the seeking of love, as this was. Some Christian churchmen were offended at such an allegory, and re-allegorized it, thinking it was a purely erotic work, as most have thought it. The book celebrates the search for erotic love, but it was nonetheless an allegory of the search for divine love, or was already a re-writing of an original which did allegorized this search. When the rose is kissed the spiritual kingdom is entered. Johan Huizinga says:

To formalize love is the supreme realization of the aspiration of the life beautiful.

It is a question of what the beautiful life was. As a poetic encyclopedia of love, it is the noble chivalrous life here on earth, and that was meant to aspire to perfection. But Perfection is a heavenly quality, and so the life meant is the life of the righteous spirit re-united with God in His kingdom. Erotic love is love nonetheless, and to imagine achieving it perfectly is to think of attaining perfect love—God's love. Those who aspired to reunite with god were the Perfects of the Cathar religions.

Ritualizing love is no different from the rites of the ancient *hierogamos*, a ritual of the Jews to judge from the many broad hints of it in the bible, culminating in the mysterious wedding at Cana in *John*. Marriage is an authorization of the act of copulation, an act of blissful uniting. Entry to heaven was the act of uniting an errant spirit with god. The church placed all its emphasis on the chastity of its founding Essenes—men who aspired to perfection, like the

heretical Parfaits—consequently losing touch with the *hierogamos* and its wider significance allowing it to separate sexual union from the sacrament of marriage, declaring one to be sacred while the other was sinful in an utter absurdity.

The gist of the story, told as a dream, is that the hero comes in May to the secret garden of desire, was led inside by Idleness, entered and described it. Eventually taken to see the roses, he fell in love with a rose, becoming a vassal of Cupid and receiving his commandments, but was unable to approach the rose. Danger, Foul-Mouth, Fear and Shame discouraged him. There is a struggle. Reason, from her high tower, and Friend advised the distraught Lover, then Venus appeared and allowed the Lover to kiss the rose. Angered by this, Jealousy built a fortress around the roses, and a tower in which to imprison Fair Welcome. The Lover was despairing, but stayed faithful to his quest.

Reason examined the Lover's problem. She explained friendship, fortune, wealth and finally justice, urging the Lover to abandon Cupid and Fortune, and to follow her. The Lover rejected Reason's proposal, and criticized her use of indecorous language. She explained his error and left. Friend advised the Lover how to outwit his enemies. She explained the importance of wealth to a lover's quest, and described his own impoverishment, the corruption of love since the Golden Age, how a modern Jealous Husband might address his wife, the Jealous Husband and the bad effect of domination upon marriage, the Golden Age and the decline which has followed it, and at last the rules for a lover to follow.

The Lover, though pleased with Friend's advice, was frustrated in his quest and was rejected by Wealth. He mollified Foul Mouth and received a promise of help from Cupid. Cupid assembled his forces including False Seeming, who addressed Cuoid's company. The assault began. False Seeming killed Foul Mouth. Cupid's forces captured the Old Woman, guardian of Fair Welcome, and induced her to give her ward the Lover's gift. Then the Old Woman addressed Fair Welcome, whereupon, with their help, the Lover was admitted to the fortress and approached the rose, but was repulsed by Danger, Fear, and Shame.

The author digressed by defending his poem against charges of obscurity, indecorous languages, and ecclesiastical satire.

The forces of Love were defeated, and Love called upon his mother, Venus, for help. Nature, though struggling with Death, entered the conflict. She sent Genius, a priest, to pronounce an anathema. Genius addressed Nature. Nature confessed to Genius in which God's creation of the world, the effects of celestial bodies upon the earth and its inhabitants, necessity and free will, the weather, illusions, phantoms, and dreams, and that comets do not announce the death of kings are explained. True nobility was the result of virtue. More information on comets and other incorruptible celestial bodies, until it is clear that, of all God's corruptible creation beneath the sphere of the moon, only man ignored Nature's laws. Nature sent Genius to Cupid, complaining that man transgressed her commands by not procreating like all other species.

Genius addressed the host of Love, then was welcomed by Love and Venus. He excommunicated the enemies of procreation, condemned virginity, encouraged procreation and appointed hell for those who rejected Nature. Jesus, the son of a virgin, was a white lamb in a field eating the incorruptible grass in a permanent daylight—the eternal midday sun being the symbol of timelessness in the original good creation of Zoroastrianism. He urged his hearers to live virtuously, so as to enter the beautiful park of the Lamb. He explained at the end of the Golden Age, Saturn was castrated, and lastly contrasted the park of the Lamb with the garden of Desire.

Venus shot a burning brand at the tower, and with God, Genius of the allegory, ignited the universe. The enemies of Love, Shame and fear, departed and the Lover finally entered the rose garden for the hero to pluck a rose, whereupon the dreamer woke up.

Huizinga says: "It is impossible to imagine a more deliberate defiance of the Christian ideal", but it is the ideal of a distorted and incomplete form of the original religion, a branch that was cut off. Catholic Christianity was a heretical branch of primitive Christianity. Here are remnants of the original itself. Only the elect were allowed into the garden of delight. Love allowed them, but they had to be free of hatred, avarice, envy, hypocrisy and other obnoxious qualities, to which were added poverty and old age, for no one in heaven was old or poor. They were some of its benefits. Yet the desirable qualities of the lover were those meant to attract women, perhaps logical in the apparent nature of the work, but doubtless a cynical rewriting of the original allegory of the ascent into the spiritual heaven of the true God at the core of this encyclopedia of fancy. It became a cult work among the aristocracy, even if it was meant to be a parody of an heretical mystical work, but woman detested it, and so too did many clergymen, though not all. Some of them, like John Gerson, tried to re-allegorize it for Catholics in which the rose was Jesus.

Chrestien's Work

Arthur has little direct involvement. Chrestien's *Yvain* is translated into English, but the French romance of *The Fair Unknown* of Renaud de Beaujeu is not the original of the English story of *Sir Libeaus*, which, like the old Italian version, had a simpler and earlier form. Likewise, the English *Sir Percevall* must come from something older and less complicated than Chrestien's *Conte del Graal*. These two romances belong to an earlier type, such as may have been hawked about in England by French or French-speaking minstrels, and they are different in their plots, not merely in their style, from the French works.

Chrestien de Troyes and Benoit de S More were courtly people, putting into their work the spirit and graces of gentle conversation, particularly amatory sentiment. Germany was quick to learn from the French and to rival them. Hartmann von Aue translated Chrestien freely—the romance of *Enid*, the tale of *Yvain*. Wolfram von Eschenbach in his *Parzival* uses the substance, but the spirit is his own, because it has a different kind of nobility. The English of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries reject this extreme romanticism of style. They like the adventures and perhaps the love aspects no less but they are bored by eloquent monologues of passionate damsels. There is only one English version of a romance by Chrestien, *Ywain and Gawain*. It is late—from the time of Chaucer. It is not rude, but it cuts short the long speeches of the original. Chrestien's *Yvain (Le Chevalier an Lion)* has 6818 lines, the English version 4032.

Besides Chrestien de Troyes and his peers, other poets wrote a simpler kind of French romance that the English liked better. They are the work of Marie de France and the shorter romances taken from Breton lays, such as *Sir Launfal*, *Sir Orfeo* and the *Lai le Freine*. Breton lays were, for the English, short stories in rhyme taken from Celtic sources. The Breton lays are nearer than other romances to the popular beliefs out of which romantic marvels are drawn. Here, there is no superabundance of monologue and sentimental digression. The clear lines of the original could be followed by the less sophisticated English without too much difficulty, but they are not Arthurian.

Sir Orfeo is the English poem—no original is extant in French—of *Orpheus and Eurydice*. The classical myth is turned into an original fairy tale, a rescue from the fairy, for Pluto has become the fairy king, and everything ends happily—Eurydice is brought back in safety. It is utterly

different from the rambling tales of chivalry, having much of the quality that is found in some of the ballads, and indeed, it became a ballad in Shetland with a Norse refrain.

Sir Launfal came from Marie de France. Sir Launfal is taken off to the Isle of Avalon, also called Oleron and Oliroun, by his fairy lover, Tryamour. Gutfried von Strasburg in *Tristram* refers to “Avalun, the Fays country”. The story is one of the best known—the fairy bride:

The kinge’s daughter of Avalon,
That is an isle of the fairie
In ocean full fair to see...

and the loss of her, through the breaking of her command. Avalon is thought of as an island in the ocean, seemingly the same as the Celtic, Isle of the Blest. Aval means apple, and Avalon has traditionally been associated with Glastonbury, in Somerset, the Town on Glass, probably meaning the appearance of the shallow green water that surrounded it.

In *Ogier le Danoir*, Avalon is a castle of loadstone “not far on this side of the terrestrial paradise, whither were rapt in a flame of fire Enoch and Helios”. So, this old tale shows us that someone in those days knew that Enoch, who famously “walked with God, and he was not, for God took him”, was the same as Helios—the sun! Morgan la Fay lived in Avalon, and when Ogier saw her he mistook her for the Virgin Mary! Ogier is plainly meant to be dead in his sojourn on Avalon, but Morgan la Fay allows him to return to life after 200 years to save the world from the Paynims—Pagans, meaning in this case the Moslem Infidel. Having done this, he was again taken and was never seen ever again.

The Wedding of Sir Gawain, which, in another form, is *The Wife of Bath’s Tale*, is of the same mythical type. *The Wyf of Bath’s Tale* is that a knight is condemned to death for rape by Guinevere. His chance of life is to discover what women desire most. The errant knight sets out to find the answer, and eventually a poor, old and ugly peasant woman promises him the answer in return for whatever she herself desires if she proves to be correct.

On returning to the castle with the answer, not a single woman of the court would dissent from the old woman’s wisdom—all women want sovereignty over their husbands and lovers. The knight was pardoned, and the old woman demanded her desire—the knight must marry her. Unhappily, he agrees to it, as he must do in honour, but on the wedding night, she tells him in response to his distress that she could be young and beautiful, but then would be unfaithful, whereas otherwise she would not. In the light of her previous wisdom, he leaves her to decide, thus having the mastery over him. She agrees and reveals herself as a beautiful maiden, promising to be faithful anyway. Of course, she will not be, because she is the earth goddess rejuvenated by the spring sun, and he is the fertilising sun god of the year. Next year, there must be another one. The knight is explicitly Gawain in *The Wedding of Sir Gawain*.

The romance of *Sir Libeaus*, “the fair unknown”, the son of Sir Gawain, is less simple and direct than *Sir Orfeo* or *Sir Launfal*, but has some of the virtues of the fairy tale. The plot is the expedition of a young and untried knight to rescue a lady from enchantment, a pure romance of knight errantry, and chivalry. Sir Libeaus has many adventures reaching the palace of the two enchanters—“clerkes of nigremauncie”—who keep the lady of Sinaudon under their spells in the shape of a loathsome worm.

In the romance of *Amis and Amiloun*, not courtly love but friendship is the knightly virtue, an all-absorbing quality which involves, if necessary, the sacrifice of the both family and conscience. Amis and Amiloun are two noble foster-brothers, much alike in appearance, whose lives are

indissolubly linked together. Amiloun generously, but surreptitiously, takes the places of Amis in a trial by combat. For his unselfishness, with the deception involved in it, he becomes a leper. Some time afterwards, Amis comes across his friend but he is in such a state he cannot recognize him. After a dramatic scene, the discovery is made, and Amis, grief-stricken, remove his friend's leprosy by sacrificing his own children. Such a sacrifice is not permitted to be irrevocable, and, when Amis and his wife Belisante go to view their slaughtered children, they are hush asleep.

There are also the prose romances, compiled about the end of the twelfth century, and expanded, interpolated and edited until about the middle of the thirteenth century. Many, like *Merlin* and *Lancelot*, give greater prominence to Arthur's own deeds and fortunes. The more elaborate French Arthurian romances were not the only authorities for the English tales. *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight*, cannot be referred to any known French book for its original.

Walter Map, who called the Welsh his fellow-countrymen, brings Wales and the Angevin court into touch with the development of the Arthurian legend. Eleanor and Marie would have been aware of the tradition of Celtic romance from their British connexions. The Celtic element revealed love as a passion in all its fulness, a passion laden with possibilities, mysterious and awful in power and effect. It opened up avenues to a fairy-land peopled with elvish forms and lit by strange lights. It pointed to an exalted chivalry and lofty ideals, to a courtesy which was the outcome of a refinement of sentiment.

The Celtic Church was for long considered heretical by the Roman Church, and this might be why the troubadours picked British myths to elaborate as stories of good and ill and the search for spiritual salvation. The misty and mysterious castles and magic symbolic objects appear everywhere in Celtic myth. The four Celtic treasures, sent to earth for the eternal glory of man, appear in the Arthurian cycle:

1. the invincible sword, Excalibur
2. a spear
3. the stone of destiny, on which a king is crowned, and inscribes his name before he can be king
4. the cauldron of plenty.

The story of Lancelot is a late, and a non-Celtic, graft on the Arthurian stock. It embodies the ideal of *amour courtois*, and shows most clearly the influence of chivalry on Arthurian story. Chrestien says in the foreword to *Lancelot* that Marie of Champagne inspired and gave the sources of the poem. Lancelot first appears as the lover of Guinevere in Chrestien's *Chevalier de la Charrette*, a poem written at the instance of Marie. Chaucer tells us that in England, women held "in ful gret reverence the boke of Lancelot de Lake." The book to which Chaucer refers will be the great prose romance of Lancelot, associated with the name of Walter Map. The *Lancelot* of Walter Map is in three parts—*Lancelot*, the *Quest of the Holy Grail* and the *Morte Arthur*. One version of the *Quest* is inscribed by him "for the love of his lord, king Henry, who caused it to be translated from Latin into French."

The prose *Lancelot du Lac* published in 1594 has Merlin the enchanter as "demon-born" and, in it, Vivienne, the Lady of the Lake, is described as...

...a fay, and in these times all these women were called fays who had to do with enchantments and charms—and there were plenty of them, principally in Great Britain—and know the power and virtues of words, of stones and of herbs by which they were kept in youth and in beauty, and in great riches, as they devised.

In the rhyming *Mort Arthur*, first occurs the story of the maid of Ascolot, and her fruitless love for the noble Lancelot. The narrative treats the pathos of love, and here, as in *Tristram*, the treatment is subtle. Lancelot is Guinevere's champion. The queen is under condemnation, but is rescued by Lancelot, who consequently endures a siege in the Castle of Joyous Garde. The end of the Arthurian story begins to be visible in the discord thus introduced between Lancelot and Gawain, Arthur and Modred. The alliterative *Morte Arthure* is more consciously historical. Arthur is represented as returning home from his wars with Lucius on hearing of Modred's treachery. He fights the traitor, but is mortally wounded, and is borne to Glastonbury, where he is given a magnificent burial.

Characters, unknown to the chroniclers, and themselves the heroes of independent legends, make a dramatic entry upon the Arthurian stage. Tristram and Lancelot and Perceval divert attention from Arthur himself. A history of Arthurian romance must cover legends which have only the most artificial connexion with the original Arthurian tradition. Some of these legends are as archaic and as purely mythical as the fables about the British Arthur, and were probably current in popular lays before they appeared in the Arthurian tales.

The Church thought the troubadours were subversive, and sought to excommunicate them and the story tellers who were singing and reciting romantic stories, as agents of the Devil! Then it set the Cistercian monks founded by S Bernard of Clairvaux the task of making these stories safe for the Catholic listener. They rewrote the epic poems as the *Vulgate* cycle, in a heavily Christianized version, just when the robber barons were set loose to massacre the Cathars of Languedoc by Innocent III.

King Arthur

Arthur is "arta", order, but is born out of disorder—adulterously! Arthur's sister, Morgan la Fay, has two sons, a good one, Gawain, and a wicked one, Modred. Here seems to be a slight variant on the normal solar or seasonal myth in which the annual sun has two demi-annual sons. Arthur seems to be the uncle of the two sons of his sister Modred, but the hint of incest between the brother and the sister means that Arthur was properly the father. Moreover, since the Father, the annual sun, comprises both the half annual sons of the previous year, it follows that he is both father and uncle to the twin sons of the following year. Arthur was crowned at fifteen, the year of manhood in the Aryan tradition we know from Persian religion. These God the Father figures are perhaps the same as the Celtic Dagda or Eochaid Ollathair, the Father of All, equating with the Aryan, Dyaus Pitar.

Guinevere is the perpetual virgin. She remains young and attractive to each new generation of knights, just as mother earth does to each fertilising sun in the spring or the wet season. She is a Celtic Venus, and her union with Arthur in the myth is fruitless. Guinevere has no children in the stories, either to Arthur or to Lancelot, and is called a barren woman by some commentators, but surely her childlessness is a direct expression of her perpetual virginity. The true "sons" are Arthur's nephews. In these solar myths, the twin sons of the annual Father are the sons of winter and summer, in the north, or dry and wet seasons in the ancient Near East. Arthur, the Father, ages, and a good son succeeds him in his adventures.

In the annual cycle, the two sons are opposed to each other, and each dies in turn, only to be born again the following year. Modred tries to usurp Arthur, but the king returns and defeats the usurper, but is wounded and eventually dies. In this act, he is being the fertile sun, a role that Gawain has otherwise, but God the Father *is* God the Son, and so Christianity is paralleled. He is "the once and future king" because the story is repeated annually.

For the rest of the cycle of Arthurian tales, Arthur recedes into the background. He is the High King standing for the High God representing Order—chivalry. Arthur is lord and Guinevere lady in the chivalrous feudal sense that they are the Father and Mother of the court, all the nobles being their sons and daughters by adoption. The kings of all the lands that Arthur conquers offer him a son to adopt. The Round Table with its twelve or twenty four knights suggests the annual cycle. The equivalent court is found in the bible with God sitting with all his sons representing the nations of the world. Yehouah is in this the god only of the Jews, but he usurps his father. Arthur's chief knights too take on the role of the Good Son in turn—Gawain, Perceval, Lancelot, Galahad. Gawain is unmistakably a solar hero.

R S Loomis thought Lancelot was the sun god Lugh. Lancelot's name, which is not a natural one, is plainly composed to mean a little spear, with military and sexual connotations. Lancelot is besotted by Guinevere, the virgin lover, even though notionally she is older than he. Lancelot is also called Galahad, and soon appears as Galahad, the virgin knight of the later versions. Guinevere recognized Galahad as Lancelot reincarnated as soon as she saw him. Yet Catholic Christianity had no knowledge of reincarnation. It was heretical! The heretics obviously saw the seasonal cycle as a natural demonstration of death and reincarnation. Even S Paul thought the grain of wheat sown in a field died before it was revived in its appropriate form by God. The heretics saw the ultimate incarnation, like Paul, as a spiritual one. The earthly favours of knights and ladies are training for the soul, and, when it is ready, the quest for God's favour has been achieved, and the cycle of reincarnations ends with the soul re-uniting with God.

The amount of early British literature dealing with the Arthurian legend is strangely meagre and undistinguished. Its exploitation was the achievement of French writers. It became an international body of romance, which poets and story-tellers across Europe used for their own purposes. The British king faded into the background, becoming overshadowed by his knights. All become natives of a neutral fairy-land of fantasy and illusion. Not much later, Chaucer links all that he knew about the Arthurian stories with his recollections of the fairy world:

In th' olde dayes of the king Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
Al was this land fulfild of fayerye:
The elf-queen, with hir joly companye
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede.

The British Arthur has his unquestioned place as the supreme king of fairy-land, an enchanted land where incompatible ideals of knight-errantry and the church eventually were reconciled, and where east met west. Gibbon writes:

Pilgrimage and the holy wars introduced into Europe the specious miracles of Arabian magic. Fairies and giants, flying dragons and enchanted palaces, were blended with the more simple fictions of the west, and the fate of Britain depended on the art, or the predictions, of Merlin. Every nation embraced and adorned the popular romance of Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. Their names were celebrated in Greece and Italy, and the voluminous tales of Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristram were devoutly studied by the princes and nobles, who disregarded the genuine heroes and heroines of antiquity.

The Celtic Arthur

The "early" poetry of the Cymry is not that early in the versions we now have, but parts can be attributed to an earlier period. *The Black Book of Carmarthen*, was compiled during the latter part of the twelfth century. *The Book of Aneirin* and the *Book of Taliesin*, are the next oldest,

from the thirteenth century, while the *Red Book of Hergest*, the basis of the *Mabinogi*, dates from the end of the fourteenth century. Arthur is not in the four branches of the *Mabinogi*, though he appears in the incidental tales in the *Mabinogion*. The hero of Llywarch Hên and Taliesin, the most celebrated of the early Welsh bards, is Urien, lord of Rheged, not Arthur. Nor does Aneirin speak of him. The *Stanzas of the Graves* in the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, introduces the mystery surrounding his grave and begins the belief in his return. A monk caused a tumult at Bodmin in the year 1113 by refusing to admit that Arthur still lived.

The Welsh folklore scholar, Professor John Rhys, says Arthur occurs in what seems to be early Gaelic myth as Artur, a son of Nemed who fought the Fomors. From being this minor figure in some old myths, he suddenly appears as a king, and not just a mortal king. The gods of earlier myths are all paying him homage, and Lludd and Arawn are among his knights. A votive offering to a Celtic god, Mercurius Artaius, has been found in south west France, so Artaius was identified by the Romans with Mercury, perhaps in the form of a Hermes. Cuchulainn is plainly phallic in some of his descriptions, and it might have once been more obvious in these heroes. Arthur is plainly from the same world as Finn and Cuchulainn. Arthur's deeds are supernatural so he is a god, even though he is depicted as human. He is at least a demi-god. Many of his companions are old Celtic gods, judging by their names and their characteristics, and the magic objects of Celtic mythology appear again in Arthurian romance.

In the *Book of Taliesin*, is the *Harrowings of Hell*, in which Arthur travels by sea to the realms of twilight and darkness, appearing as a purely mythical hero with supernatural attributes, doubtless a rendering of a myth about the setting sun. Of the stories in the *Mabinogion*, *Culhwch and Olwen* and the *Dream of Rhonabwy* are purely British Arthurian stories, unaffected by the French romances. The *Lady of the Fountain*, *Geraint, son of Erbin*, and *Peredur, son of Evrawc*, correspond in their main features, to Chrestien de Troyes's *Le chevalier au lion*, *Erec* and *Le conte del Graal*, respectively. However, even the later Welsh Arthurian stories are not mere imitations of Chrestien's poems. Their characters and incidents may be substantially the same, but the tone, the atmosphere, and the setting of the Welsh tales are different. Says E Renan (*The Poetry of the Celtic Races*):

The charm of the *Mabinogion* principally resides in the amiable serenity of the Celtic mind, neither sad nor gay, ever in suspense between a smile and a tear.

Gwydion, son of Don, was the British Odin. Professor John Rhys noted that, of the earlier gods, Gwydion and his immediate retinue are absent from among the ranks of Arthur's retainers. Lludd, Gwyn, Arawn, Prideri, and Manawddan, all appear, as do the other sons of Don, Amaethon, and Govannon—but not Gwydion. Some of the figures of Brythonic mythology missing by name in the Arthurian cycle seem to have been renamed as Arthurian characters. Gwalchmai, the "Falcon of May", is the old Llew Llaw Gyffes, a god of light, Mabon, Owain, Gawain and Peredur Paladhir ("Spearman with the Long Shaft"), and becomes Percival, Lancelot ("Little Spear") and Galahad (Gwalchaved, "Falcon of Summer"). Medrawt, Gwalchmai's brother, and the enemy of him and Arthur is the old Dylan, god of darkness and malice, and becomes Mordred. Morgan, Arthur's sister, is an old goddess called Gwyer ("Gore"), later the sister of Gwydion, Arianrod. Merlin (Myrddin) seems to have once been a high god of the British. Britain was called "Merlin's Enclosure". Carmarthen (Merlin's Castle) is named after him. He was married to a sky goddess, so seems to have been a British Zeus. He is a manifestation of Odin, the sky and sun god of the Teutons, in his sagacious aspect. He is Math, Lludd and Emrys. Kay was new, but his descriptions says he was fire, sometimes small and sometimes tall as the highest tree. Mark, king of Cornwall, or sometimes the whole of Britain, is March, a Celtic god of the underworld, probably Morc of the Fomors of Irish myth. The Fomors had animal features, and March means horse. Urien was a god who was the patron of the bards.

His symbol was a raven (“*bran*”), and so he was probably a form of the god, Bran. In confirmation, in one poem, Urien does as Bran does, ordering his head to be cut from his wounded body.

The various forms of sun god, and different names for apparently the same god, to judge by their characteristics, is the result of syncretism of the gods of many Celtic clans, probably influenced by the attempts to forge a unity against Roman, Saxon and Danish invaders. Bran was Urien was Pwyll was Pryderi and so on. They often seem to be gods of the underworld as well as of light, so were perhaps gods of the setting sun. The Greek place of dead heroes was Elysium, and the after life for the Celts seems to have been equally happy, and not at all the awful places of the non-heroic Greek, and less still the punishment of Hell conceived by the Christians. The sun sank down into the sea as a red mass in the evening, going into the underworld to procreate and rest before morning. The sun is like an engorged phallus, flushed and red, and enters the earth goddess at sunset to keep the earth fertile. Thus the underworld was a place of pleasure, and the *fons et origo* of all things. It was “Summer Land”. When the Brythons occupied the bulk of Britain the western land of Somerset was identified with the setting sun, and Avalon, near Glastonbury, was the British Elysium. In Cornwall they called it Melwas, and in Wales Gwyn. The underworld castles of Celtic myth are often of glass and stand up on an island in a calm sea. *Caer Sidi* is a castle of glass. The Irish Fomors lived on Tory island in a glass tower.

Arthurian Celtic myths often parallel the myths of Gwydion. Both Arthur and Gwydion are types of Orpheus or Odin, guardians of culture and arts, and both engage the forces of darkness. In Scotland, Arthur leads the Wild Hunt, suggesting he was identified with a god like Odin. There are differences. Arthur cannot get a single pig, but Gwydion manages to steal them from Pryderi. Yet Arthur raids Annwn and gets the magic cauldron of bardic inspiration, though his forces are reduced to only a handful, and even some of *them* seem to be dead!

From the areas where Arthurian place names abound and where he supposedly operated in the legends, Arthur was undoubtedly British. The memory of no other British hero is so well preserved in the place-names of Britain:

Only the devil is more often mentioned in local association than Arthur.

His exploits do not extend to the highlands of Scotland or to Ireland. The exploits of Finn mac Cool seem to have taken the place of Arthur in Ireland, and are often so similar to Arthur's that it suggests a common myth has been extended in two directions. Thus, the supposed Christian origin of the Grail tradition is false. It is based on a more primitive tradition than the Roman Catholic one.

When the Romans left Britain, it seems a man called after the Celtic Mercury, Arthur, shortly became Count of Britain, the representative of Rome still, though there were no Roman military present to defend this part of the empire. For this reason he was considered to be the emperor, and is so called in some myths, while in the supposed histories, he ends up conquering the whole continent.

These tales were told by bards like Taliesin, the sixth century poet, who claimed a mythical existence himself, but was writing these down in the Christian period and subject to Christian influence. Nothing important ever happened that he had not personally seen! The list of events he offers as proof mixes Christian myths with Pagan Celtic myths. Thus, Taliesin could brag he was in heaven when Satan fell from grace, helped build the Tower of Babel, and so on. Taliesin was claiming to be an incarnation of the Celtic Orpheus, thought by Rhys to have been Ossian.

Perhaps all bards were the same. It was the source of their inspiration, but, though the myths seem fairly free of overt Christian influence, it was plainly there as Taliesin shows.

Arthur is born of Uther Pendragon. Dragon is a title attached to the name meaning duke, so he is the Duke Uther Pen. Uther Pen is “Uther Ben” meaning “Wonderful Head”. He is Bran! Arthur’s wife, Guinevere (Gwyhwyvar), is the daughter of what seems to be Bran yet again—Ogyrvran (Ocur Vran—the Wicked Raven). She appears in triplicate in Welsh traditions suggesting she is the moon, and the moon is the celestial aspect of mother earth.

In one Arthurian tale, evidently of Cornish origin because the villain is Melwas not Gwyn, Melwas waited in ambush for a year to steal Gwynhwyvar to his castle at Avalon. Arthur besieged the strong hold and won Gwynhwyvar back. An Irish myth of Airem, Etain and Mider is an exact parallel of this British version of this myth where the villain has to be Medrawt, Arthur’s nephew. Even the Irish names resonate with the British ones. Arthur and Airem are taken, on the basis of Celtic “ar” being a plough, to mean “ploughman”, suggesting that Arthur and Airem were originally agricultural gods, the women’s names mean “shining” or “white”, and Medrawt and Mider are from a common root meaning something like “Decider”. Here again is Charles Squire’s “eternal strife”. In the later romance, Guinevere’s lover is Lancelot, but Mordred still plotted to rebel against the king and take the queen by force. So, the tradition of the Welsh Triads is still maintained, whereby Arthur and Medrawt slog it out, raiding each other in turn in the constant battle of summer and winter.

In the Christianisation of the Arthurian myths, the Grail, supposedly the vessel which held the pascal lamb of the Last Supper, and which held the blood of the crucified Christ is transparently an evolution of the magic cauldrons of Celtic mythology. The Dagda’s fed all that came to it and all were satisfied, like the feeding of the five thousand. Bran’s brought the dead back to life, like the communion Eucharist. Another offered inspiration, like the Christian Holy Spirit, and had to be brought from the Glass Castle where everyone lived forever, feasting and revelling, the Christian heaven and Greek Elysium.

The owner of this Cauldron was Pwyll, but it was stolen by Arthur. The *Seint Greal* says no one could ever get sick or die in the Grail’s presence, and this version also describes the Grail as kept in a revolving castle (seen by Peredur) surrounded by water (seen by Gawain) just as Pwyll’s castle was described by Taliesin as revolving, and the glass castles were always on islands. In the later romances, the Grail is owned by Pelles, who kept it, Malory says, in the Castle Carbanek, a corruption of *Caer Bannawg*, the “Square Castle”. Pwyll’s castle was four cornered.

The Grail was borne or accompanied by pretty maids, while the Cauldron of Inspiration was attended by nine muses—enneads and triads of goddesses signify the moon. The Grail knights always found its revelation accompanied by a generous feast, like the Dagda’s pot. The Grail was invisible to sinners, an apparent Christian revision of the cauldron never feeding cowards. The essential difference between Arthurian myth and romance is that Arthur gets the cauldron in the myth, but his knights get the grail in the romances.

The main theme of *Culhwch and Olwen* is the wooing of Olwen, the daughter of Yspadaden Pen Cawr, by Culhwch, the son of Cilyd, and the long series of labours imposed upon the suitor to gain her hand. Indeed, the real point of the romance is to itemise the thirteen “Treasures of Britain”, and how Arthur’s men won them. They are like the labours of Hercules. Olwen’s “skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain”, and “four white trefoils sprung up wherever she trod”. Arthur is a fairy king, overcoming uncouth and monstrous

enemies by his own and his knights' magic, but he is lord of a precise place. The places mentioned can be found on maps of Wales.

Arthur is the king of a court apparently of the age of chivalry, but the details about the characters are drawn from some lost saga. Arthur himself is introduced to us in his palace, or hall, called Ehangwen, and thither Culhwch comes to crave his help to obtain Olwen. Well known people appear like Cai and Bedwyr, Geraint, the son of Erbin, Taliesin, the chief of bards, although often superhuman, but so do several grotesque figures of whom nothing is known except what the author relates of them, such as Sol who "could stand all day upon one foot".

The "Historical" Arthur

Rhys attributes the ambivalent character of Arthur to his being a Romano-British duke called Arthur, to whom the characteristics of a god called Arthur have been added. It is not uncommon, and is part of the way myths get extended. Jesus was a Jewish rebel, devoted to his own faith and the law of Moses, but he was adopted by the gentiles as a dying and rising god, and given the attributes of a sun god. Rhys believed Arthur defeated the Saxon invaders in some battles that could hardly have been more than skirmishes, and did not change the course of later history, but was hero worshipped and given the characteristics of a god. Both were gods, but Arthur was up against Jesus and the Christian Church and so had to be brought firmly down to earth! He was romanticised and Christianised as a historical figure even though his exploits are often supernatural.

Tales like *Culhwch and Olwen*, show that the British king was better known to early Welsh tradition as a mythic hero than as the champion of the Britons in their wars with the English. There may have been a historical Arthur who was a *comes Britanniae*, or a *dux bellorum*, of the sixth century, and his name gathered round it legends of heroes and divinities of the past, but there is no historical evidence of it. The historical evidence is the *Annales Cambriae*, the *Historia Brittonum*, *Y Gododdin* which mentions Arthur in passing as an exemplary hero but with nothing to confirm him as historical, and the few occurrences of the name Arthur in sixth and seventh century contexts. Parents name their child after a god they revere, and the child proves to be a great man in his own right. Before long, his exploits have been added to those of the god, and the man becomes the god. More than that, of course, when tribes are merged by marriage or conquest, so too are their gods, and so the exploits of their heroes are similarly merged. The trouble is that the evidence is against it. Arthur was not a common name until as late as the sixteenth century. The few Arthurs are Gaelic not Briton, given by Irish settlers in Wales and Scotland not natives. The name Jesus has been regarded as too holy for everyday use by some Christians, but others use it commonly. The same might have been true here. Britons revered their god, Arthur, but only the Irish, through admiring him, felt able to use his honorific name.

The *Historia Brittonum* was written in 829/30 and ascribed to Nennius. The author was learned enough for the times but did not use historical sources. He makes Hengest and Horsa, the Saxon horse gods, into historical Saxon leaders. He describes Arthur in a mock antiquarian or biblical style as engaging in twelve battles, scarcely sounding historical, and distinctly sounding religious, whether for Christian didactic purposes, or because Arthur was really a Celtic Hercules. Nennius relates how, some time after the death of Hengist, Arthur fought against the English along with the kings of the Britons and "was himself their war-leader" (*ipse dux erat bellorum*) in these twelve battles. In the eighth of these encounters, at the castle of Guinnion:

Arthur bore the image of the holy Virgin Mary on his shoulders, and the pagans were put to flight with great slaughter.

The ninth battle was fought at the City of Legions, the twelfth, and last, on Mount Badon, where “nine hundred and sixty men fell before Arthur’s only sally”. Of the other battles one sounds like the Celtic battle of the trees (Cat Coit Celidon), and the battle on the river Tribruit elsewhere is against a pack of wolves! Nennius is post-900 and unreliable. By the end of the ninth century the idea of Arthur as a historical figure had arisen.

The Welsh monk and historian, Gildas, mentions the battle of Mount Badon in his *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*, but he does not mention Arthur in the battle, or anywhere in the Saxon war. The leader of the British Gildas *does* mention is Ambrosius Aurelianus, the last of the Romans. The silence of Gildas, who should have been contemporary with Arthur, is blamed on to his bias—he favoured the Romans and railed at the British, so declining to exalt any British prince.

The *Annales Cambriae*, of the tenth century, records under the year 516:

Battle of Badon, in which Arthur carried the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ on his shoulders, and the Britons were victors.

And, in the year 537 was fought:

The battle of Camlan, in which Arthur and Medraut fell.

Medraut is the Modred, or Mordred, of romance. Camlan is suspiciously like Cumhal, the name of the Brython’s sky god, suggesting the battle took place in the sky. One of the *Stanzas of the Graves* alludes to the battle of Camlan and to Bedwyr, or Bedivere, who shares with Cai, or Kay, the pre-eminence among Arthur’s knights in Welsh fable. Bedwyr and Cai appear together in *Culhwch and Olwen*, assigned by competent authorities to the tenth century. Bedwyr never shrank from any enterprise upon which Cai was bound. The pair were united even in their death, for, in Geoffrey’s *History*, they perish together in the first great battle with the Romans. Another of Arthur’s knights figures as the hero of an entire poem in the *Black Book*—*Gereint, the son of Erbin*. The *Annales Cambriae* to 613 is a paraphrased *Chronicle of Ireland* (late eighth century), and later material is north British and local traditions kept over the next 200 years. The Badon entry in the *Annales* depends on Nennius’ account of Arthur’s eighth battle at Guinnion Castle, in which Arthur carries an icon on his shoulders into battle with him. The other entry on the Camlann battle is widely considered to be a contemporary addition.

There is no historical Arthur, but has Arthur the god been mantled with the victories of someone more anonymous? In Gildas’s *De Excidio Britanniae*, Ambrosius leads the British defence which culminates in the battle of Badon. Another candidate as the original Arthur is the second century Lucius Artorius Castus, partly because his name fits. A more compelling argument (Littleton and Malcor, 1994) might relate to Scythians stationed in Britain by the emperor, Marcus Aurelius. He had conquered the Sarmatians—a Scythian tribe famous for armoured cavalry—and taken the title Sarmaticus. They had been attacking the frontier from about 20 AD, and Marcus had campaigned against them across the Danube determined to stop them for good and all. In fact, a rival emperor forced him to settle quickly, but with hard terms imposed on the enemy. The Sarmatians had had to send 8000 cavalry to the Roman army.

5500 came to Britain, a legion of Sarmatian cavalry led by Lucius Artorius Castus. The Sarmatians were dispersed in the northern regions behind Hadrian’s Wall in units of 500, no one knows where, except that inscriptions indicate a Sarmatian cavalry unit of 500 in the fort of Bremetennacum at Ribchester on the Ribble near Lancaster, which became a settlement of veterans, albeit under supervision, implying they were ever pressed men, unless they were

supervised there as cavalry horse breeders and trainers. They seem never to have returned home. A centurion was appointed commander of this Sarmatian unit with the title *praepositus regionis*. Two are known, one between 222 and 235, the other just after 238. Also, in the Roman fort at Chester on Hadrian's wall was an eye-shield from a Sarmatian cataphract horse, and beads typical of the Sarmatians in Hungary. And a funerary stele shows a Sarmatian horseman at Chester, identifiable by his dress and dragon standard.

Myths like the sword in the stone, the Holy Grail and the return of Arthur's sword to the lake are known in the horse riding culture of the Scythians. Arthur is Batraz, the hero of the Scythian tales, coming to Britain via the Sarmatians. Lancelot is the same hero spread on the continent via the Alans, a related tribe. The hypothesis fails in that these elements are all late elements of the Arthurian romances, whereas such an early Roman origin requires them to be already present in the myths that precede Geoffrey of Monmouth.

In another hypothesis, Arthur is Art-gwyr, Bear-man—from the Welsh for bear, “arth”—which when compounded is Artur. The connection between Arthur and the bear was made by medieval authors. The Celts had divinities such as Dea Artio “bear goddess”, Andarta “powerful bear”, Artgenos “son of the bear”, and Artaios “like a bear”. Latin texts use the name Arturus not Artorius. Arcturus was an alternative form of the name and relates to the northern constellation the Great Bear, Arctos in Greek, from which we get the terms Arctic and Antarctic. Lucan called the Gauls “arctos gentes” “people of the north”. Arcturus was not just a Bear-man but was also a Northerner. This latter idea has the advantage of Brythonic origins and antecedents.

O J Padel concludes that, before Geoffrey of Monmouth, Arthur was in all the sources a figure of mythology, associated with the underworld, supernatural enemies and superhuman deeds, not history. He is mythical—a variant of king George and the archangel Michael, a fighter of dragons and monsters, and the saviour of his people—a Celtic Mithras. Padel notes the parallel with Finn, an entirely mythical character, originally a god, in Gaelic literature, who became historicized as a hero fighting against the incursions of the Vikings. As a similar type, Arthur naturally took the same role for the Britons against the Saxons.

Supposed supermen just cannot be assumed to have been historical, unless there is confirmation from independent sources, and, when there are pre-existing myths of similar heroes, it seems more likely that the supposed figure has been made to seem historical, though simply a popular hero of folklore. As [Thomas Green](#) shows, the context of the evidence really has to be considered properly. When monks are well known for forgery—as many medieval monks were—then a deed they possess that claims to be genuine has to be considered with deep suspicion. Arthur was widely known as a mythical hero, so when he appears in a few dubious historical sources, his claim to historicity is negligible. It is a general principle! In the *Marvels of Britain* Arthur is mythical. In Wales is a stone with the print of a dog's foot.

It was when he was hunting the boar Troit that Cabal, the dog of Arthur the warrior, left this mark upon the stone, and Arthur afterwards gathered together the heap of stones under that which bore his dog's footprint, and called it Carn Cabal.

The hunting of the boar links Nennius with the earliest of Welsh Arthurian tales, the story of *Culhwch and Olwen*, where Nennius's *porcus Troit* is the boar “Twrch Trwyth”, and the hound, Cabal, is in Welsh the hound, Cavall. The boar, the winter animal, often replaces the dragon to represent the ravages of winter in these stories—it wastes and slaughters everything it meets—and is killed by the summer sun as the archangel Michael alias S George, in the mummers plays and games. Culhwch has to capture the boar and its seven young to get the magic artefacts to win Olwen from her giant father. He succeeds and kills the father to release the daughter. Giants

stand for the Father, the old sun or year, that often has to be killed to make way for the new one. As a Father, the giant stories take on many psychoanalytical aspects of the parental type. In either case, dragon or giant, the reward for the successful knight is the maiden—often the king's daughter—meaning Nature.

The Arthur who emerges from the Celtic tradition of Welsh literature at the beginning of the twelfth century is an imaginary being, a king of fairy-land, undertaking hazardous quests, slaying monsters, visiting the realms of the dead, and having at his call a number of knightly henchmen, notably Cai and Bedivere, who are all but his equals in wizardry and martial prowess.

By the beginning of the twelfth century, Robert Fitz-hamon had conquered Glamorgan, and the Normans had a firm settlement in South Wales. Robert, earl of Gloucester, and a natural son of Henry I, acquired, early in the twelfth century, the lordship of Glamorgan by marrying Robert Fitz-hamon's daughter, Mabel. Robert, like his father, was a liberal and a diplomatic patron of letters. William of Malmesbury, the greatest historian of his time, dedicated his *History* to him. He founded the abbey of Margam, whose chronicle is a valuable early authority for the history of Wales. On his estates at Torigni was born Robert de Monte, abbot of Mont S Michel, a chronicler of renown, and a lover and student of Breton legends. And, under his patronage, Geoffrey of Monmouth compiled his romantic *History of the Kings of Britain*.

In the “matter of Britain”, the history (1135) of Geoffrey of Monmouth (c 1100-1154) made king Arthur into an English national hero, the British counterpart of Charlemagne. The main source of the Arthurian portions of Geoffrey's *History* was his own imagination. The first six books tell, with incidental references to contemporary events elsewhere, the story of Arthur's kingly predecessors. At the close of the sixth book, Merlin appears and Geoffrey spends this entire book on his fantastic prophecies, and his role in the birth of Arthur.

Of all the legends, closest to Arthur himself is the story of Merlin. In Welsh tradition, Myrddin, or Merlin—the change of the Welsh consonant was necessary to avoid an unpleasant sounding French word!—is similar to Taliesin—a wizard bard of the sixth century. His first association with Arthur is due to Geoffrey of Monmouth, who identifies him with the Ambrosius of Nennius and makes of him both a magician and a prophet, to whose magic arts the birth of Arthur was largely due. His character is further developed in a Latin hexameter poem, *Vita Merlini*, composed about the year 1148. Merlin appears in French romantic poetry in a fragment of a poem supposed to be by Robert de Borron, dating from the end of the twelfth century. Upon this poem was based the French prose romance of *Merlin*, part of which is assigned to Robert de Borron. It exists in two forms—the first known as the “ordinary” *Merlin*, and the other as the *Suite de Merlin*. For the Christian, Robert de Borron, the enchanter's arts are manifestations of the powers of darkness. Merlin himself becomes the devil's offspring and most active agent.

Geoffrey's *History* celebrates the united glories of the Anglo-Norman empire which soon attained its widest extent under Henry II, in the Angevin empire. It provided a hero in whom Norman and Saxon, Welshman, Breton, and Aquitanian could take common pride. Geoffrey does not explicitly say that Arthur becomes emperor of Rome, perhaps because it was demonstrably untrue, but it is implicit in the legend. The empire should perhaps be read as the Holy Roman Empire, and the tradition expresses a wish rather than a historical fact. Arguably, he is urging the Angevin kings to emulate the British hero and conquer Europe or take the Holy Roman Emperors. The wish is for an honourable, and therefore heretical, Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa (Holy Roman Emperor, 1155-1190) also having the title “the once and future king”.

The alliterative *Morte Arthure*, derived from Geoffrey, alludes to contemporary history and the wars of Edward III. Arthur “set his desire upon subduing the whole of Europe unto himself”. The chivalric ideal is plainly there. The ladies would not “deign have the love of any save he had thrice proved himself in the wars. Wherefore at that time did dames wax chaste and knights the nobler for their love”.

In the battle with the Romans, Arthur displayed his prowess, the British hosts gained the victory, and Hoel and Gawain were nearly as valiant as Arthur himself, but many, particularly Cai and Bedwyr, were slain. The outcome fired Arthur with the ambition of marching upon Rome itself. But Mordred, Arthur’s nephew, left in charge of Britain, usurps the throne, and Arthur has to return with his British knights. Mordred meets him as he lands, and Gawain and many others are slain, but Mordred is driven back. The final battle is fought at the river Camel in the west country, where Mordred is slain, and most of the leaders on both sides perish. Guinevere, in terror of her safety, becomes a nun.

Even the renowned king Arthur himself was wounded unto death, and was borne thence unto the island of Avalon for the healing of his wounds.

Geoffrey knows nothing of Lancelot, Tristram, the Holy Grail and other famous characters and incidents of the fully-developed legend. Geoffrey’s *History* puts Arthur, a formally unknown hero, at the hub of the greatest of the romantic cycles, but, in most of the stories, Arthur is unlike this imperial monarch and conqueror. He has nothing particular to do, except to be present at the beginning and end of the story. The hero is Sir Perceval, Sir Ywain, Sir Gawain, or the Fair Knight Unknown (Sir Libeaus), but not Sir Erec (Geraint) in any extant English poem before Tennyson. Geoffrey’s Arthur is a Norman Arthur, and details and incidents in the narrative are from his observation of Norman courtly manners.

In Brittany, a belief in Arthur’s return must also have been current, for Alanus de Insulis records that a denial of it in the second half of the twelfth century might cost a man his life. By the middle of the eleventh century the relations between the duchy of Normandy and the Bretons had become particularly close, and the Duke of Brittany was one of William the Conqueror’s staunchest allies at the time of the invasion of Britain.

Development of the Cycle

The last famous legend to be attached to the Arthurian group is, in its origin and character, the most Celtic of them all—the story of Tristram and Iseult, probably the oldest of the subsidiary Arthurian tales. With scarcely any trace of Christian sentiment or, compared with the story of Lancelot, the conventions of chivalry, the legend of Tristram radiates its Pagan, and Celtic, origin. Its setting, its character and its motif mark it out as Celtic.

Tristram appears, under the name of Drystan son of Tallwch, as a purely mythical hero in an old Welsh triad, which represents him as the nephew, and swineherd, of Mark—March ab Meirchion—protecting his master’s swine against Arthur’s attempt to get at them. Mark, in the earliest poetical versions of the tale, is king of Cornwall. It is said of March, or Mark, that he was “according to legends, both Brythonic and Irish, an unmistakable prince of darkness”. Iseult, the primal heroine, is a daughter of Ireland, while the other Iseult, she of the White Hands, is a princess of Brittany. A literary critic writes that the story breathes the air and reflects the dim, misty half-lights of the western islands beaten by the grey, menacing sea.

The romance of Sir Tristram embodies the Celtic revelation of love. Tristram and the fair Iseult are fatally united by the magic love-potion, quaffed in spite of Iseult’s approaching union with

Mark of Cornwall. Their love persists in spite of honour and duty. Tristram marries Iseult of the White Hand and comes to be wounded in Brittany. His wife, distracted with jealousy, falsely announces the ominous black sail coming over the seas. How the fair Iseult glides through the hall and expires on the corpse of her former lover. The tragedy of love has been remorselessly enacted. It appears to us as a new and irresistible force. A sense of mystery and gloom enfolds it all like mists sweeping over cairn and cromlech.

The problem is as enduring as life itself. Enchantment is suggested by means of the love-potion, yet the weakness is mortal, as is the sombre climax. Passion descends to the level of reality, and the comfortable medieval ending is sternly eschewed. Love is conducted by neither code nor nice theory—it moves, simple, sensuous, passionate, to its appointed end, and relentlessly reveals the poetry of life.

The Tristram legend was likely preserved in many detached lays before it came to be embodied in any poem. The earliest known poetical versions of the story are those of the Anglo-Normans, Béroul (c 1150) and Thomas (c 1170), of which we possess only fragments, and which were the foundations, respectively, of the German poems of Eilhart von Oberg and of Gottfried von Strassburg. In fact, many isolated poems dealing with characters and incidents subsequently drawn into the Arthurian medley must have been based upon traditions popularised by the rude art of some obscure minstrels, or story-tellers, Breton or other.

One of the best known examples of such poems is Marie of France's *Lay of Lanval*, a Celtic fairy-tale quite unconnected, originally, with the Arthurian court. Even more ambitious works, such as the *Chevalier au Lion*, or *Yvain, and Erec*, of Chrestien, were almost certainly founded upon poems, or popular tales, of which the primitive versions have been irretrievably lost. For the Welsh prose romances of the *Lady of the Fountain* and of *Geraint*—the heroes of which, Owein and Geraint, correspond respectively to Chrestien's Yvain and Erec—while resembling the French poems in their main incidents, cannot be satisfactorily accounted for except on the supposition that the stories embodied in them originally existed in a much older and simple form than that in which they are presented by Chrestien.

The Grail cycle, in its fully developed form comprises stories of mythical and Pagan origin, together with later accretions due entirely to the invention of romancers with a deliberately ecclesiastical bias. The palpably mythical character of the earlier quest versions points to their being of more archaic origin than the early history texts, and they are almost certainly to be traced to Celtic sources.

The texture, the colouring, the essential conception of the older Grail Quest stories can be paralleled from early Celtic mythic romance, and from no other contemporary European literature.

Alfred Nutt

Joseph Campbell divided the literature of Arthur, Merlin and the Holy Grail into four overlapping phases:

1. Anglo-Norman patriotic epics: c 1137-1205—Arthur and Merlin.
2. French courtly romances: c 1160-1230—the knights of Arthur's court, including Perceval and Gawain, whose adventures were described in Chrestien's *Perceval* and *Le Conte du Graal*.
3. Religious legends of the Grail: c 1180-1230—the Church hijacked the popular courtly romances to promote Christian doctrines

- the writings of Robert de Borron, in particular his *Joseph d'Armathie* (1180-1199) in which the Grail became, for the first time, a chalice
 - the Vulgate Cycle (1215-1230), including *L'Estoire del Saint Graal* and *La Queste del Saint Graal*, in which the Grail is a dish
4. German biographical epics: c 1200-1215—the core Grail mythos peaked in the work of Wolfram.

The quest appeared before it had a Christian history. Many writers explaining the Grail stories do not distinguish between the dates of the stories, and yet they plainly evolved from largely, if not entirely, non-Christian stories to Christianized versions of them. No doubt there are plenty of Christian tricksters who do not want any distinctions to be made. So, the romances are also in two categories or rather strata of legend, which are independent of each other:

- the Quest—concerned with the quest of the Grail, and with the adventures and personality of the hero of this quest:
 - the *Conte del Graal* of Chrestien de Troyes and his continuators, 60,000 verses composed between 1180 and 1240, and the German epic poem *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach, written between 1205 and 1215. The Welsh folk-tales of the *Mabinogion* also have Arthurian stories such as *Peredur*.
- the Early History—concerned with the history of the Grail:
 - the oldest is the metrical trilogy of Robert de Borron, composed between 1170 and 1212, of which only the first part, the *Joseph d'Armathie*, and a portion of the second, the *Merlin*, are extant, and the *Quête del S Graal* attributed to Walter Map. A complete prose version is preserved in the so-called *Didot* manuscript, where the history of the relic is set forth. *The Perceval* is the conclusion of some short romances, the two preceding being the *Joseph of Arimathea* and the *Merlin*.

In the “Quest” forms of the legend the interest is mainly on the personality of the hero, Perceval, and upon his adventures in search of certain talismans, which include a sword, a bleeding lance and “a grail” (either a magic vessel, as in Chrestien, or a stone, as in Wolfram). The search for the talismans is connected with the healing of an injured kinsman, and with the avenging of the wrong done to him. In the fifteenth century English metrical romance of *Sir Percyvella*, the vengeance of a son upon his father’s slayers is the sole argument of the story. The early history versions dwell, chiefly, on the nature and origin of these talismans.

The Benedictine monks of S Dunstan’s at Glastonbury had a copy of Geoffrey’s *Historia* from c 1170. According to Giraldus Cambrensis, in 1184, in the heyday of Arthur’s renown as a romantic hero—at the instance of Henry II—the monks found the Glastonbury cross naming King Arthur as the occupant of the grave in the cemetery of their abbey church, and so they found the bones of Arthur and Guinevere. Sixty years before, William of Malmesbury had written of the discovery in Wales of the grave of Arthur’s nephew, Gawain, though the grave of Arthur could not be found. So, bards wrote of his not being dead, and minstrels prophesied his return. Perhaps, the Glastonbury exhumation was meant to dispel this idea while directing Celtic nostalgia to Glastonbury to the advantage of the monks, who wanted to exploit the popularity of the tales and give pilgrims a reason for visiting their church. The Joseph story was one of their publicity stunts.

The Arthurian and its kindred legends came about when there was comparatively closer literary contact between the European nations than there is now. The Normans succeeded in bringing Britain and France into closer contact than has ever existed between them since, and the literary destinies of Europe during the great romantic period of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was centered in what is now France. The south of France and the northern “Celtic fringe”

contributed, but, it was the conjunction of the two, mediated by the Normans, that gave us Arthurian romance.

Sifting the Cinders of the Cathars V

Solar Heroes and the Holy Grail

The Holy Grail

The Grail legends embody the struggle between Catharism and Catholicism, in that originally purely allegorical works were changed under the influence of the Catholics, into a mystic propaganda for the mystery of the Church's own sacraments. Initially, the Quest was an allegory of the search for perfection, in readiness for the spiritual rise to God that the death of a Perfect brought. It was the expectation that they were going directly to God that allowed the Cathar *Parfaits* to laugh at their tormentors, just as the Essenes had to the Romans a millennium before, and for the same reason—the utter conviction that by living a perfectly saintly life they had *already* been saved before they suffered death. All that remained was to die like the angels they already were. The Grail cycles were a Cathar *Pilgrim's Progress*, set in Britain, because Catharism had something in common with Celtic Christianity. When the Catholic Church set out to crush the Cathars, they also set out to bowdlerize the Cathar literature of the troubadours.

One might have thought the Church would favour a legend so apparently Christian. It did not. Christian writers do not mention the Grail. The Church ignored it completely. The Church could not approve of stories that were based in profane sources, not in canonical scripture. The legend gave the Church in Britain an independent origin as illustrious as that of the Church of Rome. If the Church did not approve of these stories, why then did it sponsor, through the Cistercians, the Vulgate Cycle? It obviously had to compromise in its battle against Catharism. Just as it had to bring in new orders and rituals to compete with Cathar practices, it had to “Christianize” these extremely popular romances, or leave the field open to the heretics.

The Arthurian romances were, indeed, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, adapted to suit Catholicism better. Arthur F J Remy writes in *CE*, “The Holy Grail” is the name of a legendary sacred vessel, identified with the chalice of the Eucharist or the dish of the Pascal lamb. The proper meaning of the word “grail” is that is given by the Cistercian chronicler Helinandus (d c 1230), known at the time Master Blihis first wrote the Grail Romance as a historian and as a troubadour at the court of Philip Augustus, and, when he later became a monk at Froid-mont, as an ardent preacher of the Albigensian Crusade! In his chronicle, for about the year 720 (the author was guessing at a suitable date), he mentions a hermit's vision of of the dish used at the last supper. The hermit then wrote a Latin book about it called *Gradale*:

At this time a certain marvellous vision was revealed by an angel to a certain hermit in Britain concerning S Joseph, the decurion who deposed from the cross the Body of Our Lord, as well as concerning the paten or dish in the which Our Lord supped with His disciples, whereof the history was written out by the said hermit and is called *Of the Graal (De Gradali)*. Now, a platter (*scutella*), broad and somewhat deep, is called in French “gradalis” or “gradale”, wherein costly viands with their sauce are wont to be set before rich folk by degrees (“gradatim”) one morsel after another in divers rows, and in the vulgar speech it is called “graalz”, for that it is grateful and acceptable (*grata*) to him that eateth therein, as well for that which containeth the victual, for that haply it is of silver or other precious material, as for the contents thereof, to wit, the manifold courses of costly meats. I have not been able to find this history written in Latin, but it is in the possession of certain noblemen written in French only, nor, as they say, can it easily be found complete. This, however, I have not hitherto been able to obtain from any person so as to

read it with attention. As soon as I can do so, I will translate into Latin such passages as are more useful and more likely to be true.

The medieval Latin word *gradale* becomes in Old French “graal,” whence the English “grail.” So, it is a dish or charger, not a cup. The adaption of “san great” to “sang real” (royal blood) seems later.

Those who maintain the theory of a purely Catholic Christian origin regard the religious element in the story as fundamental and trace the leading motifs to Christian ideas and conceptions, derived from the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, which had a vogue in the twelfth century, particularly in Britain. The food-producing properties of the vessel refer really to the Eucharist, which gives spiritual nourishment to the faithful. The purely Christian legend which had arisen was brought into contact with the traditional evangelization of Britain, and then developed on British soil, in Wales, and thus the Celtic stamp, which it undeniably bears, is accounted for, though in a manner never clearly explained.

The literary accounts of the legendary conversion of Britain are connected with the Abbey of Glastonbury, which is also intimately associated with the legend of Arthur, Glastonbury being the mythic Avalon in William of Malmesbury’s account. The *Grail* saga is the most difficult to interpret, and to account for historically, of all the Arthurian romances. Just as the ideals of courtly chivalry shape and colour the story of Lancelot, so do the ascetic proclivities of a monastic cult assert themselves in the gradual unfolding of the legend of the Holy Grail.

Possibly Walter Map, who died as Archdeacon of Oxford in 1210, and to whom is ascribed the authorship of a Grail-Lancelot cycle, got his information from that abbey. The first Grail romance was then probably written in Latin and became the basis for the work of Robert de Borron, who was an English knight under King Henry II, and a contemporary of Chrestien and of Map.

The fully developed Grail legend was later on still further connected with other legends, as in Wolfram’s poem with that of Lohengrin, the swan-knight, and also with that of Prestor John, the fabled Christian monarch of the East. Here also the story of Klinschor, the magician, was added. After the Renaissance the Grail legend, together with most medieval legends, fell into oblivion, from which it was rescued when the Romantic movement set in at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Gawain, the Solar Hero, and Perceval

The original hero of the *Grail* quest, from the earliest stage of Arthurian legend, was the Pagan sun god, Gawain, but he is displaced by the central figure of the existing versions of the story, Perceval. Perceval then is superseded by one who “exemplifies, in a yet more uncompromising, yet more inhuman, spirit, the ideal of militant asceticism,” Lancelot’s son, Galahad. The earlier versions of the legend know nothing of Galahad, nor is there any reason for assuming that the primitive forms of the story had any Christian motive.

Before Malory it was Gawain rather than Arthur, who was the typical English hero. No knight of the primitive Arthurian fellowship enjoyed a higher renown than Arthur’s nephew, Gawain. He was the centre of a cycle of adventures independent of, and as old as, the original Arthur saga. He is the hero of more episodic romances than any other British knight, and, in all Arthurian romances, none appears so often. Under the name of Gwalchmei, Gawain figures prominently in the Welsh *Triads* and in the *Mabinogion*, while as Walgainus he is one of Arthur’s most faithful and doughty lieutenants in the wars recounted by Geoffrey. So great was the traditional fame of

Gawain that William of Malmesbury thought it worth while to record the discovery of his grave in Pembrokeshire. In the *Merlin* proper, Gawain is a dominant personality, his feats rivalling those of Arthur, but in the later forms such as the *Merlin* continuations, *Tristan*, and the final Lancelot compilation, he is represented as cruel, cowardly and treacherous, and of indifferent sexual morality.

In the original myths, Gawain is seen by his flaming red hair and his strength that waxes to the middle of the day and wanes thereafter, as a sun god—a northern version of Mithras. The light-giving sword, Excalibur, belongs to Gawain, and he has a horse called Gringalet. These are often features of solar heroes or sun gods. Odin has a sword like Excalibur that he implants into an oak and Sigmund is the one able to remove it. He also has his eight legged steed, is the father of Siegfried, and in *Beowulf* is a dragon slayer. The German hero Siegfried—the Norse hero Sigurd, the dragon slayer—was a sun god, equivalent to Balder. Siegfried is the winner of the Nibelung's Hoard, standing for earthly power. The sun god had defeated the dragon of night, just as Marduk defeated Tiamat, and Siegfried won the hoard which the dragon had guarded—the visible earth itself.

In Chrestien de Troyes's *Conte del Graal*, and in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, Gawain is almost as important as Perceval himself. In the German poem *Diu Krône*, by Heinrich von dem Türlin, he, and not Perceval, is achieves the Grail quest. No other knight undergoes so marked a transformation of character in his progress through the christianization of the romances. In the *Mabinogion*, and the earlier stages of the legend, Gawain is the paragon of knightly courtesy—the gentleman, *par excellence*, of the Arthurian court. In some later romances, particularly in the more elaborate versions of the Grail legend, as in Malory and Tennyson, “A reckless and irreverent knight is he.” Before Malory's time, Gawain is uniformly presented in English literature in a flattering light, and no Arthurian hero was more popular with English writers.

The elements of the plot in *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight* are as ancient and unreasonable as mythology. In many features, Gawain is like Cuchullain, the Irish sun god and phallic hero. The chief adventure, the beheading game proposed by the Green Knight to the reluctant courtiers of King Arthur occurs often in other stories. It comes in one of the stories of Cuchullain. “You may cut off my head, if only I may have a stroke at you some other day.”

The woman whom Gawain loved was the Queen of the Other World in Irish mythology, an island of maidens which Gawain visits and returns from perpetually young. He is thereafter called the Maiden's Knight, and later in the period of Christianization, the rewriters give him a reputation for promiscuity.

Perceval means someone who is courteous or, in this context, chivalrous. Perceval followed as the hero of Chrestien de Troyes' *Conte del Graal*, and *Perceval*, and its three continuations by different authors. The *Perceval* of Robert de Borron follows and then *Perlesvaus*, an anonymous story, and *Parzival* of Wolfram. Lancelot and Galahad appearing in Malory and later stories complete the order of introduction of the stories and the knights.

Gawain is the hero of two of the long romances and Perceval of seven, but Gawain features also on many of the earlier prose compositions such as *Merlin* but not in later ones like *Tristan* and *Lancelot*. Professor Rajna has found the names, of Arthur and Gawain in charters of the early twelfth century. Gawain was known in Italy in the early twelfth century, and appears on the architrave of the north door of Modena Cathedral, a twelfth century building. Fragments of short episodic poems by Bleheris, the Welshman, glorify Arthur's famous nephew and his brother Ghaeris, or Gareth, and his son Guinglain, and some of these are recognizable in Chrestien's

work. Among these Bleheris poems was one dealing with Gawain's adventures at the Grail castle, where the Grail is non-Christian, and has features reminiscent of solar and seasonal mysteries. Gawain, belonging to the pre-Christian stage of Grail tradition, writers, bent on spiritual edification, found him a stumbling-block.

It would be an interesting scholarly study, if it has not already been done, to compare the Catholic and the original versions to see what Catholic concerns about the cycle were. The most obvious difference was that Sir Galahad, a Christian knight, replaced Sir Gawain, his solar original. Galahad is the most Christianized of the heroes. The original meaning of the Grail stories must be found in the stories about Gawain, not in the more refined versions of tales about Lancelot and Galahad.

Perceval grows from a boorish and callow youth to become a knight, and he sets out seeking adventures. He was the son of a widow, "la dame veuve," his father having been slain in tourney, battle or by treachery, about the time of his birth. The mother, fearful lest her son should share his father's fate, flees to the woods, and there brings up her son in ignorance. The youth grows up strong, swift-footed and of great personal beauty, but ignorant! He is a yokel and a fool. He spends his days chasing the beasts of the forest.

One day, he meets a party of knights in armour. He does not know what they are and asks naive questions about their armour and equipment. Told that they are knights, he resolves to be one, and tells his mother. Dressed as a fool, he departs, his mother, in some versions, dying of grief. He comes at last to the court of Arthur. Here, for his gauche ways, he is mocked by Cai, but his future fame is foretold. He, and none of the regular knights, slays a foe of Arthur's, the Red Knight, who has insulted the king. Dressing himself with difficulty in the armour of the slain knight, he sets out on his adventures which differ in the versions, and becomes a skilful and valiant knight.

This is a widespread folk-tale theme, which includes such heroes as Perseus, Cyrus, Romulus and Remus, Siegfried, and Arthur himself. The most faithful representative of the original tale is the English *Syr Percyvelle of Galles*, where the hero is nephew to Arthur on the mother's side, and his father, of the same name as himself, is a valiant knight of the court. In no instance, though, is the father of equal rank with his wife.

Perceval and the Grail

Somehow, Perceval became the hero of the Grail quest, instead of Gawain. He comes to the castle of the Fisher King. The castle seems to be desolate, the Fisher King being an old man alone on a couch before the central fire of a hall big enough for four hundred knights. He gives the visiting knight a sword, but warns that it could be trusted to be reliable except in the case of one danger that only the armourer who made it knew.

Perceval is based on the Celtic sun gods Cuchulain and Finn, and also Culwch in the *Mabinogion*. Of the Perceval-Grail romances the oldest from the point of view of manuscript preservation is the *Perceval* or *Conte del Graal* of Chrestien de Troyes.

The internal religious history of the Grail is connected with Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph of Arimathea bringing the Grail to Britain is where many modern writers begin, doubtless on chronological grounds, but this story was not told until Robert de Borron told it at the end of the twelfth century as the first of the Christianized Grail romances (*The Romance of Joseph of Arimathea*). Other Grail stories precede it, and the association of Joseph with Glastonbury is later still. The story with Nicodemus ("Victory of the People") as the hero not Joseph is told of

the *Saint-Sang* relic at Fécamp, and a similar origin is ascribed to the *Volto Santo* at Lucca, the legend of which professes to date from the eighth century. Both were popular places of pilgrimage. The monks of Glastonbury wanted to be in on it. The best *Perceval* MSS refer to a book written at “Ficamp” as source for certain Perceval adventures. The book is lost but as certain Fécamp relics, like silver knives, appear in the Grail procession of the Parzival, it was perhaps a Grail story.

When Joseph is cast into prison by the Jews, Christ appears to him and gives him the vessel, through which he is miraculously sustained for forty-two years, until liberated by Vespasian. Joseph of Arimathea was confused with the Jewish historian, Josephus, whose liberation by Titus is narrated by Suetonius. The Grail is then brought to the West, to Britain, either by Joseph and Josephes, his son (*Grand S Graal*), or by Alain, one of his kin (Robert de Borron). In *Didot*, it was given by Joseph to his brother-in-law Brons, whose grandson Perceval is destined to be the final winner and guardian of the relic. Perceval or Galahad achieves the quest. After the death of its keeper the Grail vanishes. According to the *Perlesvaus*, Perceval is removed, no one knows whither, by a ship with white sails on which is displayed a red cross.

So, the Grail came to be identified with the cup of the last supper, which Pilate gave to Joseph of Arimathea, and in which Joseph treasured the blood that flowed from Christ’s wounds on the Cross. The cup was brought by Joseph to Britain, and its story was thus connected with an old legend, preserved by the monks at the abbey of Glastonbury, which attributed to Joseph the conversion of Britain to Christianity. Glastonbury, associated as it was even with Avalon itself, came to have a significant connexion with Arthurian lore by the end of the twelfth century. The glorification of Britain manifestly intended by this particular use of the Grail legend suggests, once again, the interest taken by the Angevin court in the possibilities of adroit literary manipulation of the Arthurian traditions. And if, indeed, Henry II can be proved to have had anything to do with it at all, an argument of some plausibility is established in support of the MS record that the courtier Walter Map did, “for the love of his lord, king Henry,” translate from Latin into French *The Quest of the Holy Grail*.

The poem of Chrestien, regarded by many as the oldest known Grail romance, tells of Perceval’s visit to the Grail castle. The mystery of the Grail is in the Grail procession. A squire enters with a lance dripping blood. Two squires follow with ten-branched candlesticks. A beautiful damsel follows them with “a graal” so brilliantly jewelled that it dazzles even the candles of the hall. In the Welsh version, *Peredur*, the grail has on it a severed head swimming with blood. Another maiden follows with a casket. The knights present show it reverence. Perceval looks on but is too polite to ask the meaning of the procession or ask the question: “Whom does the Grail Serve?” Perceval thereby incurs guilt and reproach.

The next day, Perceval leaves the castle, and as soon as he does, it disappears. He turns to meet a woman with a headless body who says all would have been healed if he had asked the question about the Grail. In *Peredur*, the hero has to avenge the murder of the beheaded man, so it becomes a pursuit of vengeance for a kinsman murdered. One form of the solar myth has the sun gods beheaded. A severed head would relate in Christian mythology with John the Baptist, but in Chrestien, the grail apparently contains the Corpus Christi in the form of the consecrated wafer of the Catholic mass. This looks absurd, a large flat dish holding a small wafer, and the dish becomes a chalice. A charger holding a severed head is more sensible.

Chrestien meant to relate the hero’s second visit to the castle, when he would have put the question and received the desired information, but did not live to finish the story. Here the Grail has no pronounced religious character, and indeed is called “a graal” not “the Grail.” A miraculous dish is a Celtic mythical symbol. In Bleheris, identified by Giraldus Cambrensis as

an early Welsh story teller, the Grail is the “Rich” Grail, of unspecified nature, but magically serving the king and his court all their needs, especially of food for feasts, without the need for servants or seneschals. It sounds like the “gradale.” It turns out that the Fisher King is called Bron, identifying him possibly with the Welsh Bran, who had a cauldron of plenty, and was wounded in the foot. The Fisher King was injured by a spear in the thigh. Foot and thigh are euphemisms for the genitals. Bron might be Bar On—son of the Sun.

In the early history versions, the Grail has the greatest sanctity. It is the dish from which Christ ate the Paschal lamb with his disciples, which passed into possession of Joseph of Arimathea, and was used by him to gather the blood of Christ, when his body was taken from the cross. It is then identified with the chalice of the Eucharist, and the Grail contains a “body” taken to be the *Corpus Christi*, because it carried the Pascal lamb—the Lamb of God—at the last supper, now the wafer biscuit called the host of the Catholic mass. So, in the procession, a wide and not very deep dish carries a single consecrated wafer. The Grail sounds more like a bier or sarcophagus actually containing a body—when Gawain visits the Grail castle, the body of the dead knight. The body is carried on a bier in the Grail procession in the continuation of Crestien’s story. In the *Perlesvaus*, Gawain sees a chalice within the Grail!

The lance is explained as the one with which Longinus pierced Christ’s side, and the silver plate becomes the paten covering the chalice. But the spear is supposed to have injured the maimed king, and either bleeds continuously or exudes a few drops of blood.

The quest in these versions assumes a most sacred character, the atmosphere of chivalric adventure in Chrestien’s poem yields to a militant asceticism, which insists not only on the purity of the quester, but, in some versions (*Queste, Perlesvaus*), on his virginity. In the *Queste* and *Grand S Graal*, the hero is not Perceval but the maiden-knight, Galahad.

Lucifer and the Grail

Crestien’s sponsor for *The Story of the Grail* was Philip of Flanders, a noted crusader and persecutor of heretics! Chrestien said Philip had brought the source of the poem from the Holy land in 1177. If this is true, the source could have been the Paulicians.

In another Grail romance, *Parzifal*, written by Wolfram von Eshenbach, in about 1200, a conception of the Grail wholly different from that of the French romances emerges. Wolfram conceives of it as a precious stone, of special purity, possessing miraculous powers conferred upon it and sustained by a consecrated host which, on every Good Friday, a dove brings down from heaven and lays down upon it, the only concession to Catholic Christianity. The angels who remained neutral during the rebellion of Lucifer were its first guardians, then it was brought to earth and entrusted to Titurel, the first Grail king. It is guarded in the splendid castle of Munsalvaesche (*mons salvationis?*) by itself and nourished by its miraculous food-giving power. The Grail is akin to the horn of plenty of classical myth. According to Manessier, as the Grail procession moves along the hall, the tables are magically filled with delectable food. Wolfram’s Grail does the same, though it is a magic stone. While it was there, anything desired would be at hand.

Wolfram says exactly how many ladies in waiting serve the Grail in the procession:

If I count correctly, there must now be eighteen ladies standing there. And look at this moment come another six, making altogether so far twenty-four ladies.

The bearer of the Grail is the radiant Repanse de Schoye, who places the Grail before Anfortas and stands in the center with twelve maidens on either side of her. She presides over two convents of attendants.

In all these versions, the legend appears in a developed state, the preceding phases of which can only be conjectured. An Oriental, a Celtic, and a purely Christian origin have been claimed. Where all these merge is in the Cathar heresy. The Oriental parallels are Zoroastrian dualism with the idea of paradise, and the Persian cup of Jamshid. Celtic elements undoubtedly occur in the legend. The Perceval story is probably, and the Arthurian legend certainly, of Celtic origin, and both of these legends intimately connect with the quest story. Talismans, such as magic lances and food-giving vessels figure prominently in Celtic myths and folk-tales. According to this theory the *Mabinogion*, with its simple story of vengeance by means of talismans and devoid of religious significance, would yield the version nearest to the original form of the legend. Some pre-Christian tale of a hero seeking to avenge the injury done to a kinsman was a likely precursor. The religious element would then be of secondary origin, and would have come into the legend when the old vengeance-tale was fused with the legend of Joseph of Arimathea, as a legend of the conversion of Britain.

But, Wolfram said his source was Kyot (Guiot), a troubadour jongleur (one of their castes), of Provence in Cathar country. Derrick Everett cites O Rahn, E Anitchkof and J Evola as claiming that the ideas given to Wolfram by Kyot were Cathar. Some say the Cathars awaited a Messiah, who would be the son of a widow, like Parzival, although it seems contrary to Cathar theology as it is now known. One of their symbols was the dove, which according to Wolfram was the bird that brought a wafer to the Grail on each Good Friday.

But Kyot said his story had come from a Jew or a Moslem, Flegitanis, in Toledo. Spanish Sufi mystics, who had their origin in Persia, had spread with the Arabs to Spain and thence to Provence in the Middle Ages. They organized in convents of 13, and carried horse headed canes that they supposedly used to ride to heaven, an idea that might have transferred to witchcraft in France.

The Grail of Eschenbach also seems to reflect the Qabalistic Tiferet, a sacrificial death and rebirth or resurrection. The medieval Qabalistic initiation into Tiferet involved a hermit guide or wise old man, a king, a child and a sacrificed god. Later a truncated pyramid, a cube and a rosic cross were added. The emergence of the Mediaeval Qabalah was said to have been inspired by the Sepher ha-Bahir, said by Qabalists to have appeared from Germany or directly from Palestine as remnants of mutilated scrolls. Gershom Scholem, the nineteenth century authority on the Qabalah, says it was a survival of a Gnostic tradition that had disappeared from Judaism in the first centuries AD, and could not account for its sudden appearance. He did note that parts of the Bahir were similar to some Cathar doctrines.

Flegitanis had written of the great war in heaven between the angels. In this story, Lucifer had a large green stone made of emerald in his heavenly crown, but during the cosmic battle in which Lucifer was ejected from heaven, it fell from his crown to the earth where it became the grail. This story makes the sacred grail a possession of Satan, but he only needs to have stolen it from the true Lucifer, his brother Michael, accounting for the warfare in heaven, for the story to be restored.

Lucifer was not, when this story was circulated, a popular name for the Devil, but became so from its association with the Cathar heresy. Indeed, Lucifer is not a biblical name or title of the Devil at all, but a name used in *Isaiah* 14:12 for the fallen king of Babylon who had aspired to godhood. The kings of Babylon known by the authors of the biblical books would have been

Persians or Greeks, and the title of this Lucifer, “son of the morning”, makes him into Mithras. The author seems to have been writing about the fall of the Persian shahs, but set it earlier. In any event, Lucifer was a noble title aspired to by kings and not a pseudonym for Satan.

Corroborating this, according to Professor M Moghdam (Tehran, 1975), the cup used for the “*nushabe*”, the water of immortality, in the Mithraic divine meal, offers an origin for the Holy Grail myth. It became the holiest object in the service, figuring prominently in Persian literature, notably in mystical poems. The cup had seven measures marked on it, corresponding to the seven degrees of membership in Mithraism. The full cup is for the “*Pir*” or the Father, known as the “Father of the Seven Lines”. It was, in short, a graded cup, in Latin “*gradalis*”, a Grail!

A green glass charger was brought back from Caesarea in 1101 and has since resided in Genoa Cathedral. The legend attached to it is that it was the vessel used by Nicodemus to collect the blood of Christ when he took him from the cross. The stone which fell from Lucifer’s crown was also said to have been the philosopher’s stone which could make all things “perfect”. By this stone the Phoenix is burned to ashes, from which he is reborn. Used on humans, it immediately made them ready for the Cathar *consolamentum*, and therefore ready to enter heaven. Wolfram’s stone in *Parzifal* preserves everyone in the Grail castle in perpetual youth, identifying the castle with the spiritual heaven that all perfect Christians will enter where they live forever. Those who took it that perpetual youth could be had on Satan’s material earth, sought the stone to give them perpetual youth in physical life.

In Malory’s later version of the *Morte d’Arthur*, Christ addresses the knights:

My knights and my serjeants, and true children, which be come out of deadly life into spiritual life, I will now no longer hide from you...

Here is a dualism which could have been Cathar perhaps more readily than Catholic. The Grail was certainly originally a large flat dish, not a cup, and might therefore have been associated with a sacred feast and symbolic of it. Interestingly, John the Baptist was beheaded and his head presented on a charger to Herodias. In the Wild Hunt of the witches, Herodias is said to have led the nocturnal procesion. She seems a strange goddess for a Pagan ceremony. If the Cathars, though, were interested in John the Baptist, it might begin to have meaning. In the Welsh version of *Parzifal* called *Peredur*, which appears in the *Mabinogian*, a bleeding head is presented on a charger. The *Mabinogian* is a later work than *Parzifal*, but some of the content might be earlier, and many scholars think that *Parzifal* and *Peredur* have a common source rather than *Peredur* being the dependent version.

The Waste Land

The earlier strands of the tradition of the Grail romances in which a king is sick or old and impotent or injured in his reproductive organs is reminiscent of the dying fertility gods like Attis, in particular, but also Tammuz and Adonis. In these old religious myths, the quest is of the mother or spouse or sister for the god who has been taken away in death in the northern winter or the burning heat of summer in the east.

The earliest Grail story, the Gawain version of Bleheris, has a castle on the sea-shore, a dead body on a bier—the identity of which is never revealed, mourned over with solemn rites—a wasted country, whose desolation is mysteriously connected with the dead man, and which is restored to fruitfulness when the quester asks the meaning of the marvels he beholds—the two features of the weeping women and the wasted land being retained in versions where they have

no significance—finally, the mysterious object generating food for a common feast. All of these features seem to be survivals of a solar ritual.

The *Grail* cycle transforms this into a spiritual quest for a cure for the malaise of the king, who Wolfram calls Amfortas, the Latin *Infirmitas* in disguise. He has been wounded in the genitals by a poisoned lance.

Elsewhere, a sword injured the maimed king, or felled the dead knight, so causing the wasting of the land. J L Weston (1850-1928) points out that the sword of the Grail romances takes various forms:

1. a broken sword, the re-welding of which is an essential condition of achieving the quest
2. a presentation sword for the hero arriving at the Grail castle, but one which has been made to break at the first blow or when it is needed to defend against some danger—only the maker knows it
3. the sword with which John the Baptist was beheaded
4. the sword of Judas Maccabeus, gifted with self-acting powers

The motif of the broken sword appears in an Irish tale in which Fergus Fair-hair asked the hero Cailte to repair a broken sword that the Tuatha da Danann had refused to mend. He repaired the sword and a spear and a javelin too. Each of these weapons was destined to destroy one of the enemies of the gods. After three days, Cailte and two companions left, eventually met the enemies of the gods, and killed them with the weapons.

The maimed hero appears in classical myth. Telephus, son of Heracles and Auge, was a king in Asia Minor, who married a daughter of King Priam. Telephus was wounded in the groin (bowdlerised to thigh) by the spear of Achilles who was with the Greek party raiding Troy. Telephus' wound would not heal. The oracle of Apollo told Telephus he would be cured when the one who wounded him became his physician. The Greeks had no idea of where Troy was, so, Telephus went from Mysia to Argos, clad in rags, and begged the help of Achilles, promising to show him how to get to Troy. Achilles healed him with the rust of the spear that had caused the wound, and learnt the way to Troy. The rust might be supposed to have on it some of the original blood Telephus shed.

Prometheus, like Telephus, had a wound that could not heal. As punishment for helping humanity, Zeus had Prometheus crucified in the Caucasian mountains. Every day, an eagle came and ate part of Prometheus's liver, but it grew again during the night. Aeschylus, in his Prometheus trilogy, of which only *Prometheus Bound* has survived, depicts Prometheus as the creator and saviour of mankind. In exchange for the gift of fire, Prometheus took from them their foresight. "I took knowledge away from Man." In *Prometheus Unbound*, Zeus allowed Prometheus to be freed. Heracles shot the eagle and freed the titan from his chains.

Curiously, J L Weston assures us that the early Christian sect of the Naassenes, a name reminiscent of both Nazarenes and Essenes, had similar ideas, believing that the Logos of John's gospel was the equal of Tammuz. They had a triple initiation which made them "alone the true Christians." The origin of the Grail legends might be a primitive Christian cult that Weston describes as "semi-Christian, semi-Pagan." These might have been the original Christians or a sister sect which eventually became the Cathar heresy. The standard of Christianity is, of course, a modern one, and by that standard, early types of the religion might well have been "semi-Pagan." Only thoughtless Christians believe their religion is like their God—unchanging. The question is whether the evolution of the religion at Rome has taken it away from its original purpose. Protestants thought that it had, but the Protestant variations might be just as off-target.

Weston thought the symbolic elements of the Grail tradition were used in the initiation ceremonies of a secret mystery cult. In 1932, a wall-painting was found in a cave below the fortress of Montréal de Sos near Tarascon. Dated from the twelfth century, experts declared it Cathar. In it is a spear, a broken sword, a solar disk, many red crosses and a square panel with an inscribed square. The outer part of the panel, which might represent a table or altar, contains twenty crosses in various forms on a black background, the inner part contains five tear-shaped drops of blood and five white crosses.

For the original hero, Gawain, the land had been wasted because a knight had died. The dead knight was lying on a scarlet cloth on a bier in the Grail castle. The Grail bearer grieved unconsolably. In the prose Lancelot, Gawain sees twelve maidens kneeling at the closed door of the Grail chamber, grieving unconsolably and praying to be delivered from their torment, even though the people of Castle Corbenic had everything they needed, and were honoured guardians of the sacred, now Christian, relic, the Holy Grail. In the first continuation to Perceval, Gawain fails to ask about the Grail, by which he would have restored the Waste Land, but by asking about the spear achieves a partial restoration. In the later German text *Diu Krône* (The Crown), of about 1230, the lord of the Grail castle is old and weak. After Gawain has asked the question, removing the enchantment from the Waste Land, the king and his attendants turn out to be dead, but held in semblance of life until the task was completed.

J L Weston pointed to a distinctive feature common to the otherwise differing Perceval versions: the sickness and disability of the ruler of the Waste Land, who is called the Fisher King. The element of the Waste Land declined in importance until, in Wolfram's Parzival, the healing of the Fisher King appears to be an end in itself.

In the last of the continuations to Chrestien, about 1230, the Fisher King reveals that the bleeding spear is the lance that pierced the side of Christ and that the Grail is the cup in which Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood of Christ. Robert de Borron's *Joseph d'Armathie*, finished about 1199 has the same tales, but also that the Grail ceremony induces pain in any sinner present.

This wasting of the land is found in three Gawain Grail stories, one by Bleheris, the version of Chastel Merveilleus, and *Diu Krône*, and in one Perceval text, the Gerbert continuation, where Perceval, having partly succeeded, wakes to find himself alone in a flowery meadow, the Grail Castle gone. The day before, the meadow had been the waste land. Wandering in amazement, he meets at a different castle a joyful procession celebrating the land restored. When Perceval asks about the Grail, the mistress of the castle says:

All this was done by what he said,
This land whose streams no waters fed,
Its fountains dry, its fields unplowed,
His word once more with health endowed.

Revenge and healing are the twin themes of the Grail romances, pointing to two possible sources. The hero had to cure a wounded king, and avenge a slain king, both with the same name. The story is that of the old dying and rising gods, but with an emphasis on missing water. The king's infirmity or death caused his land to be sterile and waste, despite the power of the Grail itself. The distress of the land was a result of the death of the king, or the injury or aging of the king. The king is the water God—John the Baptist, the Water Carrier, and the Fish God, Capricornus, the stormy sun of the winter rains in the ancient near east. But in Chrestien's account, the disaster only develops after the failure of Perceval to ask the question on his first visit to the Grail castle and in the *Perlesvaus*, the wasting is a direct consequence of Perceval's failure. The point is, no one realizes they are worshipping the wrong God, and neglecting the

correct one! So, they cannot ask the proper question, and the situation must continue to deteriorate.

Finally, the themes of vengeance and healing, the wasting of the land, and the question fade away and what remains is a spiritual quest. As in *Perlesvaus*, the story is dominated by moralising and Christian allegory. The hero is now Galahad, son of Lancelot. In *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, two wounded kings are at the Grail castle, and the title of Fisher King is variously applied to both of them. The virgin Galahad, who was born at the Grail castle, has never failed and achieves the quest in fulfilment of his destiny.

The framework is ever the same. The castle is found by chance. The hero sees marvels he does not understand. He fails a test. He only realises his failing when the opportunity has gone. But after a long trial he does get another chance. The story of the Grail is a quest, but the essence is that the chance is lost when it appears. In every instance, the first visit fails. The quest is needed to make good the error. It is the entire purpose of Galahad, for he does not have to come to the castle by chance, but is brought up there. He presides at the solemn and symbolic feast, but has left the castle before the Quest begins. Like his predecessors, Gawain and Perceval, he goes forth from the castle to return.

Jessie Weston identified the following points of contact between the Adonis ritual and the Gawain form of the story of the Grail castle: the waste land, the slain king (or knight), the mourning, with special insistence on the part played by women, and the restoration of fertility. Another point is worth noting—the dove was sacred to Adonis and doves were sacrificed during his rites. It was a symbol of love before it came to stand for peace, and temples of fertility divinities were full of tame doves.

The Knights Templar

Wolfram von Eschenbach and Alfred von Scharfenberg wrote of a body of knights all in the family of the Grail who watched over the Grail in a magnificent temple built specially for it. They were called the Templars. The Knights Templar were a historical association of warrior monks formed in the century before these writers set pen to paper and a century later were accused of witchcraft, and the leaders tortured, and burnt alive for recanting their confessions made under torture.

The order was formed, in 1118, by some crusaders led by a Burgundian called Hugo de Payens. They dedicated themselves to poverty, chastity and obedience in honour of “Our Lady.” Their aim was to guarantee safe passage to pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land, and, through the influence of Hugo de Payens’ cousin, none other than St Bernard of Clairvaux, the new order was given Papal approval at the Council of Troyes in 1128. They received the livery of a white smock with a red cross emblazoned on the right shoulder. In *Perlesvaus*, Perceval comes upon a castle in which there are 33 initiates ruled by two masters. “They were clad in white garments, and not one of them but had a Red Cross in the midst of his breast.” They are Knights Templar. In *Parzival*, Eschenbach, a Templar himself, says the guardians of the Grail are Templars. The Grail castle was named Munsalvaesche (the Mount of Salvation). Baldwin II of Bourg, king of Jerusalem, granted the use of the buildings on the Temple Mount as the knights’ headquarters, including the Al Aksa Mosque, south of the Dome of the Rock. Thus they were called the Knights Templar.

They recruited anyone prepared to accept their vows and strict discipline based on the Benedictine Rules. They were like the French Foreign Legion was to become. Excommunicated knights who had become effectively bandits joined to forget their errors and seek salvation.

S Bernard (*In Praise of the New Militia*) called them rogues, robbers, perjurers and adulterers, as well as other derogatory names. They also recruited a lot in Languedoc and S Bernard actually said they would be in the company of “perfect” men. Did he have his tongue in his cheek, or did he know they were recruiting Cathars?

The Templars kept a central group of nine knights to match the number of founders, but they did have a convent of thirteen when they needed to elect a new Master of the Temple. The rule was:

All the Brothers of the Temple must obey the Master and the Master must obey his convent.

A special chapter was called to elect a “Commander of the Election” and a helper. These two sat in vigil praying until they felt inspired to announce another two to join them. This procedure then went on until the twelve had been chosen as the equivalent of the apostles. Finally a chaplain was selected to make up the extra figure to make the thirteen of the Last Supper. As noted elsewhere this is called a convent or coven. Chaplains were priests appointed to the order and following its rule. They owed their allegiance only to the Master of the Temple and the pope, a concession from 1163. The full coven then appointed the Master of the Temple.

The order survived for 200 years becoming remarkably wealthy as the bankers of the crowned heads of Europe, trusted for their personal honesty. Yet, the French King Philip Le Bel (the Fair) decided he wanted to rob them and in a plot with his puppet, the pope, Clement V, who recalled the leaders of the order to Paris, had them arrested, accusing them of heresy. Through the most pernicious tortures he got them to agree to incredible crimes and abuses. The Templars were accused of conspiring with the Assassins, a chivalrous and knightly order of the Ismaili sect of Islam, who had supposedly instructed the Templars in the secret teachings of the Essenes, handed down to them from John the Baptist through the Sabians of Harran, also known as Johannites.

Amongst the charges against the Templars were:

1. new members of the order, after taking the oath of obedience, were obliged to deny Christ, and to spit, and sometimes also to trample, upon the cross,
2. they then received the kiss of the templar, who officiated as receiver, on the mouth, and afterwards were obliged to kiss him on the anus, on the navel, and sometimes on the penis,
3. they sometimes worshipped a cat, which appeared amongst them in their secret conclave,
4. they practised homosexual acts together, refusing normal sexual intercourse,
5. they had idols in their different provinces, in the form of a head, having sometimes three faces, sometimes two, or only one, and sometimes a bare skull, which they called their saviour, and believed its influence to be exerted in making them rich, and in making flowers grow and the earth germinate,
6. they always wore about their bodies a cord which had been rubbed against the head, and which served for their protection.

Many Templars did not deny these but pleaded extenuating circumstances such as that they did not deny Christ in their hearts but knew the denial had to be done as a test of their obedience. Thus, Etienne de Dijon refused to deny his Saviour, but the preceptor told him that he must do it because he had sworn to obey his orders. So, “he denied with his mouth,” he said, “but not with his heart, and he did this with great grief.” They claimed they deliberately spat beside the cross not on it, and so on. They thus confirmed the accusations as being true.

The Templars were believed to have worshipped the image of a head, about natural size, only shown in the more secret chapter meetings on particular occasions. Many templars denied ever hearing of this head. It had a fierce looking face and a beard. Otherwise descriptions varied which suggest that there were more than one such image, or one copied in different forms. Those who saw it said it was terrifying. When it was introduced, all present threw themselves on the ground and adored it, presumably in the Moslem fashion.

Deodatus Jaffet said the image he saw had three faces. He had to say: "Blessed be he who shall save my soul!" Another said the head was of silver and had two faces, a terrible look, and a silver beard. Some said the head was that of a woman, or contained the skull of a woman concealed within it, the woman supposedly being one of the 11,000 virgins. Others said it was an embalmed head. Others saw a wooden idol of Baphomet, worshipped by kissing its feet, thereby adopting a Moslem style of worship, and exclaiming, "Yalla," a Saracen word. Another Templar was told, "Adore this head--this head is your god and your Mahomet." Mahomet commonly meant an idol or false god in Christendom.

The evidence of ancient statuettes, cups, coffers and medals suggest the templars had secretly adopted a form of the rites of Ophite Gnosticism, which was itself founded upon the phallic worship of the ancients. An English templar, Stephen de Staplebridge, acknowledged that "there were two professions in the order of the Temple, the first lawful and good, the second contrary to the faith."

In 1312, 54 Templars were roasted to death on a "slow" fire. The Master of the Temple, Jacques de Molay, recanted his forced confession and was burnt to death by Philip before he had chance to say more, on 19 May 1314—roasted on the Island of the Seine at sunset. Was this significant? The setting sun is the dark sun, Shalim or Solomon, the life-giving winter sun of the ancient near east, but the wicked winter sun of the northern climates. Jesus was a title of the dark sun in the ancient near east, but Christians in the north, in Europe, took him to be the bright summer sun, born at the winter solstice and becoming the burning wicked sun of the ancient near east. Did the Templars realize that the Christ of the Church was the wrong one, and the Catholics were worshipping the Devil, just as the Cathars believed?

In 1165, a mysterious letter had arrived addressed to the pope Alexander III, the king of France, Louis VII, and the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick I, Barbarossa, as well as a copy to the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel I, Comnenius. It was from Prester John, a mighty Christian Shahanshah, king of 72 Christian kings east of Persia, of whom rumours had circulated for about fifty years. This wondrous empire was beyond a river called Ydonis. The author goes on at length—over twenty pages. It seems to have been a saracen forgery but started a whole mythology of its own. Later, the title Prester John was transferred to the Christian kings of Abyssinia, or perhaps they had always been Prester Johns, and the legend had mixed up Abyssinia with India, a common mistake in those ignorant times. In the end, Prester John simply wanted the western rulers to destroy the Templar knights and the Pagans, and to learn of Roman practice. Eventually the western leaders complied with the request of Prester John, and destroyed the Templars, and the Pagans, if the Cathars were meant.

A Mysterious Book

A small quarto volume, in the British Museum, contains the four Middle English poems known as *Pearl*, *Cleanness*, *Patience* and *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight*. It has neither titles nor rubrics, but seems to date from the orthography to about 1400. No single line of these poems has been discovered in any other manuscript.

Pearl tells of a father's grief for a lost child, an infant daughter who had lived not two years on earth. In a vision he beholds his Pearl, no longer a little child, as a queen of heaven. From the other bank of a stream which divides them she instructs him, teaches him the lessons of faith and resignation and leads him to a glimpse of the new Jerusalem. He sees his "little queen" in the long procession of maidens. Plunging into the stream to reach her he awakes, to find himself stretched on the child's grave. The student of medieval theology may find much of interest in *Pearl*—many a theological problem, notably the interpretation of the parable of the vineyard, is expounded—but to read the poem as theological ignores it as a poet's lament. The personal side of the poem is marked, though the author nowhere directly refers to his fatherhood, suggesting it as allegory. The main part of the poem is a paraphrase of the closing chapters of the *Apocalypse* and the parable of the vineyard. Pearl is Reason personified. The basis of *Pearl* is to be found in the parable of the kingdom in *Matthew* (Mt 13:45-46) that tells of the man "that sought the precious margarites, and, when he had found one to his liking, he sold all his goods to buy that jewel". Here is a despair that the kingdom died in infancy, and was realised only as a dream.

The diction of the poem has been considered faulty by reason of its copiousness, but the criticism does not appear to be just. The author has drawn alike from the English, Scandinavian, and Romance elements of English speech. Scholars have noted Boccaccio's Latin eclogue *Olympia*, in which his young daughter, Violante, appears transfigured, much in the same way as Pearl in the English poem. There is no evidence of direct indebtedness, but both writers have drawn from the same sources. The eclogue was written soon after the year 1358.

Cleanness relates three great subjects from scriptural history, so chosen as to enforce the lesson of purity. After a prologue, treating of the parable of the "Marriage Feast," the author deals in characteristic manner with the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the fall of Belshazzar. The link that binds *Cleanness* to *Pearl* is unmistakable. The pearl is there again taken as the type of purity. The subject of the third poem is *Patience*. It is a masterly paraphrase of scripture, bringing the story clearly and forcibly home to English folk of the fourteenth century. *Cleanness* and *Patience* place their author among the older English epic poets. They show us more clearly than *Pearl* that the poet is a "backward link" to the distant days of Cynewulf.

Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight deals with a weird adventure that befell Sir Gawain, son of Loth, and nephew of king Arthur, the favourite hero of medieval romance, more especially in the literature of the west and northern parts of England. Gaston Paris, in 1888, surveyed the whole field of medieval literature relating to Gawain and considers this the jewel of English medieval literature. The story tells how on a New Year's Day, when Arthur and his knights are feasting at Camelot, a great knight clad in green, mounted on a green horse, and carrying a Danish axe, enters the hall, and challenges one of Arthur's knights, the conditions being that the knight must take oath that, after striking the first blow, he will seek the Green Knight twelve months hence and receive a blow in return. Gawain is allowed to accept the challenge, takes the axe and smites the Green Knight so that the head rolls from the body. The trunk takes up the head, which the hand holds out while it repeats the challenge to Gawain to meet him at the Green Chapel next New Year's morning, submit his neck to the return-stroke, and then departs.

Gawain, in due course, journeys north, and wanders through wild districts, unable to find the Green Chapel. Sir Gawain is not sent wandering in the conventional romantic scenery, but in the Wirral in winter, with its three hunting scenes—of the hart, the boar, and the fox—in contrast with the Christmas revels in the castle. On Christmas Eve, Gawain sees through the trees a fair castle which "shimmered and shone". It represents the sun shining through the woods. He reaches it, and asks to be allowed to stay there for the night. The lord of the castle welcomed him, and tells him that the Green Chapel is near, inviting him to remain for the Christmas feast.

The lord, on each of the last three days of the year, goes hunting. Gawain is to stay behind with the lady of the castle. The lord proposes a game or bargain that, on his return from hunting, each shall exchange what has been won during the day. The lady puts Gawain's honour to a severe test during the lord's absence—she kisses him, and in accordance with the compact, he kisses the husband on his return. There is a similar episode on the next day when two kisses are received and given by Gawain. On the third day, in addition to three kisses, Gawain receives a green girdle from the lady, which has the virtue of saving the wearer from harm. Mindful of his next day's encounter with the Green Knight, Gawain gives the three kisses to his host, but makes no mention of the girdle.

Next morning, he rides forth and comes to the Green Chapel, a cave in a wild district. The Green Knight appears with his axe. Gawain kneels. As the axe descends, Gawain flinches, and the knight twits (reproaches, taunts) Gawain. The second time Gawain stands as still as a stone, and the Green Knight raises the axe, but pauses. The third time the knight strikes him, but, though the axe falls on Gawain's neck, his wound is only slight. Gawain now declares that he has stood one stroke for another, and that the compact is settled between them. Then the Green Knight reveals himself to Gawain as his host at the castle. He knows all that has taken place.

That woven girdle which thou wearest mine own wife wove it. I know it well. I know too thy kisses, and thy trials, and the wooing of my wife. I wrought it myself. I sent her to tempt thee, and methinks thou art the most faultless hero that ever walked the earth. As pearls are of more price than white peas, so is Gawain of more price than other gay knights.

But for his concealing the magic girdle he would have escaped unscathed. In some versions of the story the item given is not described as a girdle, but merely as lace, as if its real nature is being hidden. The name of the Green Knight is given as Bernlak de Hautdesert, the contriver of the test is Morgan la Fay, Arthur's half-sister, who wished to try the knights and frighten Guinevere. Gawain returns to court and tells the story, and the lords and ladies of the Round Table lovingly agree to wear a bright green girdle, in token of this adventure, and in honour of Gawain, who disparages himself as cowardly and covetous. And ever more the badge was deemed the glory of the Round Table, and he that had it was held in honour.

The action takes place on new year's day. The Green Knight is the god of the year, who loses his head at the year end to the new year, but makes an appointment for the deed to be repeated in one year's time! The beautiful wife of the Green Knight is the earth goddess seducing the new year, Gawain, but he had an old crone of a wife too, the ravaged winter landscape, identified as Morgan la Fay, who is actually called the goddess in some versions. The chivalrous point is that the knight refuses the lady's advances, accepting only her girdle, for which mistake he is pinked with a slight cut to the neck instead of losing his head.

In some stories, the young knight rejects the blighted winter landscape in the form of an old crone, and is turned into a wizened worm. The image is a correct one—of an impotent phallus. In a frog-prince type of story, the pretty spring earth maiden takes the ugly, wizened thing into her hand to carress and kiss, returning the prince to his youthful vigour as the spring sun. This is the lay told in *The Ballad of Alison Gross*. The crone earth of winter is often the wicked stepmother, as the feeble winter sun is often the cruel uncle. Yet the youthful hero and heroine are merely the same in their fruitful aspects. The solar myth thus expanded through the lays of the minstrels to ballads and eventually to modern fairy stories for children, where they express Freudian fears and fancies.

The author here states that the story had long been "locked in lettered lore." The oldest form of the challenge and the beheading is an Old Irish heroic legend, *Fled Bricrend (The Feast of*

Bricriu) of the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century, where the story is told by Cuchulain, the giant being Uath Mac Denomain, who dwelt near the lake. The Cuchulain episode had become incorporated in Arthurian literature. The French version nearest to the Gawain story is in the first continuation by Gautier de Douvens of Chrestien's *Conte del Graal*, where the story differs in many important respects from the English version. Jesse Weston thinks it the latest of the versions. Gawain is called "the falcon of the month of May". He was the summer sun rising to its full power after the spring equinox. The whole poem may be connected with the foundation of the order of the Garter, about the year 1349. At the end of the MS, in a later hand, is the famous motto of the order: *honi soit qui mal penc*. A later poet has used the same story to account for the origin of the order of the Bath. The romance may be taken not to have been written before the year 1349. Gawain, the knight of chastity, is another study by the author of *Cleanness*. A striking passage has been noted linking the poem to *Pearl*, namely, the comparison of Gawain to the pearl.

On the evidence of dialect, the poet was born, somewhere in Lancashire, or a little more to the north, but not beyond the Tweed—about 1330. The descriptions of natural scenery, in *Gawain*, *Cleanness* and *Patience*, indicate the wild solitudes of the Cumbrian coast, near his native home. He had read *The Romaunt of the Rose*, the chief products of early French literature, Vergil and other Latin writers. To "Clopyngel's clean rose" he makes direct reference. He wrote in an intensely religious spirit, and with a good knowledge of the scriptures, suggesting he was a church man. Gawain, possibly the earliest of the four, is remarkable for the writer's minute knowledge of the higher social life of his time. He seemed to write from personal experience of the pleasures of the chase, and was accustomed to the courtly life described by him. In *Patience* the poet is preaching the lesson of fortitude and hope, amid misery, pain and poverty. Even the means of subsistence seem to have been denied him. An authority wrote, in *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*:

Full of intense hatred towards all forms of vice, especially immorality, he would have spoken out boldly against ignoble priests and friars, and all such servants of the church who, preaching righteousness, lived unrighteously.

He seems to have broken away from minor traditional patristic views, but still seems to owe allegiance to the authority of the church, to papal supremacy and to the doctrine of Rome, though his general religious attitude was evangelical rather than ecclesiastical. It is suggested that the author was Ralph Strode of Merton College Oxford, a man who corresponded with Wycliffe and was a contemporary of him at Oxford. He was considered a leader of the Lollards, a type of heretic.

In conclusion, A E Waite, an occultist Rosicrucian around 1900, wrote in *The Hidden Church of the Holy Graal*:

Look assuredly to the East, in the direction of that pure catholic gnosticism which lies like a *pearl of great price* within the... shell of external Christianity, which is not of Marcion or Valentinus, of Cerinthus and all their cohorts...

Sifting the Cinders of the Cathars VI

Folk Traditions and Cathars

Robin Hood

The real condition of the poor is rarely reflected in the literature of a nation. The unfree in feudal times were voiceless, and the labouring free of later times were little better. Patient beyond belief, people of the soil do not, as a rule, make literature of their wrongs. The plowman in the eleventh century dialogue of Ælfric had said with truth:

I work hard. ... Be it never so stark winter I dare not linger at home for awe of my lord. ... I have a boy driving the oxen with a goad-iron, who is hoarse with cold and shouting. ... Mighty hard work it is, for I am not free.

The “bitter cry” of the oppressed sounded in the Old English *Chronicle* of the sad days of king Stephen, but centuries passed before it could find adequate expression with the “mad priest of Kent” declaring for the rights of the common man. That Robin Hood tried to remedy the injustices of King John is not history. It is romance. In 1377, in the lines of William Langland’s alliterative poem, *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman* (edition B), is the earliest English reference to Robin Hood, when we hear of the “rimes of Robin Hood”. Robin Hood is the King Arthur of the people.

The implication in *Piers Plowman* is that Robin Hood was already well known enough to have more than one poem written about him. In the civil struggles of the barons’ wars, and in the years that followed, the poetry of the people rose to the surface. The Robin Hood ballads and a few rude verses here and there, give voice, not only to the free, open life of the outlaw in the greenwood, but, also, to the cry of the down-trodden at the callous luxury of the rich. In 1380, the Scot, John Fordun, praised Robin Hood ballads as particularly delightful ones, again suggesting that such ballads were well known. French folklore told of a shepherd named Robin and a shepherdess named Marion. A French drama, by one Adam de la Hale of Arras, titled *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion* had appeared around 1280, a play about the village beauty Marion who loves a worthy and honest swain Robin, but is tempted by a sophisticated charmer from the wider world. She does not succumb! True love tempted by worldliness is a distinctly Catharish theme. In the earliest English stories, Robin Hood is a yeoman, though not a nobleman, and they do not mention any maid Marion.

Robin Hood might have come with the Normans from France with the celebration of May Day. In France, by 1300, French May Day celebrations were linked with one Robin des Bois (Robin of the Woods) who is the same as the German legendary Freischütz, a Faustian character whom Satan had granted six unmissable “free” shots with his crossbow but the seventh was the Devil’s! Some have argued that the name Robin des Bois in English became Robin Wood, and then Robin Hood. Maybe. But the French were Franks, a German tribe, and the Normans were descended from the Vikings, so Robin Hood as a Teutonic legend seems a more likely source, even if it came to Britain from two directions. The Faustian “Freischütz” angle looks like a Christian denigration of the Pagan original. By the fifteenth century, May Day celebrations in England had become Robin Hood Festivals, in which Robin Hood presided as king and was accompanied by a queen called Marion.

The Devil of Dame Alice Kyteler was called in the Latin record sometimes “Robin Artisson”, sometimes “Robinus Filius Artis”. It means “a bright eminence, son of the Creator”, and therefore will be another title of the Cathar Christ, the archangel Michael. It is probably a synonym for Lucifer, but the Catholic Church has blackened what is obviously a name of a good entity, “Light Bearer!” In 1563, Martin Tulouff of Guernsey, heard his mother say, “Go, in the name of the Devil and Lucifer...” Did she mean in this that the Devil was Lucifer? Or did she mean that the Devil and Lucifer were two different entities, the two opposite sons of God? It would then be like saying, “Go, for good or ill”.

An early Christian legend says that Lucifer’s only “sin” was pride—which is not a sin—and even Milton comes near to making a god of Satan in his “Paradise Lost”. It is the dualistic idea of the Essenes and early Christians derived from Zoroastrianism. The Devil is the God of this world, the material world. For Cathars, this is a matter of fact that they can do nothing about, but they aspire to the spiritual world beyond. Satan is their God only in the sense of his being the God of all material things. They do not worship him, but the God of light—Christ—and he is the one witches look forward to joining. Lucifer as “Light Bearer” is an utterly inappropriate name for Satan but is fully appropriate for the good God, the lord of goodness and light that the Cathars saw in Christ.

“Robin”, a form of Robert, seems to have been a common name for this mysterious leader, and means “bright eminence”. He visits the witches in their houses or in quiet places. He persuades them to join the secret religion. As a rule he is dressed like a Protestant pastor, in black or other sober ordinary clothes, though he has a special mark on his boot. But his movements are mysterious, and he impresses the women more or less with awe.

None of the witches whose words are recorded give us a clear idea of how they conceived the relation of this Robin to Lucifer. The better educated witches say nothing of their creed, and the uneducated make no sense. To most of them the leader seems a supernatural person, though some speak of him as a well known man of their own district, the secret organizer of the sect. The Somerset witches called out “Robin!” to invoke their god, supposedly adding the words, “O Satan, give me my purpose”. Presumably, “O Lucifer, give me my purpose”, really. What followed might explain the supposed shapeshifting abilities of the “Devil”. The witches waited in silence until an animal appeared. Whatever it was was their god, and from the form he had adopted, they made their divinations. The Devil could therefore appear as any common animal.

Hobgoblins were depicted as devils, that is to say satyrs, half man, half goat, and were identical, at a later period, with the spirits popularly called Robin Goodfellow. Needless to say Robin Goodfellow, despite his name, is the Devil. Robin Goodfellow is described in a ballad of the time of Shakespeare (*The Mad Pranks and Merrie Jests of Robin Goodfellow*, 1588). He is goat-shaped, with a pronounced priapus, surrounded by dancing worshippers. This Robin Goodfellow is the god of the witches sabbath, but, by this late date, in practice, Robin Goodfellow seems to have become a servant’s excuse for anything going wrong. A man found drunk by the road several miles from home would blame Robin Goodfellow. Robin Goodfellow is Puck, merely a mischievous imp. But Thomas Keightley tells us that Puck first appears in *The Vision of Piers Plowman* to signify the grand old adversary of God and man—the Devil, whom Christ would deliver the Cathars from.

Robin was, this book alleges, half fairy on his father, Oberon’s, side. Having run away from home to avoid a whipping, he awoke in a meadow to find a message from his father. He had given him the power to appear in any form he wished but was to harm no one “except knaves and queans”, and was to “love those that honest be, and help them in necessity”—strange advice for a devilish creature.

Puck derives through the Gaelic “Bouca” from the Slavonic “Bog”, God—the “Bog” in Bogomile—and ultimately from the Iranian “Baga”. Bog became the name of the Devil. When people say “Boo!” to surprise kiddies, they are saying the name of the Devil. Baga is simply God—the High God, Ahuramazda to the Zoroastrians. Heretics, like the Cathars and Bogomiles, worshipped a Great God, a Baga, a spiritual God of heaven. They regarded the Catholic God of material symbols and sacraments as the Devil. Witches were likely to have been the same, their supposed Satanism being mockery of the Catholicism they considered as Satanic. The French witches allegedly worshipped a billy goat, the word for which is “un bouc”. Otherwise the French for a goat is “une chevre” and a kid is “un chevreau”. Puck as an imp is a reduction of the proper meaning of the word, “Bogu”. Here also is the true explanation of the curious title of Joan of Arc—“Pucelle”, considered to be from “puelage” meaning maidenhood. She is a female Puck—a goddess. The name will be Cathar. Goodfellows are *Bonhommes*, the Cathar *Bon Homines*, or Perfects. Bouc was read with a Cyrillic “S” at its terminus is “bous”, or “boun” in the accusative, a type of horned bread used in religious ceremonies, from which the word “bun” derives.

Reginald Scot called all the popular beliefs in spirits “bugs”. From “bug” comes the Scottish “bogle” and the northern English “boggart”, and also “bugbear”, “bugleboo”, or “bugaboo”. Akin to bogle was the old English term puckle. The Icelandic “puki” is an evil spirit, and such was the English “pouke”, which easily became “Puck”, and “pug”. Puck or Robin Goodfellow, as the Devil, Pouke, in the Mysteries is recognised by his characteristic “Ho! Ho! Ho!” now given to the jolly Christmas chap, Santa Claus.

In Friesland, the Kobold is called “Puk”, the Irish have their Pooka, and the Welsh their Pwcca, both derived from pouke or Puck, and in old German we meet with “putz” or “butz” as the name of a being not unlike the original English Puck. The Devonshire fairies are called “pixies”. Maureen Dufy claims that “puck” is cognate with “fuck”, as is the word “poke”. The “Pocker” in Sweden is the Devil. Puck was supposedly red and hairy! Sir F Palgrave says the Anglo-Saxon “pæcan” is to deceive, and to seduce, which allows us to accept that “Puck” and “fuck” have this same root.

Fairies were associated with mushrooms. A phallus begins small and expands in tumescence, eventually subsiding again. This copies the life cycle of the mushroom as it responds to the light at dawn. In their rapid morning development, mushrooms emerge from an egg or vulva, grow upwards like an engorging penis, and even had its phallic shape, with the dome of the glans which then flowers by opening fully. The mushroom therefore seemed always to signify male sexuality and fertility. The open canopy, often dark and hairy or frilly beneath, looked from below like a phallus penetrating a vagina. By the end of daylight, it is spent, and so is naturally also associated with the daily rise and decline of the sun. The Irish god, Cuchulain, is manifestly phallic in his description, but is a sun god. When he dies, he is strapped to a pillar to keep him erect in a type of crucifixion.

Maybe Puck was the magic mushroom, *Amanita Muscaria* with its distinctive red dome speckled with white, suspected to have been the haoma of the Iranians and the Soma of the Indians, and even the legendary mandrake, said to have had the shape of a man—a polite euphemism for the shape of the male organ. To shamans, certain mushrooms had magical powers and were called the “Holy Plant” and the “Son of God”, because of the way they appeared overnight and expanded with the dawn light. Their hallucinogenic properties were God’s way of showing men heaven.

The Swedish language has the terms “spöka”, “spöke”; the Danish “spöge”, “spøgelse”, the German, “spuken”, “spuk”, our modern “spook” all used of spirits or ghosts, and their

apparitions, though “spook” is now used of spies who deliberately try to stay out of sight! Perhaps the Scottish “pawkey”, sly, knowing, may belong to the same family of words.

The word “wight” (German, *wicht*), originally simply a creature, is equated with fairy or elf in Chaucer, and soon had a sinister meaning as some sort of demon. Perhaps it is the proper origin of witch.

Many writers connect Robin Goodfellow and Robin Hood. North of Nottingham was Sherwood Forest, supposed home of Robin Hood, though Yorkshire people put him in Barndale Forest near Doncaster. The two forests were probably all part of the same extended woodland at one time. The outlaws were said to meet at the thousand year old Major Oak in Birkland Wood near Edwinstowe, where Maid Marion and Robin were said to have married. Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I, became ill in Sherwood Forest. The king held council under the Parliament Oak near Clipstone. The Parley decided to continue the journey to Harby, despite the queen’s illness, but the strain was too much for her and she died.

Odin, Balder and Hoder

But Robin Hood was more than the hero of Sherwood Forest. The cult of Robin Hood was widespread both geographically and in time. He had a band of twelve companions, suggestive of a solar cult, and naturally of a traditional witches’ coven. The origin of the story of Robin Hood is a sun-myth reminiscent of the Norse myth of Odin. The Teutonic gods called the Aesir were the court of Odin. There are twelve of them besides the high god. The word “Aesir” is the same as the words used by the Iranians and Indians, namely “Ahura” and “Asura”, respectively, both cognate with “Surya”, the Indian word for sun. As in India, none is the sun itself, for the Norse sun is a maiden called Sol. The ancient Etrurians (Etruscans) also called their gods Aesir, according to Thomas Keightley, and the Etrurians seem to have been closely related to the Hurrians of the ancient near east.

Sun gods are always judges because they see all wrongs. Robin Hood was at that time the people’s ideal, as Arthur was that of the upper classes. He is the ideal yeoman, as Arthur was the ideal knight. He loves a free life, and is confident he is right. He favours the Virgin, but hates rich bloated monks and abbots, and wealthy nobles—ecclesiastical and secular authority, except that of the just king—robbing them to feed the poor.

One of the *Ballads of Robin Hood* describes how he was murdered by the prioress of a convent of nuns. Treating him, she treacherously left the wound unbound and he bled to death. The prioress is plainly the mother Church, but, oddly, Robin’s route to the priory was lined with people, mourning and lamenting his death. Here we have a Cathar Perfect proceeding to his death at the hands of the Church. Hood is Good. He is a Goodfellow, a *Bonhommes*. Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais went to their deaths, in similar fashion, as witches or heretics.

Robin had a measuring rod in some tales to symbolise justice—as we use scales—and perhaps his link with the crafts guilds. The northern god Odin (Woden) was also Metod, the Measurer, the Germanic Apollo, a sun god, depicted as an ancient man, with a hood or hat low over his brow, a blue mantle, and one eye. The single eye is, of course, the all-seeing sun. Hood has the meaning of blinding, as with the hood of a hawk, and therefore apparently the sense of darkness. Odin was blind in one eye, so had a good or functioning eye and a blind one. The god is fond of disguising himself as Grimner the Hooded, Guest or Waytorn to wander among humanity.

The Devil of the witches was sometimes described as having a tall hat. Today wizards and witches are conventionally depicted with tall conical hats, the witch one having a brim but that of

the male witch being brimless. It sounds like the penitential hat worn by the accused heretics in the Spanish inquisition—the *coroza*. Either the heretics were made to wear it by the Catholics to show publicly who they were because it was part of their own habit, or the witches wore it in mockery and defiance of the inquisition. Such a hat is not a hood, that is plain, but if it was worn it must have been ceremonial. No one would go out in one! So witches would normally have worn hoods as most people did when they needed a head dress. They were cheap and practical.

Odin has twin sons Balder (Slavonic, Belibog? White God) and Hoder (Hod, the Blind, a god born blind). Hod seems to be another way of writing Odin, so the two sons are the two eyes of the father. Odin is the sun in its full yearly course, and Balder and Hoder, are the two half years ending at the equinoxes, Balder the summer sun and Hoder the winter sun.

Balder was so beautiful he had been made immortal when all things had promised the Aesir not to harm him. Because he was immortal, the gods had an idle game of shooting projectiles at him, knowing they could do no harm. The lowly mistletoe, a poisonous plant but considered too young, had been the only one not to swear the oath. Jealous Loki gives a spear tipped with mistletoe to blind Hoder and, inviting him to join the game, tells him to hurl it. Thus the blind god kills the white god. Here we have the dark god of winter overwhelming the bright god of summer at the autumn equinox. Balder is a sun god because he is burnt on a funeral pyre, and Loki seems to be the fire god. Loki is generally wicked and considered to be the Norse Satan, but also sometimes does good things, so he was probably originally considered a good god, as fire gods were, but had been reduced to a demon.

Balder is only allowed to revive if all things on earth weep for him—the spring thaw after a winter frost. This would have been the original resurrection of the summer god, but it has been overwritten with the story that the giantess Thokk (really Loki) refuses, and so Balder remains dead. This is likely to be a Christian amendment, Christians resenting any other gods than Jesus being resurrected. At the next festival a few months later Hoder, who logically should be killed by Baldur, is killed by Vali, another twin son of Odin born just as Baldur died! Hoder, the winter sun, thus dies at the spring equinox. The tale is left with the twin sun gods remaining dead, but two more apparently born in their stead. Vali is one, his twin brother being Vidar. Vali is Baldur revived, and Vidar was the same for Hoder, but the reteller has forever spoiled the cyclic nature of the story, and has left the gods dead and therefore useless. All Vikings could therefore turn to the god that *had* been resurrected!

In the original myth, Balder does indeed revive in the spring when everything wept for him. The symmetry of the tale suggests that the instrument of the deicide, the mistletoe, called “all heal”, has a magical healing role in reviving the god too. Mistletoe grows in such a way that each branch yields three more. Mistletoe is the true shamrock, suppressed by the Catholic Church in favour of a lowly clover or herb. It must help bring Balder back to life after a seasonal death, having been responsible for the death in the first place. Druids are said to have cut mistletoe not at the equinoxes but at the new year and at the midsummer solstice. At midsummer, in Norse myth, it was used to poke out the eye of the year, the ritual doubtless represented in Odin’s single eye and Hoder’s blindness. It is the birth day of the winter sun god.

The ceremonies must have been moved from the original equinoxes to the solstices, as the Aryans moved west, perhaps influenced by the habits of the native megalith builders. Yule, Christmas, became the perceived if unofficial year end in the northern regions, doubtless seeming much more important than the equinoxes to people living in the freezing cold than those living in the ancient near east where Christmas was not life threateningly cold. Christians made mistletoe the symbol of love, kissing beneath it, but it is still too Pagan or threatening to be seen inside churches, unlike holly and ivy.

In what seems another incident, to rejuvenate himself, Odin has himself hung on the world tree, Yggdrasil, for nine days transfixed by his own spear consecrated to himself, a self crucifixion, the tree and the spear forming a cross. This is probably a different version of the death of Balder equating with the Christian myth, Odin's spear probably being the one tipped with mistletoe wood, a hardwood because mistletoe grows so slowly. In the myth of Balder one of his brothers rides on Odin's eight legged horse to the queen of the underworld, Hel, to plead for Balder to be returned. It takes him nine days, doubtless the nine days that Odin-Balder was crucified. Odin was saved by the runes, but they will have given the message that Hel had allowed him to live, rejuvenated after a seasonal death.

The German versions of these myths had been thoroughly spoiled by Christianization. Derrick Everett, in a website devoted mainly to Wagner's interpretation of *Parzifal*, says even in Scandinavia, which had been converted to Christianity in and around the eleventh century, the priests and monks had managed to destroy most traces of paganism, before they were ever set down. Some poems, either heroic or religious, survived, but even the best manuscript (the *Codex Regius*) of the Old Norse *Poetic Edda* is incomplete. Around 1200 the Icelandic scholar, Snorri Sturlason, wrote a manual for poets now known as the *Prose Edda*. Snorri was guessing a lot of myth that had already gone, even though it was preserved better than the German myths. They had been obliterated by Christians but these versions from Iceland were less affected. They were spoiled, nevertheless.

Seasonal Rituals

Robin Hood is Odin, the god of the full year, consisting of the white or bright summer half (Robin) and the dark or blind winter half (Hood). He accordingly has twelve companions. In Teutonic Mythology, the Wild Hunt lasts the twelve nights of Yule—which was adopted at some stage as the year end, instead of the equinoxes that were earlier. To end the year, the whole year is celebrated in miniature, a day for each month, the equivalent of the Roman Saturnalia. The god of the year end in classical mythology was the two faced Janus, and Robin Hood seems to have had the same connotations, although the name “Janus” seems to have gone to Little John (Janicot), one of Robin's companions.

The winter solstice was a fire festival, the day concluding with bonfires lit to reinvigorate the sun at its weakest time. Fire was an object of worship, and the ancient Aryans used to carry it with them so as to save the trouble of having to light a fire from scratch. But it was thought to lose its purity and sacred character in being propagated, so, on these solemn occasions all fires were extinguished and a new fire lit using a fire drill, or swastika. The fire drill—a stick of hard wood, perhaps mistletoe, twirled rapidly with its point against a softer wood generating heat to kindle a fire in the dry furze it was set in—was seen as mimicking the sexual act. It was the heat of the desire in this act that produced the flame, and so it was called the need-fire (in Old German “not-feur”, and in Anglo-Saxon, “neod-fyr”). The swastika symbol, a twirling cross, stood for the fire drill, and is associated with the sun by being used initially on the occasions of the equinoxes to regenerate the sun's fire on earth—then later in northern Europe, at the solstices too. The newly lit fire was pure, and the celebratory bonfires could be lit from it, so its embers were kept for fire-lighting. This tradition is remembered in the Yule log, now usually just a cream cake imitating a log, but originally kept from Christmas to Christmas. The mistletoe, in its use as a swastika, would be enacting its role as the regenerator of the dead Baldur, the completion of the solar cycle, and Loki, as a fire god, would have been the overseer of the annual swastika fire ritual.

Here are some solar customs from England. In Gloucester, there was a custom, until after 1841, that on 6 January, S John's Eve, twelve small fires were built, and one large one. A festive ritual

was then held of “burning the old witch”. This sounds like the new year festival suggested in these pages as a ceremony of both the Cathars and the witches.

Another new year tradition is the Haxey hood game, also held on 6 January in Lincolnshire. It was inaugurated, according to the tradition, by a thirteenth century lady Mowbray whose hat, blown off by the wind, was chased by thirteen woodmen, but it is a bit more elaborate than just a chase. Of the thirteen “Boggans”, one is King or Lord, in a red jacket and top hat bedecked with flowers, and carrying as a sign of office a wand of thirteen willow rods bound with thirteen willow withies, and another is Fool, with a black and red face—typical Morris characters. In the preliminaries, they make a circle and a “hood” made of sacking is thrown into a crowd, nowadays of children, in the middle. The children scramble for it and whoever gets it has to try to get past the Boggans who only need touch the hood. If they do, it is played for again. The process goes on with each of twelve sacking hoods, anyone getting past the Boggans getting a small prize.

Next is the main game itself. A leather “Sway Hood”, a two foot long coil of thick rope sewn into leather, is thrown in and there is a mighty scramble, called the “Sway”, among teams from the local villages—at one time, five, but now apparently down to two—who have to get the hood to their local inn, perhaps a precursor of rugby and gridiron football, though this “ball” cannot be thrown or kicked. The final ceremony, formerly on the next day, was the “Smoking of the Fool”, a symbolic burning. Now, this precedes the main events, the fool making a feeble attempt to escape before being caught and made to make a traditional speech from the Mowbray stone, with the smouldering straw around him. The older tradition was to suspend the fool from a tree swinging over the smokey smouldering straw, until he was choking, then to allow him to fall into it to scramble free. His blackened face with its red marks signify someone who had originally really been roasted over properly burning furze, doubtless until the rope burnt through and he fell into the flames.

Folklorists think the Sway Hood was originally a bull’s penis and the event a pagan seasonal fertility ritual. The Boggans were supposedly people from the bog, the local fenland, but it seems beyond coincidence that both fairies and witches were called “Boggarts” in the north of England, and this relates to the word “Bogu” used for god and appearing in the word “Bogomile”. The wand of sticks carried by the Lord Boggan sounds much like the baresman, emblem of the Magian priests in Zoroastrianism rather as a crook is for Christian bishops. Was this tradition brought into Europe either by the Aryan tribes or later by the Cathar heretics?

The Robin Hood myth is connected with the Morris dance, but that was late in the fifteenth century. Maid Marion is the dawn-maiden. Little John was one of the companions. According to De Lancre the name of the Basque god was Jauna or Janicot. The latter he says means “petit Jean”, and was applied by the witches of the Basses Pyrénées to Christ. A man-witch at Orleans also spoke of the host as “un beau Janicot”. Murray says Janicot could be Jauna with the ending “Cot” “God”, as in the northern “Irmincot”. De Lancre notes that the witches, when “in the hands of Justice” used the name Barrabon to signify either their own or the Christian God, this being apparently a name used by witches in Belgium. It is suspiciously like Barabbas.

In the fifteenth century, a chaplain was issued a pardon in these words:

Pardon to Robert Stafford, late of Lyndefeld, co Sussex, chaplain, alias Frere Tuk, for not appearing before the King to answer Richard Wakehurst touching a plea of trespass.

Here is a real Friar Tuck. These names begin to look like titles for people in different roles. The most celebrated historical Robin Hood was supposedly the Earl of Huntingdon in the reign of Richard I, who being himself a Plantagenet was possibly a Cathar.

Robin Hood always wore the fairies' colour, green. Green gowns were given on Mayday, and some say the Cathar Perfects wore, not black, as the Catholics said, but a deep blue or green robe. Robin was inseparably connected with May day celebrations. In 1580, Edmund Assheton wrote criticizing...

Robyn Hoode and the May games as being Lewde sportes, tending to no other end but to stir up our frail natures to wantonness.

In mediæval poetry and romance, the month of May was consecrated to love, as pervading all nature, inviting humanity join in. Chaucer writes in *Court of Love* that early on May Day "goeth forth all the court, both most and least, to fetch the flowers fresh, and branch and bloom". May was celebrated with festivities dedicated to Nature's fecundity. The Romans had their Floralia, a sexual festival, and much of the mediæval celebration of May-day reflects the Floralia. The northern festivals of Samhain and Beltane, or Mayday and Halloween, were particularly associated with fairy activity, and bringing in the May or "Nutting" on May Eve was a feast of sexuality looked forward to all year.

Even in Christian times, up until at least the end of the twelfth century, the rules of virginity were ignored on May Eve. Shakespeare said that no one would sleep on May morning, but they rose early to observe the rites of May. How early? Hazlitt cites a contemporary account in the north of England.

The juvenile part of both sexes were wont to rise a little after midnight on the morning of that day, and walk to a neighbouring wood to gather their greenery and nosegays to take home to decorate their doors and windows.

As in the Floralia, according to a Puritan disdainful writer of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Philip Stubbes (*Anatomy of Abuses*, 1583), the revelling ended up in youthful copulating. Stubbes recalls that everyone, young and old went out into the woods to spend all night in "pastymes", returning with flowers and the greenery in the morning. The arrival of the festival was announced by horns sounding in the preceding night, and no sooner had midnight arrived than the youth of both sexes went in couples to the woods to gather branches and make garlands, and to return at sunrise to decorate the doors of their houses. He declares on the authority of the most credible sources that:

...of fourtie, three score or a hundred maides gaying to the woode over night, there have scarcely the third part of them returned home again undefiled.

Spelman, in the time of James I, remarked that:

May is the merry month. On the first day, betimes in the morning, shall young fellowes and maids be so enveloped in the mist of wandring out of their ways, that they shall fall into ditches, one upon the other.

In England, the feature of the day was the Maypole, the trunk of a tall young tree cut down for the occasion, painted various colours, and carried in joyous procession, with minstrels playing, until it reached the village green, where it was set up, decked with garlands and flowers, the lads and girls danced round it, and people indulged in all sorts of riotous enjoyments. The Puritans

were certain the maypole was a relic of Paganism. It stood for a phallus, and the ceremonies of raising up each of them were identical. The same joyous procession in the Roman festivals conducted the phallus into the midst of the town or village, where in the same manner it was decked with garlands, and the people danced, feasted and indulged themselves sexually.

Wedding revels were the same, when the bridesmaids often did more than catch a bouquet of flowers. One wonders whether primitive Christianity, opposed as it was to sexuality, permitted a necessary release of tension in the May day celebrations. The Puritans stopped it all, seeming to suggest otherwise, inasmuch as Puritan roots were also in Catharism. But by then, the Roman hatred of heretics and witches was such a scourge, that even the lineal descendants of the original heretics had joined in the mass hysteria.

“Nutting” is, politely, courting or pleasing a maid with small presents, but reduces to a pun for the sexual activity of the night, remembered in the nursery rhyme about the Little Nut Tree:

I had a little nut tree, nothing would it bear
But a silver nutmeg and a golden pear.

The King of Spain’s daughter came to visit me,
And all for the sake of my little nut tree.

The Queen of France’s daughter gave it unto me,
That we might go a nutting on her little nut tree.

“Nuts” is still used to mean testicles. “Nutmeg” was certainly a colloquial word for testicle, and presumably “pear” was meant to be too. An appropriate present for a bride was a bag of nuts. James Orchard Halliwell says the King of Spain’s daughter was Juana La Loca (Joanna the Mad) whom Henry VII would have married for diplomatic reasons. She lived to a ripe age, but was quite mad for most of her adult life. The nature of her madness might throw more light on the poem.

Robin Hood, Maid Marion, Little John and the band of merrie men played an important part in May Day activities. Young men in a village took on the roles of the forresters and the girls were maids Marion. Surnames such as Robinson, Hudson, Hodson, Johnson, Littlejohn, Godson, and Godkin attest to a maid having an illegitimate child sired one May eve. The Roundheads put an end to these islands of fun in a sea of misery, not the Catholic priests.

The maids had other objectives besides “pastymes”. They believed that by wetting their faces with the dew dripping from the hawthorne at daybreak on May Day, they would remain beautiful for the whole year. The benefits of dew for preserving good looks is itself an ancient belief, and not restricted to the dew of May Day. The wife of the Doge of Venice was keen on using it in 1081.

Heretical festivities perhaps also ended in a degree of open sexuality, particularly since there were no prurient priests able to insist on their favourite maid or youth attending a confession so that they could have the same pleasure vicariously. If the sabbats were fairly described as paradise, the witches were being given a taste of the guiltlessness they would enjoy in heaven.

The obvious phallic symbolism of the maypole and riding the hobby horse signifies the fertility aspects of spring festivals.

Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross,
To see a fine Lady on a white horse.

This children's rhyme invites them to see a sexual coupling between a maiden and a winter white stud—though in some versions the cock horse is black. “To horse” by the seventeenth century meant to possess a woman, and a “horse leech” was vernacular for a whore. The queen of the May might have declared summer by publicly fornicating, something the churches could hardly have been happy about. One version of the rhyme (1784) makes the woman an old woman with a ring on her finger and a bonnet of straw, sounding like an attempt to make her a respectable old married woman! In fact, Banbury Cross was deliberately pulled down by the Puritans in 1601, suggesting they did not like its associations, but also showing the verse precedes this date.

“Riding a cock horse” is used with children to mean a toy horse, usually a stick with a horse-like head, or a human knee used to bounce the child while reciting the rhyme. Iona and Peter Opie, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, says these have been the meanings since 1540, at least. It is closer to the implications of the rhyme. Riding is a traditional euphemism for sexual activity, and in a late version the old woman “jumps” on to the horse. Needless to say, “to jump” is another euphemism for the same thing. Witches were supposed to ride their broomsticks like a cock horse, probably another sexual allegation by the Church meant to match their orgiastic nature, or, in truth, the prurience of the examiners. However, the expression “hot cockles” means female masturbation.

In other versions, the cross is Coventry Cross suggesting that the custom of Lady Godiva, riding naked on a white horse, is the sight to be seen. The custom is said to be based on an eleventh century incident, but it seems too fantastic to believe. In any case, Godiva was the wife of Leofric, the man who supposedly founded Coventry, so there could not have been much of a town there at the time. The name Coventry is said to refer to the three spires there, but it could hardly have had three churches when it was founded. Coventry means three convents or covens, and the town once set up was always progressive, being associated with the new crafts, and eventually became strongly puritanical. It was probably always a center of the Cathars trades.

The date of the Godiver incident is said to have been Corpus Christi, a Christian festival started by women only in the thirteenth century, when it first came to historical notice. It will have been Christianized from from May Day, which it originally celebrated, to Corpus Christi. The Puritans made May Day and its accoutrements like the Maypole illegal in 1644, suppressing the “greenwood marriages” of young men and women spending the night in the forest to greet the May sunrise, and bringing back garlands of flowers to decorate the village in the morning. Puritans did not approve of what they got up to during the night.

In Wales, in the nineteenth century, a ceremony was held on May Day in which thirteen dancers, including a garland bearer and a “Cadi”, led a crowd of revellers cavorting in circles. The Cadi wore a grotesque black mask, red around the eyes and mouth, and with red cheeks, or painted his face with the same pattern in greasepaint. The grotesque is probably the wicked sun. In Welsh myth, the perennial battle between Gwythur and Gwyn for the love of Creudylad took place each May Day, a typical solar myth of the equinox, suggesting that May Day was taken as the Celtic equinox.

A Gypsy Connexion?

The origin of the tale that Gypsies came from Egypt is that a crowd of them appeared in Paris in 1427 led by a duke and a count and ten other horsemen. Another 120 camped outside the city. Their leaders explained to the burghers that the pope had ordered them to leave Egypt and to

wander for seven years without a bed to sleep in as a penance *for apostasy*. Was there some truth in this claim? Were they heretics? 1200 had started out led by a king and a queen, but the rest had died *en route*. They announced that all bishops and abbots had to donate them J10 for being dutiful in their faith. Crowds of Parisians went to see them at their encampment, where they had their fortunes told. They could have been told that they would lose sums of money since they lost it “by magic art or in other ways”.

Romany, the language of the Gypsies, is a language with close ties with Sanskrit, one reason why Gypsies are now considered to be from India. The Indian word, “dom”, is identified with the Romany, “rom”, from which they are supposed to get their name, “Roma”. It meant a caste of poor dancers and musicians. Yet Romany has many Persian words, a language that is also based on Sanskrit. The Romany word for “good” is “kushti”, the name of the holy girdle of the Zoroastrians. Western Romany also has many words from other countries from Armenia westwards, words that are considered to trace the Gypsies’ route into Europe through Persia, Asia Minor, Bulgaria, Romania, Bosnia and Serbia, then west and north. The countries thus identified were often the countries of the Catharists too. Perhaps Gypsies are Romanies simply because they lived for long in Romania, and when they left were identified with that country, as their country of origin. Romania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Serbia had many Bogomiles among their people from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries.

The Gypsy sign language is called Patteran, suggesting a link with the Patarenes, a type of Cathar who sorted rags for a living and came from Bosnia. Both Bogomiles and Gypsies came into Europe from the Balkans, although the Gypsies were supposed to have been a few hundred years later, and the Balkans still have the highest population of Gypsies in Europe till this day. After the thirteenth century, both Cathars and Gypsies were pariahs in Europe, and might have given each other mutual support. But, unlike the Cathars who were determined in their religious commitment, the Gypsies adopted whatever was convenient. Western Gypsies are Christians and eastern ones are Moslems. The Bogomiles who used to live in the Balkans, oppressed by the Hungarian Catholics, converted to Islam when the Turks came, and are now the Bosnian Moslems, so they were not ultimately any different from the Gypsies in this respect too. Balkan Gypsies in the fourteenth century were quite possibly Bogomiles, and felt a sympathy for the hounded Catharenes, when they entered western Europe. The gypsies were often associated with witchcraft.

Sifting the Cinders of the Cathars VII

Fairies and Cathars

Fairies

Thomas Keightley (*The Fairy Mythology*, 1880) notes and rejects the idea that Dwarfs were a memory of a short race defeated in the fifth to tenth centuries. They might have been an even earlier memory, of course. Anthropologists think fairies are a folk memory of the small brown megalith builders of Europe, who were displaced into the wild heathlands and moors by the invading Iranians. The *Larousse Dictionary of World Folklore*, *sub voce* “fairy”, says that fairies were “conquered peoples forced off their land to a precarious existence in the wild, making occasional surreptitious raids” to eke out their frugal supplies. This might be so, but, the direct dealings that humans were said to have had with them in the Middle Ages, including intermarriage, suggests the concept was transferred to living human beings—Cathar refugees. After the twelfth century, and in the witch hunting period, the Christian authorities seem to have identified them as witches. Maureen Duffy, in *The Erotic World of Fairy* (1972), observes:

Not content with the Albigensian genocide, Lollard hunting, Jew-baiting and wars against the infidel, the Church was about to turn on the rural holders of fairy beliefs...

The Church conceded that angels and demons existed. It conceded that ghosts of the dead who were confined to Purgatory might reappear on earth until God got round to appointing them to their permanent place. The Church was more reluctant about fairies, and they are not considered among the supernatural entities they permit. For the Church, if fairies did exist, they were demonic, like witches and heretics. A fairy tempting Perceval was turned into a puff of smoke by S Collen’s holy water—a popular theme of latter day vampire movies. Yet they were considered as Christians. Not by the Church, so by whom?

The fairy beliefs can now be seen to have been the same as those of the Albigenses, the people of Albi—the Cathars. Who else could fairies be in Christian Europe other than the heretics driven from their homes in fear? If this is so, how would the name fairy have been given to the Cathar refugees?

The word “fairy”, or rather “fata” in Italian, whence “fada” in Provençal, “hada” in Spanish, and “faée”, “fée”, in French, came into general use about the right time—during the 1200s. The proper meaning of the word “fairy” is from the Latin word “fata”, meaning fate, or “fatae”, Fates. It should not be surprising, then, that the “fada” or “fïe” began being supernatural.

The Fates were three female spirits, who controlled everyone’s destiny, even the gods’, and so were perhaps senior or above the gods themselves, in a way, rather like the Persian concept of “arta”. Odin, in the *Edda*, explains that the three Fates are called Nornir, but there are far more than three of them. They go about in threes because they stand for past, present and future. There are three for each entity, of whatever race they are. It is in this role that fairies are invited to the birth or Christening of infants. They confer on to the child its destiny.

From about the thirteenth century, the word “fïe” was increasingly applied to a woman skilled in magic—a witch! So, Keightley thought that the word “fae” came from the verb, “fatare”—itself derived from the word “fata”—meaning “to enchant”. The point of “faerie” was that it was an illusion. The Lady of the Lake’s lake was an illusion. Where the Lady lived was...

...so secret and so concealed, that right difficult was it for anyone to find, for the semblance of the said lake covered it so that it could not be perceived.

In Old French, the Franks being famously lazy speakers, and determined to get rid of superfluous consonants and syllables, “fatare” became “faer” or “fêer”, still meaning to enchant, and from that came “fae” or “fay”, meaning an enchanter, and “faerie” and “fêerie”, meaning enchantment, then the country of the fairies and its people.

The “fae” was thus an ambiguous being, sometimes thought of as a human woman with magical powers—in the Neapolitan *Pentamarone* of Giambattista Basile (1637), “fata” and “maga” are interchangeable—and sometimes as a different species, like a goddess or an angel or demon.

Economy of speech, like that of the French, lends itself to confusion, whether accidental or deliberate, by punning. The Old French had another “fay” with a different meaning and etymology. It meant “faith” and came from the Latin “fides”, by the same process of elision. A similar word was “fair”, from the Latin “feria” meaning a holiday, and there was the common French word “faire” meaning to “make” or “do”.

The Cathars were craftsmen, they made and did things, travelled to attend trades fairs to sell their wares, and they also were evangelical, at least originally, travelling in pairs to spread their faith, which was evidently strong. Today, the word “fairy” has been easily transferred to effeminate men, but in the thirteen century, there were several reasons why the Cathars could have been given the name fairy, whether jocularly or unkindly. It seems it stuck, but with the elimination of the heretics, its connexion with them was forgotten, leaving just some of their characteristics as clues.

It is also a strange coincidence, noted by Keightley—bearing in mind that “p” is often changed to “f”—that the Persian word “peri”, means a beautiful airy spirit, much like our fairies. The Persian Zoroastrians had a whole world of airy spirits called “fravashis”, from which the concept of “peris” might have derived (or *vice versa*). The Persian “Peries” are in constant battle against the evil “Deevs”. They live on nothing more than fragrance, reminding us of the Essenes who wanted to offer to God a sweet fragrance rather than a sacrifice. In Pahlavi, “fravashi” becomes “fravahr”, rendered in the west as “feroher”, the “v” in the word plainly pronounced as an “ou” sound. “feroher” is also astonishingly close to fairy in sound. Since the suggestion is that fairy is a name of people who followed a primitive Christianity, still much influenced by the Persian origin of Judaism and Mithraism, the links are far from impossible.

In an early northern poem about the biblical Judith and Holofernes dated about 900 AD, the heroine is described as “elf-shining”, taken to mean beautiful, but suggesting that “shining” was an elvish property. So elves sound something like the rays of the sun or sunbeams in Teutonic solar mythology, conceived as the god’s helpers or angels. “Elf” is the Teutonic word for a fairy, and so it came to be used of the Cathars in the same way.

In the fourteenth century, Chaucer used the words “elf” and “fairy” interchangeably. Chaucer and his friend and rival, Gower, were sickened by the corruption of the Church, and Chaucer plainly counterpoises the fairy world and the Church saying there are no more elves, only wandering friars who creep into ladies’ beds. Chaucer also, through the Wyf of Bath, sarcastically says fairies were driven out by the charity and prayers of the friars “thick as motes in a sunbeam”. The fairies driven out are the sunbeam polluted by the friars thick as motes in it, but in fact, the friars were the Church’s weapon against the heretics, and so Chaucer here is associating fairies with heretics.

The word “elf” (“aelvan”, “alvisc”, elvish) was used in Layamon’s *Brut*, the first English poem after the Norman conquest. In Germany, the creatures that were born of unions of witches and the Devil were called “elben”. Curiously, “alb” or “albi”, reminding us of the Cathars, is a German word for elf. Oberon, the king of the Fairies was originally Alberon in the medieval French romance, *Huon de Bourdeaux*, where he is the son of Julius Caesar and Morgan la Fay! The author must have been signifying an admixture of Roman and Celtic mythology in this. Celtic Britain was called Alba. The guardian of the Nibelung Hoard, in the *Nibelungenlied* of the thirteenth century, is Alberich, perhaps the same person. The name means “Elf King”.

Other German names are similar. Alfred is “Elf Counsellor”, and Albert is “Shining Elf”. In German, the word “elf” used in proper names in the form of “alp”, as in Alprecht and Alphart, was changed with the Christianization of the Germans, becoming “engel” (angel), yielding names like Engelrecht and Engelhart. It suggests that angels were considered a suitable Christian substitute for elves, and that elves were therefore thought of in the same way as angels.

Nennius says that the earliest name of Britain, and the one used by Pliny, Alba (Albion), was from Albina, the eldest of the Danaids. The German river Elbe is from the same source (Latin, *Albis*). It might be the association of Albi and Albion that tempted the troubadours to look to Albion for some of their inspiration, and that led on to the *Golden Legend* and the Arthurian cycle. Albina is white because she is the Goddess of barley and hence flour. She is another form of the white moon and cereal goddess, Diana.

Curious it is too, that the Cathar pope and the Bogomiles came from the Balkans where there are people called by the Greeks and Latins, Albanians, though it was not their own name for themselves. In *Huon of Bordeaux*, a reference is made to Prince Florimont of Albania, as the first love of Oberon’s mother, Morgan La Fée. A few hundred years later, she loved Julius Caesar and gave birth to Oberon. A fairy forgotten at the Christening cursed him not to grow after his third year—but promised him great beauty to make up for it—the beginning of the decline in size of the fairies. The other fairies present gave him other wonderful gifts. Here, Albania is obviously the country of the Albs or Elves. The French verse version is thought to be thirteenth century but the prose version was published in 1454.

Spenser in *The Fairy Queen*, derives the word “elf” from the word “life”. Prometheus made the elves and called them “elves” because they were alive! Perhaps, he was tongue in cheek, but both words are Anglo-Saxon, and derive from unknown old Teutonic originals, so perhaps there is some truth in it.

In Greece, in classical times, the role of fairies was taken by the various types of nymphs who dwelt in woods, mountains, springs, rivers and so on, and were depicted as beautiful women. The woodland nymphs were particularly considered as attendants of Artemis, the huntress, who was Diana. Titania, the name used by Shakespeare for the Queen of the Fairies, like Herodias, is an epithet of Diana. Ovid called Diana Titania, and Chaucer called her Proserpina. King James writes of a kind of spirit “which by the gentiles was called Diana, and her wandering court, and amongst us called the Fairy”. Gower makes no distinction in *Confessio Amantis* between Medea as a sorcerer or a witch, a fairy or a goddess.

She seemed no woman, but a fay:
Such powers to her charms obey,
She might be called a deity.

Finn Magnusen equated witches with Trolls and Nisses when he wrote:

And trolls, witches and nisses in each nook.

Milton speaks of “fairy elves whose midnight revels by a forest side or fountain some belated peasant sees”. Fairies and witches in revelling at midnight both acted in the same way. Both fairies and witches were said to be averse to salt. Both were said to entice ordinary people into their circles. Both had a reputation of not tolerating being spied on, and people avoided places favoured by fairies or witches, especially at night. It became a custom to leave food out for them so that they would not steal it. They were also thought to steal farming implements and seed corn, though these were usually returned, the farming tools carefully cleaned and sharpened.

Fairies were traditionally small, because the invading Aryans were taller than the heath folk, but they were mainly within the bounds of human size, and so it is for the fairies met as evil creatures of the Devil. Mainly the fairy of Romance was about human size, and from the time of Spenser’s *The Fairy Queen* and Shakespeare, they uniformly became tiny woodland creatures. Before, a fairy could be mistaken for an ordinary mortal, so stories of contemporary people meeting and even having sexual intercourse with fairies arise. In the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Anne Page dresses herself as a fairy so that she could be taken for one, though she was a full-grown young woman. In Scotland, Ireland, and France, the fairy is of the size of a human being. Bessie Dunlop (1576) in Ayrshire saw eight women and four men fairies:

The men were clad in gentlemen’s clothing, and the women had all plaids round them and were very seemly-like to see.

She was told they were from the “Court of Elfame”. The “Queen of Elfame” had visited her although she had not known who she was. The Queen was “a stout woman who came in to her and sat down on the form beside her and asked a drink at her and she gave it”. Fairies among the villagers were dressed like their neighbours, lest they should attract attention and so be recognised. Andro (Andrew) Man of the Aberdeen witches had lived for thirty-two years as the husband of the “Queen of Elphen”, by whom he had several children. In the Basses-Pyrénées in 1609, one could find in each village a Queen of the Sabbath that Satan chose as a special wife. The converts, after renouncing their old faith...

...take Satan as their father and protector, and the “Deviless” as their mother.

Jonet Drever in Orkney was convicted of fostering a child to the fairyfolk, whom she called “our good neighbours”. Her punishment was to be scourged from one end of the town to the other, and thereafter to be banished to the country, never to return under pain of death. This was the same punishment imposed by the Inquisition on Maria de Coccicas, a young woman of Lisbon, charged with heresy and tortured on the rack.

Margaret Murray says in most cases of witchcraft, from Joan of Arc in 1431 down to the end of the seventeenth century, the most damning evidence against the accused was knowing fairies! Confessing to knowing them usually guaranteed condemnation to the stake. Yet, the Plantagenet kings, from the south of France, where the Cathar heresy was strong, claimed a fairy ancestry! Shakespeare refers to the Plantagenet fairy origins in *Henry IV* where the king hoped to prove:

That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,
And called mine—Percy, his—Plantagenet!

Plantagenet was the name of the family who supplied the kings of England from Henry II to Richards III (1154-1455). The name is from the Latin meaning the broom plant (*Planta Genista*),

supposedly because the founder of the line, Geoffrey of Anjou, wore a sprig of broom in his hat. Broom is always associated with witches.

The people called fairies before about 1600 were not little gossamer winged creatures, but were in every respect human. Two allegedly green children, wandering lost in a cornfield and crying inconsolably, were found by reapers near Wolpfit St Marys (Woolpit?) in Suffolk, sometime in the mid-twelfth century in the reign of Stephen (1135-1154), according to an account of it by William of Newbridge, confirmed by Abbot Ralph of Coggeshall. They wore strange garments, spoke no English and lived only on broad beans. They were quickly baptized as Christians, but the boy pined and died. The girl survived to learn how to eat normal food. Ralph of Coggeshall, going by the word of her employer, Sir Richard de Calne, described her as loose and wanton in her conduct, but she eventually married.

She described where she had lived as inhabited by Christians and called S Martin's Land, a place with no direct sun, only twilight, though a bright land could be seen across a broad river. Fairies, paradoxically, in view of their supposed demonic character, were generally supposed to have been Christians. Marie of France, who wrote in the twelfth century court of Henry II of England, relates *The Lay of Yonec* with its distinct affinities with *Joseph and Aseneth*. A lady is confined to a tower by her jealous husband, but the hero flies in to her as a great bird. She fears he is the Devil but he agrees to prove he is a Christian by assuming her shape and taking the Mass, something a demon could not abide, the Church taught. He was able to do this because he was the Fairy king, and so a Christian.

Paul Harris in *The Fortean Times* (1991) suggests the half-starved children had lived in fairly dense woods—whence their twilight world—by the river Lark, near the village of Fordham S Martin, where they had wandered into an old flint working and had emerged at another entrance, lost. He suggests they merely spoke a dialect that the locals did not recognize, but it seems unlikely that dialects could differ so much in proximate places even in those days. Woolpit is ten miles from Fordham S Martin, so the kids had walked a long way from home without coming across Bury S Edmunds which is only a mile or so from Fordham. Of course, they might have been told by their parents to avoid people, because they were probably children of Cathar or Waldensian evangelists, scratching an existence in the woods. Their language would have been that of Oc, and their natural complexion might have been the olive skin of Mediterranean people.

Thomas Keightley notes that the Anglo-Saxon word for a mushroom means “wolf's fist”, a peculiar idea since wolves do not have fists. The puff ball mushroom is however called Puck's foot in Iceland, and Puck's fist in Old English works. He conjectures that the Anglo-Saxon mushroom is really an “elf's fist” not a “wolf's fist”, and that elves at some stage became wolves, by accident or design, in some of these words. If this is so, the Wolf Pits where the Suffolk children were found might have been Elf-Pits originally! Now they have become Wool Pits, it seems. Only a few miles to the northwest, still in woodland to this day, is the village of Elveden.

Geraldus Cambrensis having toured Wales, in 1188, reports a child's description of Fairyland. The story is that of Elidurus, a priest who experienced it as a twelve year old boy. Later recollecting the events, he could never avoid shedding tears through his sense of loss. Playing truant one day, he was led away by some little men:

These men were of the smallest stature but very well proportioned in their make. They were all of fair complexion with luxuriant hair falling over their shoulder like that of women. They had horses and greyhounds adapted to their size [presumably ponies and whippets].

The description continues that they were vegetarians, took no oaths because of their great regard for the truth, and held no public worship for the same reason. All of these characteristics including the long hair denote them as Cathars. He tries to steal something from them, and fails but can never find them again.

Those who go with the fairies are never the same again, just as the Church made out that it was easy to be persuaded into heresy but impossible to follow the reverse path. In those days, it was not “Once a Catholic” but “Once a Cathar”. It was obviously a much more compelling belief than Catholicism.

Fairies mainly danced and hunted. They were thought not to work except as cobblers or tailors—meaning craftsmen. Eyewitnesses aver that the fairies spun and wove their own cloth, and the heretics were artisans, notably weavers. The fairy weavers used woollen yarn, most often dyed dark green or dark blue, the colours that some say were the colours of the Cathar Perfects’ robes, described by the inquisitors as black. They were indeed dark, especially the blue, and might have given rise to the idea of the black fairies. Irish and Scottish fairies are dressed respectably in black, and are called the Good People! Even so, white garments are often recorded, probably of linen bleached in the sun. Fairy stories tell of the fairies spreading their linen on the grass, and the whiteness of the fabric is admirable.

The fairy women were good spinners, just as good as human women, but it seems they often had no looms or only unsatisfactory ones, so they sought to weave on other people’s looms. The fairies entered a cottage and wove their cloth on the cottager’s loom. Other fairy tales are of fairy cobblers and such, who help save the poor man, or use his lasts and leave a gift. They sound like poor but honest people, scraping a living against adversity. Fairies were allegedly scrupulous in keeping a promise, unlike “mortals” who often cheated them. Truth and honesty were central to dualist faiths based on Zoroastrianism, for which “The Lie” was the Devil, as it was for the Essenes.

Fairy Beliefs

Fairy beliefs only come to light when humanity blinked its way out of the Dark Ages, notably in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The earlier invasions of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes into Britain and then the wider incursions of the Vikings, Scandinavian pirates, kept the northern gods alive when the established Christians would have preferred them dead. Odin was a Father God, and the earth seems to have been a mother goddess, Erce. Odin had twin sons, Balder and Hoder. It seems that the simple people, who had preserved a form of Christianity less refined than that of the established Church, identified with the northern gods, who seemed closer to their own concepts of Yehouah and his twin sons Satan and Christ, using them for poetical and musical inspiration.

Tacitus mentions a northern goddess called Nerthus, evidently also the earth, among the German tribes, and Bede mentions Eastre whose name was given to Easter. Nerthus was drawn on a ceremonial cart, like Christian Virgins still in many countries that have Easter processions. The heresies, particularly the witch cult seemed to retain a Nature Goddess, Diana or Herodias. This goddess has been almost entirely obliterated in modern Christianity. From the twelfth century, against some formidable objections by the schoolmen, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was promulgated perhaps to counter the attractions of the now disappeared earth goddess.

The Christianity which established itself in Europe had the limited mythology of the gospels and the Jewish scriptures, but even these were not readily accessible to illiterate people, and

establishment Christianity quickly made sure that most people were illiterate. Even for the *literati*, the language they had to read in was a foreign one and soon a dead one, so simply reading was not a sufficient skill for anyone wanting to read the bible. They had to know Latin too. Only priests had this training, and many of them were so abysmal at it that they could not even understand the Mass and the Lord's Prayer. So, popular art could only be inspired by tales remembered from priestly sermons delivered in the vernacular, and whatever was remembered from classical or traditional mythology. Some sculptors and fine artists might have found inspiration in classical art, notably in the places where it could still be seen, but popular art knew nothing much of it.

Minstrels, storytellers, mummers and dancers had to find another inspiration, as well as facing the disapprobation of the Church, for the Church did not like anything that inspired the folk population to continue with these bad habits. Establishment Christianity was utterly opposed to dancing. When Iceland was converted to Christianity at the beginning of the twelfth century, the new bishop banned the dancing and ballad singing that the Northmen had used to pass the long winter evenings.

That fairy belief stems from Christian heresy is considered only long enough to reject it, yet its disapproval by the Church suggests that it echoed either heretical or Pagan sources. Folklorists have predominantly opted for northern Paganism, but there seems to be plenty of classical allusions as well as northern ones, generally pertaining to primitive solar beliefs. Many of the elements of fairy existed in the mythologies of the Greeks and Romans, but for the northerners, they were fresher in the mythologies of the Celts and Germans. In the extant records, it was Geoffrey of Monmouth who made some of the legends of the Celts into respectable history, and created an acceptable fairy lore through the Arthurian cycle. And the Celtic Church seemed to have retained more of the original simpler Christianity of the peasants than the version of Constantine and the state.

The poets and troubadours set their tales in the past so as not to seem to make accusations in the present—a time when the Catholic Church was getting increasingly fearful and callous. If the distance in time were not sufficient, the lays were often set in distant or imaginary places. The fairy stories were an alternative religion, and alternative mythology with different hopes and taboos from the Catholic Church. Those depicted as entering the fairy world are depicted as not to blame. They are enchanted. Those who return or are cast out, often pine to death—reminding us of the Essenes who could only eat grass if cast out of their community while holding on to their faith.

Chaucer (1343-1400), in *The Wyf of Bath's Tale* describes a Britain of “many hundred years ago” which was full of fairies who were jolly company and loved to dance in the green fields. Robert Kirk, in *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies* (1691), remarks that “their apparel and speech is like that of the people and the country under which they live”, and some were even lords and ladies. Note too that they were a “secret” commonwealth. These fairies sound more like a Christian sect than an alien species. Interestingly, the Jaloff people of the Island of Goree in west Africa near Dakar, had stories about the Good People, a white race, but one which dressed and acted according to Jaloff custom in most matters. Possibly some heretics in the twelfth century succeeded in escaping to west Africa.

Fairies were considered an enchanted company of beings, and “fairy” described their enchanting world before it was used to describe the people in it. It was an enchanted world, perhaps because the heretics, unlike the Catholics, were certain of ultimate salvation and so did not suffer the fear and guilt of the ordinary Christian. Cathars believed their own purity of behaviour signified the

manifestation of heaven on earth, just as the original Christians took Jesus to be the first being to rise from the dead into immortal life.

Curiously, fairies were often identified with the dead and fairyland with the Underworld. Chaucer calls the Fairy Queen Proserpina (Persephone). Sir Olaf, in *Sir Olaf in the Elf Dance*, sees the elves dancing and is invited by each of them to join in. He refuses because the next day was his wedding day, but it turns out that he and his wife and mother are all dead! *The Elf Woman and Sir Olaf* is a different version. The Cathar heretics thought this world we live in to be Hell. There was nothing lower than earthly existence for them. Souls of the dead were either reborn when they were immature, or went on into heaven when they were mature enough and had been consoled. Cathar belief therefore ties in with fairy lore. Our world *is* of the dead.

In *Sir Orfeo*, Hades is Fairyland and Pluto is the Fairy King. [comment](#) The Church always made out that Satan was the god of the heretics because they accepted he was the god of the material world. Yet the heretics were in rebellion against the wicked god and his earthly agents including the Catholic Church, and sought only the light, through Lucifer, the Light-Bringer, who was the same as Christ and the archangel Michael. People might have no choice but to accept a wicked ruler, but they need not like him or obey him.

Sir Orfeo is the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice retold as a fairy story. Eurydice appears as Herodias (Heurodis) who falls asleep in an orchard and dreams that the Fairy King takes her to a glittering Fairyland. The Underworld glittering? It sounds quite the wrong description for a place of dead people. The King has a glittering crown cut from a single gemstone, his knights and ladies dress entirely in white and ride snow white horses. The Fairy King announces to Herodias that he would return the next day to take her for good. And so he does.

Sir Orfeo wanders the world as a minstrel living as a wild man while seeking Herodias. One hot morning, he sees the Fairy King hunting. Then, on another occasion, he sees Herodias among a group of sixty lady falconers who ride straight into a rock. He surreptitiously enters with them, and inside is a country bright as a summer's day, with a green land and a castle of gold and jewels. The jewels glow like the sun at night giving the land a constant illumination. The castle gateman allows Sir Orfeo in, because he is a minstrel. The people within are "thought dead and are not".

The Fairy King was impressed by Orfeo's music and promises him anything he should wish. Naturally, he asks for Herodias, and the Fairy King, true to his word, as fairies, like Cathars, always were, allows her to return with the hero. The ending, unlike the classical story, is happy.

This fairy world of the dead is obviously not at all like Hades or Hell. It has to be heaven, therefore. It might be entered via a rock, but the epiphany of the sun god Mithras was from a rock. From the outside, where it could be seen by gods, the cosmos looked spherical like a rock or an egg. The sphere of the firmament was the inside view of it. Another world, therefore would be entered as if it were a rock. The heroine, Herodias, is again Diana. The name Herodias seems simply to mean "The Heroine", or even more literally "She who is Heroic", unless it is simply a corruption of Eurydice (Perfect Justice). Herodias is equated with Diana in the Wild Hunt right back into Roman times, but it is perhaps just a "heroic" title for a goddess. The biblical Herod chose to be called that, feeling he was "The Hero" or rather "He who is Heroic", but the name Herodias associated with the Wild Hunt and therefore witches almost certainly has nothing to do with Mrs Herod.

Maureen Duffy admits that fairyland is "like all the mythological European heavens, and its activities are much the same as they are on earth except that they never pall". Nor could they be

allowed to because, in heaven, people are immortal, and eternity cannot be endured unless time is somehow different so that activity can never cease to be pleasurable. Those who return from Fairie often find that hundreds of years have passed, or conversely that a century in fairyland is only a single night in reality. Fairie, like Christ's Kingdom of God, can be fleeting, turning to dust or dead leaves in a moment of doubt or dishonesty. This is, indeed, heaven—not the ludicrous place that modern Christians fill with crooks, liars and tricksters who have supposedly been saved. Christ was adamant that, at the least lapse, heaven faded away. That is Fairie. But Fairie was not only this spiritual place but the medieval poets also had it as the place where fairies of the human species dwelt, because people could have fairy wives and husbands.

Fairyland is therefore confused between being a concept of heaven, and a place on earth where the people with this particular heavenly concept live together. The *post-mortem* life of the Cathars could only be in a wonderful place, or back here on earth. Hell for them was the act of living on earth. They had no fiery or subterranean hell. Heaven could be entered by seeming to go underground to judge by the fairy tales. Heaven was obviously everywhere to a Cathar as it was to the Essenes who believed the whole world would become incorruptible and heavenly at the End Time. So, for a Cathar, it seems even a subterranean world was heavenly to a perfect soul.

Dead people eventually become the substance of the living, through their bodies fertilizing the land, a fact long known however imperfectly by the offering of sacrifices to the god of fertility. The most primitive of people, even Neanderthals, buried their dead in a foetal position, implying a rebirth. The ancient barrows were thought of as a belly swollen with life, and those with entrances were directed to the rising sun to allow its rays to penetrate the womb of the earth and initiate new life. Reincarnation, not resurrection seems the more natural belief.

Fairies lived in the wild uncultivated parts of the country, in lonely and mysterious spots—in enchanted places, glades, mounds, river banks, copses, stones, old buildings and bridges. Like Jesus:

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Mt 8:20

Duffy writes:

Fairies also lived in wells, trees and water generally, on the tops of hills and in connection with standing stones.

These were secret places where they hid or met secretly. That would be expected of the traditional fairy but would also be true of witches, meaning Cathars trying to remain out of sight as best they could. Here were homeless travellers, later refugees. These are also the holy places of Zoroastrianism, the first of the patriarchal dualist religions, that Christianity had the heritage of, through the Essenes and Judaism. Fairy lore hints at a persistent memory of it.

Fairies, along with witches could bring impotence and infertility. This might have been true in a negative way. The Cathar heretics had medical skills that they used to benefit the people in their struggle against the evil lord of the physical world, Satan. Offending them might mean this help was withheld, and without it, animals and crops were more likely to die. From this perhaps grew the idea that animals could be bewitched.

Curiously, though fairies evidently married in some sense, since there was a fairy king and a fairy queen, they were considered infertile themselves. They needed to steal human children or copulate with a human being. This is an excellent memory of the Cathar ideal of chastity, derived from the Essenes. The perfect soul had no desire for sexual gratification. It was entirely a material desire and quite unnecessary for immortal spirits. So, Cathar Perfects eschewed any sexual indulgence. They did not condemn sexuality in lesser developed souls, but were clear that advanced souls resisted it. So, perhaps, the heretics, being more sincere than most Catholics, actually did resist sexual activity.

The Essenes in the monastic camps certainly rejected sex, as it seems the Therapeuts did too. Their numbers were maintained by recruitment and adoption from outside their ranks, just like the fairies! The Church, through books like the *Malleus Maleficarum*, spread the fear that human children would be stolen by witches, and crying or demanding babies substituted. With the end of the witch craze, this accusation transferred to Gypsies.

Fairies were also considered to be free of sickness and able to live longer than ordinary people, again like the Essenes, and those, in general, who live frugally but otherwise healthily. Fairies who did give birth often had to send for a human midwife, suggesting that they did not consider midwifery as a useful occupation. Nor could they have, if they thought the world was hell. Fairy children were often weak, ugly and hairy, symptoms perhaps of a near starvation diet. Yet the favour of fairies was considered particularly valuable at sowing and harvest times, and at births and marriages. On these occasions their blessings were sought, as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or they had to be placated to avoid a curse.

Essentially, both the Cathars and the Catholics reflected their Essene roots in being against sex, but though the Cathars always seemed to take the principle of chastity most seriously, they apparently appreciated it was wrong to totally suppress sexuality. So, though the determination of the Cathar Perfects gave them the reputation of being blighters of fertility, they seemed to have a better understanding of the need for sexual expression and its psychology than the Catholics, and offered some opportunities for it, infrequent though they perhaps were. Through this, Catholic critics were able to say they were hypocritical about sex. Their own determination that personal chastity was necessary for purity and salvation gave them a reputation for being against fertility all together.

Fairy Tales

Thomas Keightley says that the people of the north believed:

All the various beings of the popular creed were once worsted in conflict with superior powers and condemned to remain until doomsday in certain assigned abodes.

These were the mountains and hills for the Dwarfs and Hill Trolls (Berg Trolde), the woods and forests for Elves, and seas, lakes and rivers for Mermaids and Mermen. The Germans considered the Dwarfs to have been fallen angels, the self-same belief the Cathars had about themselves, and Keightley tells us that the Dwarfs of Germany are the Fairies and Elves of England. They were "of flesh and bones, like mankind, they bear children and die" but were thought to have additional powers including invisibility, a hint that they were adept at hiding. Keightley, who was an Irishman, explains that the popular belief in Ireland was also that fairies were fallen angels, who felt uneasy about their condition come the Final Judgement. Keightley adds:

Both Catholic and Protestant clergy have endeavoured to excite an aversion to these beings but in vain. They are considered as possessing considerable power over men and nature, and it is believed that though now unhappy, they will eventually “get salvation”.

It is just what the Cathars believed of themselves. Fairies, Dwarfs, Trolls, Elves sound, in short, more like names of an heretical sect than an alien species, and they were called, by a remarkable coincidence, if that is what it is, the Good People, like the Cathars.

In a Scottish story related by Hugh Miller, a young cowherd and his sister are the only two in a village one Sunday who have not gone to church. At twelve noon by the sun dial, a procession came past the cottage heading south up a hill. The people rode on shaggy ponies and were poor looking and stunted in growth, and wore long uncombed hair. As the final rider passed them, the boy called out asking who they were. “Not of the race of Adam,” was the reply. Then, “The people of peace shall no more be seen in Scotland”. Cathar mythology was that they were not of the race of Adam because they were really fallen angels waiting to rejoin God. Adam and his descendants were made by the Demiurgos, Satan. Moreover, they it was who were People of Peace and the Good People.

In the romance of *Maugis d'Agrement et de Vivian son Frere*, the fairy, Oriande la Fée, declares “by the God in whom we believe”, a curious expression, implying that the God might not be the same as the Christian God. Otherwise, she prayed “our Lord”, and has Maugis baptised, making her sound Christian. Cathars were Christians, but not Catholic Christians, the only type the agents of God on earth permitted at the time.

According to Torfaeus (cited by Keightley), writing at the end of the seventeenth century, of the opinion respecting the Dwarfs of a venerable Icelandic pastor, Einar Gudmund, he knew as a child:

I believe, and am fully persuaded that this people are the creatures of God, consisting of a body and a rational spirit; that they are of both sexes; marry, and have children; and that all human acts take place among them as with us: that they are possessed of cattle, and of many other kinds of property; have poverty and riches, weeping and laughter, sleep and wake, and have all other affections belonging to human nature; and that they enjoy a longer or a shorter term of life according to the will and pleasure of God. Their power of having children appears from this, that some of their women have had children by men, and were very anxious to have their offspring dipped in the sacred font, and initiated into Christianity; but they in general sought in vain.

They “sought in vain” because of the deceitful attitude of Catholics towards them. Finrus Johanaeus describes the elves and dwarfs in some detail but as “figments”, “old wives tales”, and “ridiculous or perverse persuasions of our forefathers”, in *The Ecclesiastical History of Iceland* (1774):

It was believed as a true and necessary article of faith, that there are genii or semi-gods, called in our language Alfa and Alfa-folk. Authors vary respecting their essence and origin. Some hold that they have been created by God immediately and without the intervention of parents, like some kinds of spirits. Others maintain that they are sprung from Adam, but before the creation of Eve. Lastly, some refer them to another race of men, or to a stock of pre-Adamites. Some bestow on them not merely a human body, but an immortal soul. Others assign them merely mortal breath (*spiritum*) instead of a soul...

...they have a political form of government modelled after the same pattern as that which the inhabitants themselves are under. Two viceroys rule over them, who in turn every second year,

attended by some of the subjects, sail to Norway, to present themselves before the monarch of the whole race, who resides there, and to give him a true report concerning the fidelity, good conduct, and obedience of the subjects; and those who accompany them are to accuse the government or viceroys if they have transgressed the bounds of justice or of good morals. If these are convicted of crime or injustice, they are forthwith stript of their office, and others are appointed in their place.

This nation is reported to cultivate justice and equity above all other virtues, and hence, though they are very potent, especially with words and imprecations, they very rarely, unless provoked or injured, do any mischief to man; but when irritated they avenge themselves on their enemies with dreadful curses and punishments.

The new-born infants of Christians are, before baptism, believed to be exposed to great peril of being stolen by them, and their own, which they foresee likely to be feeble in mind, in body, in beauty, or other gifts, being substituted for them... whence nurses and midwives were strictly enjoined to watch constantly, and to hold the infant firmly in their arms, till it had had the benefit of baptism, lest they should furnish any opportunity for such a change. Hence it comes, that the vulgar use to call fools, deformed people, and those who act rudely and uncivilly, changelings, and come of the Alfs.

They use rocks, hills, and even the seas, for their habitations, which withinside are neat, and all their domestic utensils extremely clean and orderly. They sometimes invite men home, and take especial delight in the converse of Christians, some of whom have had intercourse with their daughters or sisters, who are no less wanton than beautiful, and have had children by them, who must by all means be washed in holy water, that they may receive an immortal soul, and one that can be saved. Nay, they have not been ashamed to feign that certain women of them have been joined in lawful marriage with men, and continued for a long time with them, happily at first, but, for the most part, with an ill or tragical conclusion.

Their cattle, if not very numerous, are at least very profitable They are invisible as their owners are, unless when it pleases them to appear, which usually takes place when the weather is serene and the sun shining very bright; for as they do not see the sun within their dwellings, they frequently walk out in the sunshine that they may be cheered by his radiance. Hence, even the coffins of dead kings and nobles, such as are the oblong stones which are to be seen here and there, in wildernesses and rough places, always lie in the open air and exposed to the sun.

They change their abodes and habitations occasionally like mankind; this they do on new year's night; whence certain dreamers and mountebanks used on that night to watch in the roads, that, by the means of various forms of conjurations appointed for that purpose, they might extort from them as they passed along the knowledge of future events. But people in general, who were not acquainted with such things, especially the heads of families, used on this evening strictly to charge their children and servants to be sure to be serious and modest in their actions and language, lest their invisible guests, and mayhap future neighbours, should be aggrieved or any way offended. Hence, when going to bed they did not shut the outer doors of their houses, nor even the door of the sitting-room, but having kindled a light, and laid out a table, they desired the invisible personages who had arrived, or were to arrive, to partake, if it was their pleasure, of the food that was laid out for them; and hoped that if it pleased them to dwell within the limits of their lands, they would live safe and sound, and be propitious to them.

Reginald Scot, in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, regards it as within his brief to include fairies too. He describes Luridan, the "astral spirit" of the largest of the Orkney islands who lived in Jerusalem at the time of David and Solomon, when he was called Belelah. In *The Book of*

Vanagastus, the Norwegian, Luridan was said to have been at war with fire. This is curious since “luridus” is the Latin word for a pale yellow, as if a flame were seen through thick smoke. The name “Belelah” must really be Belial, the Essene word for the Devil, and meaning something that is worthless. It looks as if it might have been Lucifer.

The verse *Edda* was eleventh or twelfth century and the prose *Edda* was thirteenth. Elves and dwarfs are among the main characters in them. Thomas Keightley cites one Thorlacius:

Our heathen forefathers believed, like the Pythagoreans, and the farther back in antiquity the more firmly, that the whole world was filled with spirits of various kinds, to whom they ascribed in general the same nature and properties as the Greeks did to their Daimons. These were divided into the Celestial and the Terrestrial, from their places of abode. The former were, according to the ideas of those times, of a good and elevated nature, and of a friendly disposition toward men, whence they also received the name of White or Light Alfs or Spirits. The latter, on the contrary, who were classified after their abodes in air, sea, and earth, were not regarded in so favourable a light. It was believed that they, particularly the land ones, the *epichthonioi* of the Greeks, constantly and on all occasions sought to torment or injure mankind, and that they had their dwelling partly on the earth in great thick woods, whence came the name Wood Trolls, or in other desert and lonely places, partly in and under the ground, or in rocks and hills. These last were called Bjerg Trolls. To the first, on account of their different nature, was given the name of Dwarfs, and Alve, whence the word Ellefolk, which is still in the Danish language.

The Pythagoreans, like the Essenes had views that were plainly strongly influenced by Persian religion. The dualist links with Gnosticism are also evident in the separation into Celestial and Terrestrial, broadly as Good and Bad. Light Elves were described in the prose *Edda* as brighter than the sun, suggesting they derived from sunbeams or glints of the sun in the woods, or off water and snow. It might also imply that the root of the word “elf” is the same as the Latin “albus”, meaning white. A title of Odin in the *Edda* is “har” meaning “high”, but a word close to the widespread word in the ancient near east “hur”, meaning sun.

The Scandinavian elves were fond of singing, playing music and dancing in the hills, woods and meadows, and the sounds could sometimes be actually heard in the evening. Danish masculine elves could sometimes be seen in summer basking in the sun, but the feminine ones were more often seen by moonlight. Scots and Shetlanders called the Trolls the Good People and the Good Neighbours. They married and had children, but were of small stature and wore green. They were fond of music and dancing, and Shetlanders say they hear them passing their doors playing on flutes. They were not free of disease but had wonderful cures and ointments.

The original German myths were all despoiled by Christianity, but some survived re-written in the Christian period as *The Heldenbuch* and *The Nibelungenlied*. The Elves have disappeared from the Christianized stories, but the Dwarfs remain, and indeed, the Elf King, Albrich, has become the Dwarf who guards the Nibelungen Hoard. The only remnant in German of the Elves is the word “alp” meaning a nightmare, “elfen” being a re-adaptation into German of the word elf from English.

In *The Niberlungenlied*, Siegfried gets the strength of twelve men by wearing a cape given him by Albricht, described as a Dwarf. Sven Färling, the Scandinavian hero, takes a drinking horn from an elf maid who offers him the strength of twelve for its return. She keeps her promise but Sven also has the appetite of twelve. The Brothers Grimm considered that Sven and Siegfried (Sigurd, Sifret) were all the same hero. He is plainly enough a sun god.

The story in *The Heldenbuch* of the battles of Dietrich and the Dwarf king, Laurin, could almost be an allegory of the Catholic destruction of the Cathars. Perhaps, Laurin is another rendering of Lucifer. The Dwarf king has magic artifacts, a cape of invisibility, and a magic ring and girdle which give the Dwarf the strength of 24 men. Hildebrand advises Dietrich how to get these valuable things from the Dwarf king, and consequently the heroes finish up victorious. The Dwarf king, however, tricks the heroes into his own domain and imprisons them. The Dwarf queen, who was stolen from the humans, releases them for another mighty battle after which Laurin is humiliated by having to earn his keep as a buffoon. Hildebrand was, in history, an eleventh century reforming pope (S Gregory VII), perhaps among the first to realise that the Catholics might lose out to the Cathars if they continued as they were.

The Brothers Grimm describe a Hillman who came to a dance at the celebration of a wedding. He asked to join the dance and his request was admitted, whereupon he politely wished everyone to be merry and joined in, dancing three dances in fine style. He rewarded each partner with a coin of unknown denomination, but evidently valuable, and the advice to be pious and good and to live like Christians. He suggested they should save their money, but to make sure they did not become proud, and to help their neighbours. The Hillman ate but only lightly, then in the evening asked to be ferried across the river. The ferryman agreed, and during the crossing asked for payment, complaining at the three pence offered. The Hillman warned him of arrogance, urging him to be pious and humble, then gave him a little stone to wear that would save him from drowning, and did so within a few weeks. Then the Hillman departed.

There seems little to this story other than to show the wisdom and saintliness of the Bergman, who seems in all respects to be a pious and wise human being.

A similar small man asked Count von Hoya to lend him his kitchen for a single night. The Count agreed and a travelling party of Dwarfs came the next night and prepared a feast for themselves using the facilities offered. The Count was rewarded with gifts that would bring good fortune so long as they were kept together. Having lost two of the items, the family eventually died out, but the last one remained with the last of the line, only disappearing when he died.

Dwarfs and Trolls were sensitive beings and would move on when offended. They hated the sound of church bells, and were particularly offended by human ingratitude. It was these things in the legends that led to them moving away from humans so that none are found today.

A farmer's wife left the farmer's breakfast for him—freshly made bread tied in a bundle. A Dwarf woman approached saying she was baking her own bread, and it would be ready at noon, but her children were already crying with hunger. Her request was to be allowed to take his, and she would replace it faithfully when her own was ready. The busy farmer agreed and the woman returned true to her word at noon with a white cloth containing piping hot bread. She said she would return later for the cloth. When she did, she briefly told the man that her kind were offended by the constant din of the forges, the uncouth swearing of the people, and their profanation of the sabbath. They had no choice but to leave.

Keightley adds in a footnote that Dwarfs would borrow beer, a whole barrel at a time, and carry it off on their shoulders. In a similar way in Scotland they would ask for a sack of meal, and carry it off directly. They always paid honestly for whatever they wanted. These people could not have been as fanciful, or as diminutive as later storytellers made out.

Some elves in southern German were called the Wood or Moss people. They wore green clothes and were so poor, they often came begging for food from the woodcutters, and sometimes would

steal it. When they did, they always owned up and offered to pay by helping with the cooking or pot washing.

Late and highly Christianized stories have it that the Wild People of Southern Germany would actually go into Salzburg Cathedral at midnight to perform their devotions. If they did this, they could not have been Cathars, who abhorred built churches. They might have been Christian Gypsies, but most likely the story has been tweaked to make the Christian heretics into Catholic Christians. Even Charles V appears in them as a type of King Arthur with an army of knights and lords waiting for Doomsday. Charles's beard has already grown twice round the table at which he sits. When it grows round for a third time, the Anti-Christ, the End of the World and Judgement Day will be here. These stories were told by Grimm about 1782, and were made to pertain to a period about forty years before.

In one story, a Wild Woman wanted to take away a farmer's son while he laboured in the field, but the farmer saw what was going on. The woman insisted that the child would be better off with her than at home and would be well looked after. The father was not persuaded, and the Wild Woman departed weeping bitterly. In another tale, a young cowherd was carried off, to be seen about a year later in a nearby district dressed in green. A search was set up, but the boy was never seen again. Here again, is the hint of a people, like the Essenes, who did not multiply adequately themselves—the explanation being their reluctance to have children and be responsible for providing a vehicle for a soul in the wicked world. They were desperately trying to keep up their numbers in this way, depending on the over-production of children in Catholic families to get a supply of unwanted infants. The Protestant Reformation, besides increasing the persecution, also reduced the supply of unwanted children.

The Dwarfs or Earth People of Switzerland were happy, joyous people who liked walking in the mountain valleys, and coming down in season to labour in agriculture. They were noted as being kind and generous, and for saving stray lambs, or leaving berries and brushwood for poor children to find. The valley people were, though, often unkind to them, playing tricks on them and treating them as a laughing stock. In one story, some of the Earth-Folk were accustomed to sitting on a rock to watch those who were labouring in the hay-making season. The locals built a large fire on the rock in the morning before they arrived and when it had been burning long enough to make the rock blisteringly hot, they swept away the cinders and ashes. The poor Dwarfs ran on to their resting place as usual and some were severely burned as a result. The story ends that they cried out in anger and despair, "O Wicked World! O Wicked World!" They added a plea for vengeance and then disappeared for ever. This sounds like an attenuated version of a mass burning.

In another story, the Dwarfs wore long mantles to hide their feet, while helping each year with the cherry harvest. A shepherd spread out fine ash in the orchard revealing that the Dwarfs had goose feet. Again, they were offended and withdrew to the higher valleys. The accusation of goose feet implies they were regarded as witches, and again there is a reference to ash, suggesting a witch hunt. Witches were accused of having cloven feet, and it seems that they might sometimes be distinguished by peculiar footwear. Divided toes on shoes were fashionable from time to time, and this might have been meant by cloven feet. Religious sects tend to be conservative in dress, so that the clergy of the modern Catholic and Anglican Churches still wear the clothes of a fourth century Roman. Again the story records the persecution and derision that drove these poor and pious people into the mountains to escape Catholic and then Protestant society.

Other stories might have been derived from mockeries of the Catholic Eucharist. A poor Christian sat at the edge of a wood starving. He prayed aloud to God in despair for a morsal of

food, whereupon a passing Dwarf appeared before him saying his prayer had been heard. He gave the poor man a pouch, which he assured him would always keep him well fed, so long as he always shared his food with anyone who needed it. The Dwarf left and the poor Christian found in the pouch cheese, bread and wine—perhaps originally fish, bread and wine. He ate his fill, but the pouch remained full. Some weeks later, he sat before his hovel eating his fill from the pouch when a poor old and sick man stumbled by, and asked for a bite to eat and drink. The churlish Christian arrogantly refused. Instantly, the pouch and its contents decayed into dust. The magical food of Catholics did not make them into good Christians.

Ann Jeffries in 1626 describes fairies as “small people, all in green clothes” who “always appeared in even numbers”. They taught her surprising cures, and fed her from harvest time until Christmas. They angrily denied they were evil and “referred those who termed them such to Scripture”. Again the piety of these people does not surprise us but the detail that they always appeared in even numbers. The Cathars and Waldenses, carried Scripture with them at a time when few could read, and travelled on their missions in pairs!

Bovet describes a fairy fair related to him by “country people” in Somerset, near Taunton and Chard. The fairies were “men and women of a stature generally nearer the smaller size of man”. They wore red, blue or green and wore high crowned hats. Stalls for pewterers, shoemakers, and pedlars were mentioned as at any normal fair, and there were trinkets and fruit for sale. There was even a drinking booth! The observer knew it was not a regularly scheduled fair and so knew it must have been a fairy one. The story has it that anyone who enters a fairy fair loses sight of it, but can still hear and feel it about him. Riding out, allows it to be seen again, but the warning is that the intruder will suffer some permanent affliction or injury.

In Act V, Scene V of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare in a mysterious passage has Dame Quickly describing the fairies as:

You orphan heirs of fixed destiny.

Keightley surmises that “orphan” here really should be “elven”, or means that, but the Cathars saw themselves as having a fixed ultimate destiny—all would be saved, unlike the guilty Catholic—and their pious aversion to sexuality notably after the *consolamentum*, meant that, like the Essenes, they depended on conversion and adoption to keep up their numbers. Dame Quickly is soon talking about the “Garter” and “*Hony soit qui mal y pense*”, admittedly in connexion with knighthood, but an interesting conjunction.

King James, in *Demonologie*, says fairies did everything that natural men and women do. He thought it was like the Elysian fields and not to be believed by Children. Witches would go to their deaths having confessed that they had obtained from fairies such things as stones with beneficial properties.

In an interesting Scottish story, a clergyman saw a man walking along the surface of a lake leading a retinue carrying lights and playing instruments. Arriving at the lakeside by the minister, the attendants dispersed, and the man leading them in the feat of walking on water greeted him. The man was small and grey haired, and, in reply to the clergyman, he explained that he was one of the Good People. They had once been angels, but had been seduced into revolting against God by Satan and had been cast down to earth to remain until the End of Time. He wished to enquire of the vicar what their fate would be. It seems the clergyman asked the man to say *The Lord's Prayer*, and each time he did, he said, “Which wert in heaven...” instead of “Which art...”. The clergyman seems to have concluded from this that Satan was his God and the Good People had

no prospects of salvation at Doomsday. Hearing this the Good Man threw himself into the lake with a cry of despair.

The Lord's Prayer was the main prayer of the Cathars, and all of their Perfects were considered as living Christs. They were called the Good People, as in this story, and here they are shown as effortlessly behaving like Christ in his most singular miracle. The Catholic Church insisted that the Cathars, though Christians, worshipped Satan under the name of Lucifer, and this story, which looks initially to be in praise of the Good People, ends up condemning them as Satanists. The logic of the original tale must have been that the clergyman asks the secret of walking on water, and is told by the Good Man it is doing God's will, or some such formula. The clergyman declares he does it faithfully according to Catholic standards, and steps confidently on to the lake to end up plunging into it, unlike the fairy, who was truly good. The Christianization reverses the outcome in line with Catholic propaganda.

In another Scottish story, the allies of fairies are said to have been goats! Moreover, Welsh fairies, on a Friday night, combed their goats' beards to make them decent for Sunday!

In the Isle of Man, the title, the Good People of the fairies, and the reason why they lived in the hills was that they disapproved of the vices of humanity living in the towns. A seaman put ashore at Douglas one winter's night, decided to walk directly to his sister's cottage instead of taking overnight accommodation in the town. Crossing the mountain, he heard the sound of a hunt, and he saw thirteen huntsmen pass in the moonlight. At his sister's she expressed great relief that he had arrived safe, having encountered the Fairy Hunt. Again the gentle morality of the fairies is belied by the apparent fear of the sister. It is again incoherent propaganda.

A Welsh story with some hints at heresy is that of the young farmer who married a fairy woman but on condition that, if he laid hands on her three times in anger, she would leave forever. A few years later the fairy wife embarrassed the man at a Christening when she burst into tears, explaining, "The poor babe is entering into a world of sin and sorrow, and misery lies before it. Why should I rejoice?" He gave her an angry push, and she warned him that he had laid his hand on her in anger. A few year's later the self-same child died and the couple attended the funeral. The fairy woman again seemed to the farmer to be behaving inappropriately, acting happily and joyously, and explaining, "The babe has left a world of sin and sorrow, and has escaped the misery that was before it, and is gone to be good and happy for ever and ever. Why then should I weep?" Again he pushed her in annoyance making the second time. Finally, the pair attended a wedding of a beautiful young girl and a rich old man. The fairy woman could not stop herself bursting into tears, explaining, "Summer and winter cannot agree. Youth is wedded to age only for gold. I see misery here, and tenfold misery hereafter as the lot of both. It is the Devil's compact!" Pushed angrily for the last time by the angry farmer, the fairy wife disappeared and was never again seen, but her sons became famous healers. These three characteristics—despair at bringing a soul into the world, joy at its leaving and disapproval of marriage (the age difference being a possible Catholic rationalization) were Cathar ones, not Catholic.

Thomas Keightley admits that Spanish fairy lore was scanty, and that his Spanish correspondents frankly explained the absence of fairy tales in Spain, saying: "The Inquisition had long since eradicated all such ideas". He is skeptical that this is so, and sarcastically notes: "As far as we can recollect, there were no prosecutions for Fairy-heresy". Keightley had not considered the possibility that the heretics *were themselves* the fairies!

Palgrave tells one story—the tale of Don Diego Lopez who married a beautiful fairy woman whose condition was that he should never utter before her a "holy name". One day his mastiff and Spaniel fought savagely, and the Spaniel tore out the throat of the mastiff, a plain symbol of

the coming liberation of Spain from the Moors. In astonishment, Don Diego called out, "Holy Mary", whereupon the fairy woman grabbed her children to speed back to the hills. Don Diego, just managed to hold on to his son, but the mother and daughter left. The story continues with Don Diego helping to free Spain from the Moors but getting captured while doing it. The son sought out his fairy mother in the mountains and she agreed to help recover his father, which she did, but was never then seen again. The eviction of the Moors and of the Fairy seem to be pointedly linked in this story.

The various pucks or nisses wore green or grey with red pointed hats. The Spanish clergy wore a long conical hat without a brim called, by Calderon, a "cucurucho". In *La Dama Duende (The Fairy Woman)*, the Duende dress rather like Capuchin monks with their cucuruchos. The Duende were considered, like fairies in many places, as fallen angels.

Gervase of Tilbury lived in Arles in the Camargue and wrote about men who were lovers of the Fadas, the fairies of Provence:

We have seen them live in great temporal felicity, who when they withdraw themselves from the embraces of these Fadas, or discovered the secret, lost not only their temporal prosperity but even the comfort of wretched life... When they married other women, they died before consummating the marriage.

Gervase seemed to think the Fadas were phantoms, but to be a lover of a phantom seems unlikely. Perhaps understandably in the Bouches du Rhone many of the fairies were water spirits, or the traditions about these are the only ones that the Inquisition allowed to survive. Elsewhere in France, the Fées would make use of the implements and animals of certain farms, apparently without permission but even so brought fortune on to them, the cattle thriving, and any implements used being polished and sharpened or repaired, if necessary, so as to be as good as new. They were kind and obliging and gave cakes to those they liked. These people sound like a type of outcast rather than phantoms.

The Fay Melusina was so famous that she had her own chronicle written in the fourteenth century and noble families claimed descent from her. Her father was said to have been the king of Albania, meaning Elf-heim, and her mother was another Fay. Circumstances led her mother to curse Melusina to be a serpent from the waist down on Saturdays only, and she had to find a husband who would agree to not seeing her on that particular day of the week. A count called Raymond agreed and she built the castle of Lusignan for him, as well as other fine castles. Regrettably, the children of the marriage were affected by the curse in some way, and were ugly or deformed, and a cousin suggested to Raymond it was connected with his promise to his wife. Raymond spied on his wife and saw that she was half snake. Melusina has to leave, withdrawing to Sassenage near Grenoble, and now wanders the air as a spirit, appearing only on certain occasions.

Here is a hint that Saturday was a special day for the Fairies, doubtless their Sabbath, and poses the question whether the Primitive Church and the Cathars kept to the traditional Jewish sabbath, when the established Church unified around the day of Sol Invictus. Interestingly, Lusignan was destroyed in 1574 for harbouring Huguenots.

From Pam

Mike, I have the following comments on: AskWhy! on Sifting the Cinders of the Cathars 7—Christianity Revealed

For Chaucer, Pluto is indeed the Fairy King, as can be seen in the Merchants tale. In “Sir Orfeo”, you are incorrect to state that the Fairy King is named Pluto, in fact his character is not named at all in the lay. However, Pluto is present in the story, as is Juno but they comprise Orfeo’s lineage.

In the *Auchinleck MS* see lines 43-46—“His fade was comen of King Pluto, And his moder of King Juno, That sum time were as godes yhold For aventours that thi dede and told.”—translated as—“His [Orfeo’s] father was descended from King Pluto, and his mother of King Juno, Who once were considered to be gods for adventures that they did and told.”

Many thanks for your observations. I shall look at the page again and correct it, or add your note to it.

The Modern Era

Christianity and Fascism

Not only is Rome the source and centre of Fascism, but it has been the seat of a Pope, who, as we shall show, has been an open ally of the Nazi-Fascist-Shinto axis, he has never denounced the abominable aggressions, murder and cruelties they have inflicted on mankind, and the pleas he is now making for peace and forgiveness are manifestly designed to assist the escape of these criminals, so they may presently launch a fresh assault upon all that is decent in humanity.

H G Wells, Crux Ansata (1943)

Nazi Leaders

“Every tree is known by his own fruit,” said the Christian God (*Lk 6:44*). European fascism was the fruit of Christianity. Christians were Nazis and took part in Nazi atrocities. Nazi practices pioneered by Catholics included the forced wearing of yellow markers, ghettoization, confiscation of Jewish property, and bans on intermarriage with Christians. Martin Luther’s work, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, inspired many parts of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*.

Ernst Nolte (*The Three Faces of Fascism*, 1963) says that when Count Yorck von Wartenburg described fascism to include the elimination of the citizen’s “religious and moral obligations towards God”, he suited “Christian and conservative beliefs”. Nolte thinks it is “hard to deny” that the churches in most European countries “encouraged fascism to a sometimes very considerable degree”, and this was an early attempt to get Christianity off the fascist hook.

Thus the religious right always claim Adolph Hitler was an atheist. Two-thirds of Germans were Protestant, the rest mainly Catholic, while 1½ percent of Germans were unbelievers in a 1939 census. Obviously, most Nazis were Christians like the general population, and few of them could have been atheists. The truth is that Hitler was an Austrian, and Austria was a predominantly Catholic country. He was himself a baptized Roman Catholic, a communicant, an altar boy, was confirmed as a “soldier of Christ”, and considered entering the priesthood. He regarded himself a Catholic, and said that Christ was his saviour. In 1941, he said to General Gerhart Engel:

I am now as before a Catholic and will always remain so.

Judging from his “forgotten” library, T Ryback, (*Atlantic Monthly* 29:4, 2003), expressed ignorant but unwarranted surprise at Hitler’s interest in religion. Contemporaries confirm Hitler as a good Catholic Christian, as do contemporary photographs. He never left the Church, and the Church never excommunicated him, or even condemned him. Hitler biographer, John Toland, explained:

Still a member in good standing of the Church of Rome... he carried within him its teaching that the Jew was the killer of god... extermination could be done without a twinge of conscience... he was merely acting as the avenging hand of god.

The leaders immediately beneath Hitler were not devout traditional Christians, but there is no firm evidence that any top Nazi was against religion. All the Nazi leaders were born, baptized, and raised Christian, mainly in authoritarian, pious households where tolerance and democratic values were *not* valued. Hitler’s father was a non-believer, but his mother, whom he doted on, was a pious and devout Catholic. Other Catholic Nazis included Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich, and Joseph Goebbels. The commandant of Auschwitz concentration camp, where Zyklon-B gas was first used to kill Jews, had strict Catholic parents. Hermann Goering had

mixed Catholic-Protestant parentage, while Rudolf Hess, Martin Bormann, Albert Speer, and Adolf Eichmann had Protestant backgrounds. Martin Borman, rather lower in the Nazi hierarchy, is the only well known Nazi who was against religion. No top Nazi leaders had a liberal or atheistic family.

Himmler regularly attended Catholic services, but became increasingly obsessed with the Aryans, sending out parties to find Christian and Cathar relics like the Holy Grail and the Spear of Longinus. Goering, least ideological among top Nazis, sometimes endorsed and sometimes criticized both Protestant and Catholic traditions. Goebbels turned against Catholicism and toward a reformed Aryan faith.

The Metamorphosis of Corporal Hitler

Hitler thanked God or His providence for surviving the western front during the Great War, his later safe escapes from assassination, his miraculous rise from homelessness to power, and his international influence. In the Great War, Hitler had shell-shock and psychologically induced blindness. He never stopped having frightful nightmares in which he awoke utterly terrified and gibbering. But a psychiatrist cured him of his depression and blindness by urging him to believe he was a man of destiny, possibly God-sent. Holding candles to Hitler's eyes in a darkened room while thus haranguing him, Hitler began to see again. The psychiatric ruse had worked, Hitler took it that his restored sight was proof of his destiny, and grew from an uncertain wimp into the demagogue we all know about.

Thereafter, Hitler, no less than America's fundamentalists, thought messianically. He wanted to bring about the eschaton and inaugurate a new world. He spoke of his armies growing from battalions to regiments to divisions then being ready to face "the eternal Last Judgement". In his demagogic speeches to Nazi rallies, he would make stirring vows to heaven amid wild applause and thunderous cheering. Then, after a pause while it all quietened down, he would utter a solemn, "Amen". What is curious is that Hitler projected Jewish myths of the messiah and their being the Chosen people on to the Germans, as the pinnacle of the Aryan race. The Germans were encouraged into the same apocalyptic beliefs about themselves that Jews had had since the Aryan Persians had taught them 2500 years before. The Master Race were the Chosen People God meant to choose!

Hitler believed in astrology and various cults besides Christianity, and apologists always try to use these oddball ideas to hide his eschatological and messianic ones—his Christianity. The legacy of Christianity is that it promotes oddball and occult ideas from its own emphasis on the supernatural. Rauschning, the governor of Danzig, cited Hitler as saying:

Creation is not yet completed... The ultimate aim is the coming of the Sons of God. All creative forces will be concentrated in a new species...It will be infinitely superior to modern man. The New Man is living amongst us! He is there! What more do you want? I will tell you a secret. I have seen the New Man. He is intrepid and cruel. I was afraid in his presence!

While Hitler looked forward to an apocalyptic change in the world, his image of what came after was a return to rigid feudalism—a return to society as it was under the total domination of the Church. Nationalism was a step towards it, but only had a temporary value:

The day will come when even here in Germany what is known as nationalism will practically have ceased to exist. What will take its place will be a universal society of masters and overlords.

We do not want to do away with inequalities between men but, on the contrary, to increase them, and make them a principle protected by impenetrable barriers. What will the social order of the future be like? Comrades, I will tell you. There will be a class of overlords, and after them the rank and file of party members in hierarchical order, and then the great mass of anonymous followers, servants and workers in perpetuity, and beneath them, again all the conquered foreign races, the modern slaves. And above all these will reign a new and exalted nobility...

A Hitler, cited by Louis Pauwels

Seeing the famous passion play at Oberammergau in 1934, strengthened Hitler's hatred of the Jews. Jews rightly fear the latest blockbuster movie by Mel Gibson, *The Passion of the Christ* will arouse the same sort of religious hatred of Jews among some unstable people today. Christianity always has been a dangerous delusion. Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*, and repeated the same words in 1938:

I am convinced that I am acting as the agent of our Creator. By fighting off the Jews, I am doing the Lord's work.

Even as his Third Reich collapsed about him, Hitler's ideas just became more and more apocalyptic and messianic. Speer wrote that Hitler tried deliberately to ensure that everything perished with him. The end of his own life would be the end of the world. And Goebbels said, after the defeat of Stalingrad:

Spiritual forces will be crushed. The Hour of Judgement is at hand.

Hitler's attitude to the Catholic Church was "remarkably positive", though largely based on Christianity's intrinsic hatred of the Jews. In the pamphlet *Hitler's Table Talk* (US, *Hitler's Secret Conversations*), Hitler picked out for particular praise the popes who had fought the "pernicious principle of equality for Jews". Hitler openly admired Martin Luther for the same reason. Luther hated Jews whom he called ungodly wretches:

The Jews deserve to be hanged on gallows, seven times higher than ordinary thieves. We ought to take revenge on the Jews and kill them.

Though Luther condemned the Catholic Church for its pretensions and corruption, he supported its history of pogroms against the Jews, but Hitler discarded Protestantism as a whole as an "ersatz Lutherism", containing at its core "the Jewish maggot". He celebrated Luther's 450th birthday in 1933 on a massive scale. Hitler was actually like most modern Christians, and perhaps most Christians in general. He had no great admiration for the Christian religion itself, which he considered was embryonic Bolshevism, but he loved the authority and dominion of the Catholic Church. Mussolini was similar in this respect, saying in a speech (1938):

The fascist state lays full claim to an ethical character. It is Catholic, but it is fascist, even above all exclusively fascist.

A report, that same year, of the inaugural mass at the *Campo Dux* gathering of the Mussolini youth, describes how the party secretary helped the priest at the altar. When the host was raised, fifteen thousand bayonets were simultaneously pointed at the sky. The congregation prayed for the *Duce* and sang fascist anthems. Here is no distinction between Catholicism and fascism. But, though a Catholic, Mussolini claimed to be anti-Christian! He favoured an authoritarian church but not an impoverished Jewish Christ.

Hitler was also a Catholic, but he too would not have a Jewish Christ. He was apparently Marcionite. Like his colleagues', his Christ was Aryan. Hitler thought himself God's chosen leader (Führer) for the Aryan race, and Christianity's ultimate reformer, not its enemy. He criticized the established churches for professing Jewish origins and not being sufficiently vigorous, as Aryans should be! Yet, Hitler's Germany established the Church. Christian prayers were mandatory in all schools. Priests often sprinkled soldiers of the Wehrmacht with holy water, and Wehrmacht soldiers wore belt buckles inscribed: "Gott mit uns" (Emmanuel! God with us). Members of the Wehrmacht swore this loyalty oath:

I swear by God this holy oath to the Führer of the German Reich and the German people, Adolf Hitler.

Members of the SS swore:

I pledge to you, Adolf Hitler, my obedience unto death, so help me God.

Hitler boasted in a 1933 speech that he had stamped out atheism:

We have... undertaken the fight against the atheistic movement, and that not merely with a few theoretical declarations: we have stamped it out.

Catholic policy on contraception also suited the fascist leaders who were keen on procreating cannon fodder and colonial administrators for their plans to conquer and colonize the world. The fascist leadership demanded "tireless love" for the production of "numerous and brave" offspring.

The Basis of Fascism

The French Christian conservative, Joseph Marie de Maistre had described the French revolution as "satanic", laying a step for the counter-Enlightenment that fascism represented. He laid another solid step up for fascism by claiming that "man is too wicked to be free", a judgement that one would have thought any Christian would have left to God, rather than taking it upon himself to make. But Christians generally hold the delusion that God Himself has chosen to speak through them, and so all are liable to claim they are God, or at least his audible prophet. Hitler was the same.

For Mussolini, Fascism was the utter rejection of the French revolution, the explosion of the Enlightenment in to feudal Europe. The Russian revolution, with its Marxist ideology was, Mussolini thought, the child of the Enlightenment, but these were crudely held ideas, hardly formulated as any sort of ideology itself. Hitler had no ideology at all, unless *Mein Kampf* is flattered with this description. His aim was to act first, and then, when his political projects had been completed, he meant to work out a doctrine.

An ideology of fascism was only worked out in the country where the Enlightenment exploded—France. Charles Maurras was its author, and he too was utterly inconsistent. It is typical because fascism is essentially opportunistic. Like a hyena, it feeds on whatever it can find, foraging for dead meat here and there, but equips itself with powerful teeth, and so is able to consume everything it finds. Maurras saw that the French revolution was part of a continual revolution beginning with the Renaissance and stretching into modern times, where it remains active. In Hegelian terms, it came out of a series of dialectics:

- clear exposition against obscurantism

- reason against dogma
- science against revelation
- truth against lies
- technology against traditional methods
- progress against reaction
- tolerance against oppression
- democracy against despotism
- freedom against authority
- spontaneity against suppression
- independence against imperialism.

Depending on an analyst's or author's main focus, it has been called many things too:

- the Enlightenment
- Liberalism
- Secularization
- Industrialization
- the Scientific Revolution.

It is summed up in the popular demand for liberty, and so is perhaps best called by the generic name "Liberalism".

Rousseau said primitive humans had been free—not only subject to no laws but with no conception of law. They behaved naturally. Progress into society has displaced that natural freedom—the institutions of the *ancien régime* conspired to enslave human life—and the aim of liberalism is individual freedom. The Age of Revolutions in Europe had destroyed the *ancien régime*, so conservatives had nothing to conserve. They had to campaign for change despite their label. They were no longer conservatives but neo-conservatives, and every Christian neo-conservative from the French revolution until the present day has stood for the *restoration* of the *ancien régime*. They want to put the clock back! It was the basis of fascism in the twentieth century and remains it. Leo Strauss, the anti-Enlightenment guru of the crypto-fascist US neoconservatives, was eager to meet Maurras in 1933.

In describing the French revolution as "radical evil" with a "satanic character", Joseph de Maistre declared that the movement for liberty was directed against God! In pronouncing war as divine, he opposed humanity's hatred of it to God's love of it and divine use of it. In declaring human reason as merely "a trembling light", he rejected human endeavour as the basis of human existence in favour of the benefits of the radiant glow of faith in God and His providence. In praising the executioner as the cement of society, he denied any possibility of a humanitarian state. Man is too wicked to be free because of original sin. Most men are destined to be slaves. That is why authority is needed. It is God sent! The aristocracy and the clergy held to God's truth, and, in defending it with the Inquisition, they had been right. Authority rattled the manacles and lit the pyres that made great societies great.

That which our miserable country calls superstition, fanaticism, intolerance was a necessary ingredient of French greatness.

J de Maistre

Though it all sounds demented, it is all the pure logic of the Christian neo-conservative. Essential planks of fascism were being carefully set in place ready for the Christian conservative backlash—the fight to the death between Christianity and the Enlightenment—between Christianity and liberalism! De Maistre is the ideological founder of fascism. Another

Frenchman, Édouard Drumont, added hatred of Jews to the simmering pot of fascism with his book, *La France juive* (1886). He wrote in a sentence even more true today:

In our era of universal lies, one must speak the truth.

The trouble is that the truth he thought he had discovered was that the unfathomable malaise of France was the fault of the Jews. He was already playing the scapegoating themes of fascism familiar fifty years later—creative, idealistic, justice-loving Aryans were set against the parasitic, cunning, exploiting Jews. Change the scapegoat to communists then to Moslems and the neo-conservative policies of the next fifty years are also described in essence. A Christian, Drumont supported lowly clergy against the hierarchy of the Church, identifying it with the Jews in its hypocritical practice of usury. He was to be remembered by *Action Française* as the founder of French National Socialism.

Action Française, the extreme right in France before WWII, and its newspaper shaped the minds of the French generation who collaborated with Nazism. Charles Maurras founded *Action Française* in June 1899. He was a classicist whose idealistic vision was of a French Hellenic classicism. Maurras was opposed to modernism, with its democratic emphasis on the individual, but his political philosophy were modern, in being intellectual and scientific. In Paris from 1886, he studied Auguste Comte, the French positivist philosopher, accepting his ideas about order, individualism and scientific reasoning, and adding to them the classical values of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy—hierarchy and authority. Maurras shared the authoritarian and hierarchical attitude of the Catholic Church. He was brought up a Catholic and remained one to his death, but could not accept that Christ was a Jew. He said his view was “sufficiently heathen and Christian to merit the beautiful title of Catholic”. The Church appreciated Maurras in return and used articles from *Action Française* in sermons, its own propaganda to its flocks.

Maurras bragged, “I entered politics like religion”. He was an elitist like de Maistre and believed:

The souls of men have not all been drawn from the same source. The daughters of potter’s clay will not rise to the ranks of those whom the gods begat in beds of purple.

This elitism is the central distinctive feature of fascism. Maurras was a passionate monarchist and anti-democrat. These fascist ideologues considered that the “satanic” Enlightenment came from the “slaves” at the base of society, degenerates whom Nietzsche thought should be destroyed.

Action Française was effectively the French fascist party and used all of the organized brutal methods of intimidation used by fascism even before Hitler or Mussolini. It encouraged an escalation of marches, demonstrations, rioting, bombing and assassination, but Maurras ensured its survival by restricting it to incitement. Apostles of Maurras and offshoots of *Action Française* were happy to turn words of incitement into the action that *Action Française* itself avoided. Its central support was in the army, the conservative right and the Church—the core of the *ancien régime*. It was one of the few allies of the “Syllabus”, the Church’s campaign against Modernism, and Pius X (1903-1914) sympathised with *Action Française*, even saying of Maurras, “I bless his work”. It was cynical opportunism. Pius X signed a decree against Maurras’ party but deferred its implementation claiming it was “worthy of condemnation but not condemned”! The relationship between the Catholic Church and the French fascists was, to say the least, ambiguous. Eventually the decree was applied in 1926:

Catholics are not permitted to adhere to the school of those who place the interests of parties above religion, and make religion the servants of those interests.

It must have been a pronouncement that was purely local in scope or was soon forgotten, having no apparent consequences for Mussolini's or Hitler's Catholic supporters. *Action Française* retorted that it was like a father telling his son to murder his mother. They refused and turned against the father. The Catholic Church had broken with its neo-conservative allies of its own volition, and temporarily, it was not so tainted with fascism. Many leaders of *Action Française* began their own fascist parties, while Maurras continued in charge of it, as unpredictable as ever, supporting Franco in Spain, but calling German and Italian fascism "the Islam of the north". Even so, the policies he advocated all supported Hitler's aims.

When Hitler occupied France, Maurras supported Marshal Philippe Petain as king of France, while Maurras was praised as the "most French Frenchman". Before long he affirmed that Pius had been the saviour of France, and he was reconciled with the Church. After a lifetime of hating Germans, Maurras welcomed the defeat of France as a vindication of his ideas. The collaborationist Petain's regime, run by men of *Action Française*, became the incarnation of the Maurrassian ideal regime—order, hierarchy and authority. From 1940-44, French Jews were denied their civil rights. Xavier Vallat, a Catholic member of *Action Française*, and the commissioner for Jewish affairs in the Vichy government, implementing Vichy's anti-Jewish legislation, began sending French Jews to Auschwitz.

In the *New Statesman*, Carmen Callil suggests from the example of Maurras, that "mythologies about culture and intellect" can be deceiving. Thousands of his fellow citizens called Maurras "*Le Maître*", but he "was a child, a dangerous child of his time". The same might prove true of the modern US Master of intellectual fascism, Leo Strauss whose philosophy is often chillingly similar to Maurras'.

Attempts were made in Britain to seek Christian support for fascism. H G Wells in his booklet, *Crux Ansata*, written in 1943, highlights the position Christians were openly taking vis-a-vis fascism. A Christian organisation called the United Christian Front (UCF) had been formed and explained itself in a document of that name published in 1938. The United Christian Front sought to rally Christians against bolshevism. Whether you regard bolshevism as a Christian heresy or the evil empire of Satan, those who have most fanatically sought to destroy it have always turned out to be fascists. There is an exclusion principle in totalitarianism. Ultimately, no space is big enough for more than one of them. So it is that US and Jewish neo-cons have locked antlers with their opposite numbers in Islam.

Among UCF luminaries was the leader of the British fascists, called Blackshirts, Oswald Mosley. At the onset of hostilities, Mosley was interned for obvious reasons, but, interestingly, the chairman of the United Christian Front, Captain Archibald Ramsey was interned with him! Another of its leaders, its treasurer, Sir Henry Lunn described Franco, the fascist dictator of Spain, as "a Christian gentleman". Franco was such a Christian that he set his Moroccan soldiers, mainly Moslems, against the supporters of the properly elected republican parties of Spain, mainly Christians, and turned Spain fascist for a generation.

Also among its members were Pius XII and Charles de Gaulle. When he was in exile in Britain, de Gaulle used the Special Operations Executive (SOE), meant to conduct covert operations behind enemy lines, to have his political opponents assassinated. Naturally, no one was allowed to know this. Some history is secret. Among the aims of the UCF, Wells says, was to "drive every honest teacher of history or science out of our schools". In its place could be put the

dishonest non-history and non-science of the bible to return the world to the dark ages when serfs knew their place.

How Christians Gave Hitler Power

By the early 1930s, roughly two-thirds of German Christians repeatedly voted for candidates who promised to overthrow democracy. Protestants had given the Nazi party its main backing leading up to 1933. Evangelical youth was especially pro-Nazi. 90 percent of Protestant university theologians supported the Nazis. Protestant pastors defended Nazi murders of “traitors to the Volk” from the pulpit. Considerable numbers of individual clergymen viewed the growth of fascism with suspicion, that is true, but antifascist Protestants found themselves marginalized, and their reservations did not stop the favourable policies of church institutions themselves. Those who turned to outright criticism of fascism made their last appeals from the death cell. Hitler had a plan to unite the evangelical sects, but, though many pastors Nazified, the plan failed because the evangelists could always find incompatible differences in their Christian beliefs. It showed Hitler did not always get his own way.

The Catholic clergy were at first more opposed to Hitler, but their anti-Semitism supported him despite themselves. The popes of this period were both Pius. Pius XI, a clever man, was pope from 1922 until 1939. His main activity was in secret negotiations. While apparently co-operating with the socialists with whom he was negotiating in Belgium, he abandoned Italy to Mussolini. He also supported the fascist tyranny of Pilsudski in Poland, while writing erudite encyclicals on moral and political principles. These latter are what apologists now cite at their critics, the underhand “diplomacy” being forgotten. Pius XII, pope from 1939-58, as a priest, Eugenio Pacelli, was an under secretary of state in the Vatican City before being appointed a bishop and the Papal Nuncio to Bavaria in 1917. From then until 1929, he had practice in preparing Papal concordats for Germans, doing so for Bavaria and Prussia, precursors of the Nazi Concordat he negotiated in 1933.

After the War, critics pointed out that the pope had never made any move to protect the Jews persecuted by the Nazis, and had never even spoken out against it. The concern of popes was the Christian heresy of communism, not Jews or Nazis. The American Cardinal Gibbons, returning from the election of Pius XI, was asked by a US reporter what he thought of papal infallibility. He replied, smiling:

Well, he called me Gibbons.

Pius XI, issued encyclicals directed against both Mussolini and Hitler in the 1930s but they were mild enough not to attract attention or sour relationships between the dictators and the Catholic Church. Little of the criticism there was was directly against fascist totalitarianism. Most was hidden in more general attacks on “secularism”, and the totalitarianism meant was Bolshevism not fascism. Bolshevism was the totalitarianism that was unequivocally secular, and many of the clergy approved of fascism as a bulwark against communism—in the “historic battle of resistance to Bolshevism”.

Eventually the Catholics put Hitler in power. The devoutly Catholic Chancellor Franz von Papen, not a fascist, but right-wing, brought about Hitler’s electoral victory. Papen dissolved the Reichstag in 1932, forming a coalition between the Nazis and the Catholic Zentrum party that had become anti-democratic under the leadership of the priest, Ludwig Kaas, from 1928. Papen made Hitler Chancellor in 1933, stepping down to the vice-Chancellorship. The Catholic Church congratulated Hitler, and commanded the laity to be loyal to this regime, as it always did. Joseph

McCabe points out that the *Annual Register* impartially notes that the Bavarian Catholics, under orders from their bishops, supported Hitler.

In the last elections, under Hitler, the Catholic vote for the Nazis increased. Catholics claimed 30% of the population but got only 15% of the vote, communists and socialists had 37%, and Nazis 33%. The communist and socialist deputies, who had refused the powers Hitler wanted, were liquidated. After the Reichstag fire, the Hitler-Papen cabinet needed a two-thirds majority to pass an act to give it authority independent of the German Parliament. The Zentrum voted for it *en bloc*, enabling the necessary majority to be reached.

Even then, it took the Concordat of 1933, negotiated by Pacelli, between Nazi Germany and the Vatican to secure Hitler's position. Negotiations were initiated by both sides, modelled on the 1929 concordat between Mussolini and the Vatican. In Italy, Giovanni Gentile had handed over the primary schools to the Catholic Church, and the deed was confirmed in the Lateran treaties. Plainly, the Italian fascists saw no obstacle to their aims in making the schools Catholic, and cannot have had any intention of "de-ecclesiasticization", to use Nolte's word. Equally the Catholic Church was happy to ride along with a fascism that treated it favourably.

Vatican policy toward Hitler was to work together in a similar way. Hitler put every effort into the 1933 project, impressing the Holy See with his own Christianity and his growing national and international influence. The future Pius XII worked incessantly to finalize a treaty that negotiated away the Catholic Zentrum party in favour of the Nazis.

Pius XII, when we strip him down to reality, showed himself as unreal and ignorant as Hitler. Possibly more so. Both have been incoherent and headlong men, whom chance has made figure-heads for the undisciplined foolishness of this dying age. The mere fact that a man by accident and misdirection can trail a vast trace of bloodshed and bitter suffering about the world does not make him any the greater or wiser.

H G Wells, *Crux Ansata*

The Holy See treated Zentrum as it had the Italian Catholic party which it negotiated away in the Concordat with Mussolini. The Latin Pact and the Reich Concordat illustrated the attitude of the Curia. Hitler was so confident that he had the Church in his hands that he promulgated his sterilization decree before the Concordat was even agreed. Forced sterilization of minorities and the mentally ill was nominally against Catholic teaching, but Hitler knew the Holy See was so keen on the Concordat it would not notice. With most German Catholics behind the Nazi party, Hitler was also confident enough to use violence against dissident Catholics, disrupting their rallies.

The church supported the new dictatorship by endorsing the end of democracy and free speech, binding its bishops to Hitler's Reich by a loyalty oath. In exchange, it gained enormous tax income, reinstatement of Catholic assemblies in schools, and criticism of the church was forbidden. Rome held a celebratory mass amid great pomp and circumstance. Catholic enthusiasm was so vaunted that Hitler had to defend himself to Protestant clerics and Nazi radicals who viewed this sudden friendship with Rome as a betrayal. Catholics adjusted to the dictatorship, indeed they flocked to the Nazi party.

Catholic apologists have had to fight a long battle over the scandals that have constantly emerged about Pacelli. He has been heavily criticised for his indifference to the Nazi murdering of Jews, and because, after the war, he ordered that Jewish children handed over by their parents to the Church for safeguarding should not be returned if they had been baptised. Needless to say, Catholics claim the documentary source of this information is false.

Hitler, during the war, even wanted to protect Pius XII! General Karl Wolff testified at the Nuremberg trials that Hitler had said, as early as 1943, he wanted to protect the pope from falling into the hands of the allies. If the allies threatened Rome, he would transfer the pope and the Curia into a safer place to stop the allies from securing the pope and the papal archives to use for political advantage. Catholics have recently re-presented the story in *Avvenire*, a Catholic Italian newspaper, as a Nazi plot in 1944 to kidnap the pope and abolish Christianity!

The Concordat bound all devout German Catholics to the state—the clergy through the oath and income, the laity through the authority of the church—but they had no open legal right to complain if the Nazis welched on the agreement. It offered no protection to Catholics as apologists have claimed, and Protestants, with no such protection, were treated no worse than the Catholics. Opposition was rare among Protestants too, and Germany's Mormons and Seventh-Day Adventists were equally accommodating.

German Christians, right wing as ever, welcomed the Nazi terrorizing, imprisoning, and killing of the German Left. The leftists had long been despised by traditionalists, who were a large majority. The Nazis proudly publicized their concentration camps, though in a sanitized way, but no one doubted their true function in the newly founded police state. Yet few Christians raised any objection. Increasing institutional murder reported in the press as they became death camps was met with Christian apathy or approval, but little protest.

Was it Inevitable?

Hitler was an unusual dictator. He was popular. That is why the war was difficult. Until the last years of the war, the defence of Germany's Third Reich was well supported. Hitler's personal security was lax, and Goering regularly drove his open convertible around Berlin. The Gestapo was remarkably small. By satisfying Germany's Christians, there was little resistance to suppress.

Determined public opposition could and did alter Nazi policy. Stymied when the Protestant churches refused to unite, Hitler abandoned his attempt to reform German Protestant Christianity in the foreseeable future. When Hitler denounced Protestant opposition bishops, Hans Meiser and Theophil Wurm, and ordered their removal, public anger boiled over. One protest drew 7,000 demonstrators. Hitler did a U-turn and reinstated Meiser and Wurm. Strong opposition to the mass killing of the mentally disabled c 1941 saved many lives, even though this program too enjoyed the Führer's approval.

When regime officials contemplated forcing the removal of Munster's Catholic bishop, Clemens Galen, Goebbels feared the whole of Westphalia could be lost. Galen was harassed but held his office and remained active throughout the war. Germans who refused to participate in atrocities—even if they were soldiers, party members, or SS—almost never suffered retaliation. This was so well known that, after the war, Nazis accused of war crimes were not allowed to claim fear of retaliation as a defence.

In the latter stages of the War, the Curia fell out with Hitler over the Concordat, and then the Vatican suddenly discovered a policy of "neutrality" in politics and remained silent. With the defeat of the Nazis by the USA and the USSR, Catholic writers immediately began to say that only Catholics had refused to submit to Hitlerism in Germany, though they could do little about it. Christian apologists' claim—that Germany's traditional Christians were impotent in the face of Nazi terror—is a big lie on a scale that Goebbels would have enjoyed. Christians had the power to confound Hitler and the Nazis had they wanted to. All they had to do was do it. If they were scared to, then they had no faith. Is that Christian?

The Nazi regime could have gotten nowhere if people, and that means Christians, had united against them. Sarah Gordon (*Hitler, Germans, and the "Jewish Question"*, 1984) comments:

Because the Nazis feared the propaganda or political power of the churches, it is almost certain that church leaders could have spoken out more vehemently against racial persecution.

The Aryan ideology of the Nazis necessitated them having the support of the Christian Aryans. That is why Nazi leaders depended so much on propaganda, education, persuasion, and social pressure rather than brute force. They knew that terror worked best when its objective was supported by many and opposed by few. Terror was a last resort to use mainly against minorities, with the support of the Christian majority, but only towards the end of the regime was state terror widespread in Germany.

The "Peace" soon became clear to Christians to be a new Holy War—the Holy war that the fascists had promised the Christian churches they would win—the war against bolshevism. The USA led this war and the Catholic Church took to whole-hearted support of the cold war. This time the churches were on the winning side and have therefore gained much of the esteem that they had previously lost. That is fine for believers, not known for their critical abilities, but anyone critically reading the record of the Christians in this or any other period can see nothing other than lack of any principle in favour of naked opportunism. History again demonstrates the nature of Christianity. It is all things to all men.

The latest drive to rally "Believers" is an amalgamation of two organisations. Its sole objective, so far as I can find an understandable objective, is to drive every honest teacher of history or science out of our schools. Then our people's minds can be bunged up with mud thoroughly and finally.

H G Wells, *Crux Ansata*

As Wells has more narrowly said, the teaching of the Christian churches puts Faith before any social or political consideration, and the Christians in any country and under any form of government are essentially an alien conspiracy against the people. The liberals of the twentieth century believed this alien body would, in some mysterious way, repay the toleration so natural to the secular liberal mind. Nothing of the sort! Christians have had a disproportionately large share of the media and of broadcasting time. Non-Christian voices have been inaudible by comparison, although most intelligent people do not profess to be Christians. Steadily, persistently, US Christians have worked to destroy the liberalism which allowed an unreasonable and anachronistic belief to retain disparate political influence contrary to the US constitution. Persecuting relentlessly where it was in the ascendant, and canting about individual liberty of conscience wherever it was faced by social objections, this mental cancer has spread itself back to destroy the health and hope of the modern world.

There was an old prophecy found in a bog
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la,
That we shall be ruled by an ass and a dog.
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la,
Lero lero, lilliburlero, lero, lero, bullen a-la.

And now is this prophecy coming to pass,
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la,
For Rumsfeld's the dog and Bush is the ass.
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la,
Lero lero, lilliburlero, lero, lero, bullen a-la.

Reporting from [Free Inquiry Magazine](#).

A Note from the Thought Police From Chris Bonds

Your page on Christianity and Nazism, while interesting, is considerably plagiarized from Gregory S Paul's article in the magazine *Free Inquiry*, Vol 23, No 4. While you do provide a link to the magazine's website <secularhumanism.org>, I don't believe that is sufficient to acknowledge the source of your words. Out of respect for the author, you should have credited to him those words that are essentially his, and contacted the publisher of *Free Inquiry* for permission to reprint them. The magazine's copyright policy is clearly stated on page 4 of the issue in question.

I suggest you get to understand what the words "copyright" and "plagiarism" mean. "Plagiarism" is pretending that the work of someone else is your own. It is not using someone else's work as a source. "Copyright" is the protection that your own work enjoys in law. It is not a protection for ideas, but actual work, the words you write, the pictures you paint.

The whole point of giving information is so that it can be used. That is what I have done, and I acknowledged the source of it. I used more than one article by different authors from the magazine *Free Inquiry*—and I acknowledged this source—and I also incorporated additional material. I have used a mixture of sources to argue a case in my own way. There is nothing wrong with that, and if there were, then everyone would have to find out everything for themselves before they set pen to paper, or give an authority for almost every point they make. The purpose of the page was to bring my own polemic with Christianity into the mid-twentieth century, so it provided one fragment in an extended argument. This is not an academic paper or a novel but, as stated, it is reporting. Let us not be silly!

I wish to apologize for the comments about plagiarism in my earlier post. I came across your page while using a search engine looking for information relating to the relationship between Christianity and the Nazi regime. I had earlier read the articles in *Free Inquiry*, and several passages on your page sounded like something I had read before. As a college instructor, I am perhaps hypervigilant on such matters (as you suggest at the end of your response—*mea culpa!*). If the editors of *Free Inquiry* do not object, then I certainly have no business objecting.

Having said that, I would nevertheless argue that a series of even a few sentences that are substantially the same (with perhaps a word or two omitted or changed), and in the same order, as those in the source material should be considered quotations, and should appear in quotes, with proper in-text citations. This is the generally acknowledged standard for academic papers, theses, and journal articles in our country, and most likely in yours as well, although I am not certain. I don't see why web publications should be held to a looser standard. All this aside, let me also add that I support what you are doing in providing a reasoned critique of Christianity.

A man called Tom Flynn from *Free Inquiry* has written to me saying the item you complained about is not "actionable" on any of the grounds you mentioned, but he seemed annoyed it was not. I have therefore told him I will pull the article in response to your joint complaints and find equivalent material to replace it elsewhere when I get time. Now, those who might have benefited from reading this article will not do, and nor will they get the chance to hyperlink to the originals.

None of this is the sort of reaction I expect from secularists who I, evidently mistakenly, have assumed would be liberal in their views. When dogmatism succeeds you should be clear whose side you are on.

Another Note from the Thought Police From Tom Flynn

I have the following comments on: AskWhy! on Christianity and the Nazis—Christianity Revealed I am the editor of FREE INQUIRY Magazine. A reader alerted me to a possible copyright violation on your site. On reviewing your article on Christianity and the Nazis, I conclude that you have not plagiarized our article “The Great Scandal” by Gregory J Paul. You followed its outline slavishly, quoted many of the same references Dr Paul cited, and essentially rewrote the article paragraph by paragraph in a breezier style. But you did rewrite, and occasionally introduced new material not included in Dr Paul’s article. While I find your method unfortunate, it surely is not actionable. That said, given that your debt to Dr Paul’s work, I’d certainly appreciate if you could include a more detailed citation of his article—which, by the way, was a two-part article which appeared in our October-November 2003 and December 2003-January 2004 issues. (You don’t seem to have, um, paraphrased Part II yet, I look forward to seeing it.) Most of all, I’d appreciate your spelling the name of our journal correctly—silly Yanks that we are, we spell “Inquiry” with an initial “I”.

It is plain enough to we aliens that America needs no friends. Unelected theocrats sent by God will think they do not, but in secularists it is a surprise.

It is as you said. I saw an article in a Sunday newspaper about the psychiatrist who inadvertently created Hitler, and followed it up on the net, finding your website, and then using material from some of your articles to add what I thought was a useful page about the Nazi period to my own argument. I had a picky email from Chris Bonds speaking of plagiarism and copyright even though I had cited the source and rewritten most of the material—except quotations which by definition cannot be rewritten while remaining quotations.

I therefore added this to the bottom of the page, beginning with the quotation of Bonds’ email to me and then adding my own comment: [*****Here is reprinted the letter above.*****]

You concede, albeit churlishly, that this is not plagiarism and evidently are not satisfied with a link to your index page, where any interested surfer would have found not only the specific articles used, but others too. I did not see the second article because it was not online when I visited your site, and the part I saw was sufficient for my purpose. I apologise for getting the spelling of your magazine wrong—force of habit, don’tcha know, old boy—but the web address was correct and I cannot see that anyone could have been misled.

Precious goods should be tightly locked up in boxes. Since that is your attitude, my reaction is to pull the page, and seek equivalent material elsewhere when I get time. Now, those who might have benefited from reading this article will not do, and nor will they get the chance to hyperlink to the originals. Curiously enough, I got an apology from Bonds in the same mailbox as your peevish acceptance that the piece was not “actionable”, so the whole episode seems a victory for ill-considered petty dogmatism, something one does not naturally associate with secularism.

I am flattered, though, that you think my style is breezy. Yours liberally.

I am happy to publish this correspondence because I have no desire to claim anyone else’s work as my own, but believe authors publish information for use, not censorship by thought

policemen. The publication of it ought to satisfy the complaining parties, and so I am leaving the page online. The person who has not complained is Dr Gregory Paul, whose article was particularly the basis of the section entitled *How Christians Gave Hitler Power* of this report. Since these pages are reportage and not original scholarship, I am not going down the pretentious and unnecessary road of citing the source of every word I use, as Christian “scholars” do in their largely inconsequential and unread theses and papers. Nor, however, do I wish to offend any author who might wish to be acknowledged. I am happy to acknowledge my use of Dr Paul’s work in *Free Inquiry*, and a simple letter requesting that would have been more effective and gracious than the sanctimonious preaching of supposed secularists acting as Big Brother.

That letter should have come from you, asking permission for use, prior to your posting the material. It all being after the fact, you have no business being surprised that anyone treats you as a brigand...

You seem not to have read the rest of the correspondence. You are the one who is beefing. The acknowledgement I gave on my page to your journal, together with a link to it, would, for most people and purposes, be more than sufficient recognition of indebtedness to a source. Only thought policemen could think otherwise. Since you were evidently offended that I had carelessly not met your grandiose standards, you are the one to have made the request instead of being bombastic, not me. What is your attitude, Obersturmfuhrer, to those who criticize your stuff, if you treat those who commend it by usage and attribution as if they are criminals? Are you a tad neurotic? Must anyone who wishes to use any of the work you publish have to ask explicitly for permission? If so, you are going far beyond normal copyright. Are you certain it is permissible to even read what you publish without an acknowledgement by a Wagnerian choir and a rendering of the 1812 complete with cannons in Times Square? Or would that be *too* absurd?

Why not concentrate on lancing the religious ogres that presumably you are paid for, instead of finding irrelevant windmills to tilt at. While the USA is being taken over by Straussist fascists and their Christian dupes, you seem to have chosen to join them and growl at your friends instead of exposing the danger in your midst. Grow up before you find yourself encircled by your enemies.

Jesus Cults: Ancient and Modern

Meal Ticket

The Christian religion began as a tiny cult within the Roman Empire which captured the imaginations of some of the poor and disadvantaged of the time and was spotted by certain men as a reliable meal ticket.

Two thousand years have passed but nothing fundamental has changed. The great edifices of the established churches naturally remain but new “churches” or cults spring up with astonishing regularity especially in the United States and some of them have done extremely well for themselves and their bishops or evangelists—the smart guys who realise there is plenty in it for them!

Since the sixties successive generations of youth have arisen who rejected authority and hierarchy socially, politically and even in terms of religion. They were disillusioned with the establishment in general but those who had been brought up to be Christians or sought a spiritual outlet in what they saw as an increasingly materialistic world also rejected orthodox Christianity. Orthodox priests and ministers supported the values that young people questioned.

The result was the growth of a vast shopping mall of alternative cults, some derived from eastern religions but others being various types of—generally fundamentalist—Christianity. Much of it was based on the rejection of large organisations in favour of small ones so that large churches were rejected in favour of house churches aiming to revive the feeling of fellowship which they believed existed among the first Christians. But these small independent organisations had no safeguards built into them that the larger churches had developed over the millennia to prevent heresy and abuse. The result was heresy and abuse!

Characteristics

A key characteristic of these cults is that they are built on the cult of personality of some charismatic leader, almost invariably male, who uses the childish naïvety of his followers to boost his own ego, status and lifestyle. The characteristics can be summarised as follows:

- The cult has a charming and charismatic leader usually a man.
- The leader sets up a hierarchy of close associates of similar personality and inclinations and uses it to demand total obedience from members—victims is a better word—through heavy punishments often with a strong psychological element.
- Members become obsessed by the cult. It becomes the most important thing in their lives. They believe they are part of a genuinely loving Christian community—unlike all the others—which is destined to bring in God's kingdom! Often they are seeking an escape from drug addiction, parental abuse or inability to cope—the problems which a genuine church would seek to help them with.
- Members leave their families and might give up their jobs to devote their lives to the cult.
- However, members usually have to prove their dedication by giving almost all their money and possessions and much of their expertise and time to the cult. Sometimes they pursue careers to help the cult, giving their expertise and their earnings willingly to the organisation. The leader will benefit most plainly from this but communal money is often spent on large country houses or even guns and poisons since they often have an eschatological outlook.

- Members are encouraged to use peer pressure on others to conform strictly.
- Personal relationships are governed by the leader of the cult on the basis of the excessive authority he is granted based on his messianic or prophetic pretensions. He decides who will be friends with whom and who will have sexual relations with whom and often especially with him—a great honour.
- Familiar Christian teaching and morality—service to others, forgiveness, obedience to the will of God, charity and generosity, submission to Jesus as the controlling spirit of one's life—is the usual basis of the cult but suitably distorted in favour of the charismatic leadership.
- Primitive Christian practices such as speaking in tongues and falling down in the spirit are used to artificially induce intense emotion among the congregation—often highly suggestible people—which tends to leave them emotionally dependent on the leaders.

Christianity the Model

Now it is immediately clear why people brought up in a Christian tradition are particularly susceptible to such cults. It is because Christianity itself is the model for them. Orthodox Christian parents are amazed and distressed when their children get possessed by a charismatic cult today but Pagan parents were surely equally distressed by their children when they took to the new eastern cult of this man Jesus they called Christ.

Christians do not question their myths and believe that all Pagans were children of the devil, but really they were simply normal people, mainly pious in terms of their own religious beliefs, doing what they had always done. For them it was the strangers beguiling their daughters who were evil and, when the parallels are drawn with today's charismatic cults, it is easy to see they were right.

Like anyone faced with the inexplicable behaviour of their loved ones, these people *were* distressed... distressed by Christian teaching, and Paul was the leader of the charismatic cult which had obsessed their children and friends. The evidence is in *Acts* and Paul's letters and, if they are not clear enough for the sceptical reader, a look at some of the apocryphal works is persuasive.

For Paul, as for the Essenes, chastity was an absolute virtue, though—if it is not an insertion—he seems to make the merest allowance for marriage as a poor second. In *The Acts of Philip* we also get chastity praised when a woman says,

It were better I never married

and Philip replies:

You are right. Chastity is especially dear to God.

The men of the city of Icomium feared they would have no wives because their womenfolk were listening to Paul's message. In *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* it is paraphrased as:

There is for you a resurrection in no other way, unless you remain chaste, and pollute not the flesh, but keep it chaste.

Paul was telling gentle maidens that they would not be saved unless they gave up sex.

The citizens of Icomium had the entirely sensible view that:

The resurrection of which this man speaks takes place in the children which we have.

Nevertheless, the virgin, Thecla, is amongst those captivated by Paul's sermons on chastity and, after suffering various hardships and miraculous escapes, she dressed as a man to follow Paul and lived in a cave offering cures. Driven out by jealous physicians, she went seeking Paul to Rome but found he was dead. She died too and was buried two or three stadia only from Paul.

Isn't Thecla's behaviour that of the young people captivated by modern charismatics? She will not listen to her friends and family, leaves them, gives up everything for her hero, follows him wherever he goes. Paul finished up a rich man, the companion of governors and kings. Thecla finished up poor and forgotten. Standard cultish behaviour?

No modern Christian will be able to see it that way.

Evangelical Charismatics

The Bishop of Oxford once said that Western Europe is a “post-Christian society”. In England, although most people say they believe in God, less than 2.5 percent of the population goes to church on Sundays. The Church of England may appear to be moribund, but Antony Storr has said that Christianity is expanding faster than ever. The variety of Christianity sweeping the world is not one that will appeal to rational people, for it is based upon miracles, mystical experiences, belief in direct divine intervention, talking in tongues, healing the sick and even raising the dead—the standard trappings of revivalism throughout history.

These new Christians are Evangelical Charismatics. Evangelicals might now be as many as 30 per cent of the world's Christians. Founded in 1974 by Roger Forster is *Ichthus*. The fish—ichthus in Greek—was the earliest Christian symbol. It symbolized Christ because the initial letters are “I” for Iesus, “Ch” for Christos, “Th” and “U” for Theou Uios or Son of God, and “S” for Soter or Saviour. Ichthus organises the march for Jesus which involves millions of people in the world.

Drama is an integral feature of Evangelical Charismatic Christianity. Its protagonists are expert at crowd manipulation. In a service, four hymns were sung in succession, including *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* and ending with *Be Still for the Presence of the Lord*, inducing a feeling of tenderness, gentleness and peace. The faithful nestle on the tender breast of the Lord. Minutes later, the congregation was being harangued about the evils of satanic child abuse, encouraged to exorcise the devil and heap curses on the heads of the abusers. Such services may be an exciting alternative to the repetitive tedium of the Church of England but they bear a sinister resemblance to Hitler's mass meetings at which sentimental affirmations of old-fashioned friendship and unity were succeeded by poisonous imprecations against the Jews. Simplistic divisions into black and white, or “them” and “us”, always have an irresistible appeal to the masses notably in periods of social stress.

So, the growth of this demagogic Christianity might be promoted by the horrors of the modern world such as the growth of population, the threat of nuclear destruction, fears of global warming, the insecurity of unemployment, the dangers of aids, and so on. Boredom with conventional Christianity is probably equally to blame. It remains to be seen whether fears of the millennium also had anything to do with this phenomenon.

New religions movements, whether Christian or not, seem fashionable at present. About 600 are said to exist in the UK and about 2000 in the US, and that in a country with a far higher proportion of the population regularly going to church. Of course, it is not a modern

phenomenon, and only Christians cannot see their own religion as an ancient example, albeit one of remarkable adaptability.

History is littered with horror stories like that of Thomas Schucker, a Swiss Anabaptist who was divinely guided to cut off his brother's head, and did so in front of a congregation which included his mother and father. To do this in public, Schucker had charismatic powers of a high order. In Uganda, hundreds of believers submitted themselves to charismatic leaders who murdered them. All these things reflect the roots of Christianity. The sanity of most Christians is a tribute to the sanity of nature, not to the sanity of Christianity's underlying principles.

Today people are in a better position than ever to appreciate and experience mystical impressions. No one can doubt that there are subliminal mental processes going on all the time of which we get only intermittent indications whilst dreaming or in a state of reverie. Modern techniques can make these processes more conscious and, in some subjects, can induce hallucinations and transcendental experiences resembling those of the mystics.

Research into the cerebral bases of mystical and ecstatic experience, has shown that it can be generated artificially, with little apparent risk, though long term effects are plainly not yet known. Enter a soundproof, darkened room wearing a helmet through which electromagnetic currents are directed to various parts of the brain. One can be transported to one's early childhood and recapture the sense of wonder of it all. One can experience the life of others in widely differing situations as if it were real, or as real as a non-lucid dream, at least.

Comets

In former times comets were considered as harbingers of ill fortune. A comet preceded the death of Julius Caesar, and another, in 1066, that of Harold of England and the arrival of his successor, William of Normandy. Halley's Comet often disturbed the peace. In 1456 it was blamed for earthquakes, plague and a mysterious red rain. Pope Callixtus excommunicated it as an instrument of the devil but it seems the devil was not impressed by the Pope. In 1835, Halley was blamed for a fire that razed New York, and also for the loss of the Alamo.

In 1910, when it was announced that the earth was to pass through the poisonous cyanogen gas of Halley's comet's "tail", people committed suicide. Some people in Oklahoma sacrificed a virgin, it was said. Comets presaged both the English and French civil wars and although some French vintners believed they helped produce grapes with a higher sugar content, usually they left a bitter aftertaste.

In the even more bizarre world of today 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult in San Diego looked upon the comet now departing the sun, comet Hale-Bopp, as the herald of a new life. To make sure they entered it they joyously abandoned their existence in this life and were found poisoned in a mass suicide which is becoming only too familiar.

Victor Clube, the Oxford astronomer and historian of cometary calamities, says:

All these things show we are getting more uncertain. 20 or 30 years ago we weren't having the incidence of these events that we are having now, but you can bet we will have many more of them if people begin to think the end of the world is coming. And the appearance of a comet in the sky does, in an irrational way, excite this kind of thinking. What happens when society gets more and more unhinged is that you get more and more mad people. America is particularly prone to it. We in Britain seem to have had it trained out of us, but we have been quite nuts ourselves in the past.

On the scales of time and space of the comet we are insignificant little motes in the grandeur of the universe, but whatever view of God or nature you have chosen to adopt, it must be sad that whole groups of apparently prosperous people can decide to jettison the only certain life that they have for pie in the sky elsewhere.

Christian Belief

For the Heaven's Gate sect the comet was the ultimate sign of the times. It signified the end of the world for the believers. For anyone who has looked through this website or read *The Hidden Jesus* or *The Mystery of Barabbas*, the phenomenon will be only too familiar. That the signs of the times told of the end of the world was the belief of the Essenes at the time of Jesus and it was the belief of the first Christians who adopted much of Essene philosophy. Not that Essenes or early Christians believed that they had to take their own lives to meet their God. Quite the opposite. They thought that God was coming to meet them with a host of angels from heaven to cleanse the wicked world. Everyone would die except for the saved, the perfectly holy people—the Essenes initially, then the Christians.

The real sign of the times is that today religious fanatics in the western world are less positive. They also hate this world but don't think it can be saved and seek solace elsewhere. For the Heaven's Gate sect the comet was bringing with it a giant spaceship to take the believers to another world. The departure lounge was a mansion near San Diego, their ticket a handful of sleeping pills, and the exit gate was oblivion. Their ticket took their souls out of their earthly bodies allowing them to join their hosts on the Hale-Bopp space cruiser. In this again they differed from Essenes and early Christians who, though confident that they would be saved, were certain that God would resurrect them into this world, albeit a renovated, supernatural world free of sin and corruption.

Still, death, should it come, as they thought it might in fighting for God's kingdom, would be merely a form of sleep in which the soul was liberated from its corruptible and corrupting body to roam freely—a rationalization of dreaming—until god recalled it into his kingdom. The suicide bombers of Islam also believe that death is desirable for those who believe they are promoting God's work. Their physical bodies might become steak tartare but their souls immediately enter into the presence of God.

The sad thing about all of this self sacrifice is that these martyrs actually believe that their souls are freed by their self destruction of the body. Now, if I were a god who had gone to the trouble of giving life to a lot of supposedly intelligent creatures for whatever reason I might have, I would not be delighted if the ingrates gave me a metaphorical up-yours by drinking a can of paraquat. Why they should think I would leave my heavenly seat to save their souls after this insult, I cannot comprehend. Nor would I be able to comprehend how the regular branch of nutters think they have to kill others that I have taken the trouble to make, to save *me* the trouble of killing them. These people are truly insane. If there were a Good God, He would eliminate all of these cracked pots and leave the rest of us in peace.

Souls

Less speculatively, there is not a jot of evidence that people have souls. The word simply applies to our self awareness, and most people are so self-centred that they cannot believe that the world will tootle along in their absence. The way they rationalize this is to extend the dream experience into a belief in an immortal soul which lives independently of the body. People cannot accept that they are mortal and not immortal, that they are human and not gods.

The belief is deep seated because it is a concomitant of self-consciousness, but thoughtful people have been able to reject it nonetheless. The ancient belief of the Romans and the Jews was in Hades or Sheol where departed souls groped aimlessly around forever, unconscious and unaware of God. This belief will have been arrived at by the realization that very elderly people often lost their reason and degenerated into an infantile state of unawareness. The conclusion had to be that a continuing process was being seen and ultimately the soul lost its consciousness dead or alive. Thus Sheol was conceived. The soul was still immortal but like senile people, or those who join the army, it forgot.

Satisfaction for saintly people was to be in this life by doing God's work—good deeds—not by hoping for a lollipop from God after death.

Western religions, those which evolved out of post-exilic Judaism, have gone down a blind alley, encouraging absurd beliefs. A satisfying and rational religion would put the emphasis on the planet earth which succours us in *this* life, and would take away the excruciating selfishness which pervades our culture. Instead we think only of ourselves and merrily destroy the world in the belief that we are going to a better place.

Even this belief is an absurd extension of the original. The philosophy that the Christians adopted was that only the perfectly holy would be saved. The perfectly holy could only be a minority or “the remnant” in the Essene term, not any blaggard of a crook or confidence man who decided to call himself a Christian. Under the original rules God would not accept the majority of people in to a transcendental heaven, even if such a place existed, and would certainly not accept bogus preachers who got rich on widows pennies.

Perhaps we should try a different Belief.

The Essenes were seeking to build a heaven *on earth*, not in deep space or in the eleventh dimension. The truly religious should accept this as the basis of their philosophy. The greatest sin then would be to harm the earth or its balances of existence, whether directly or indirectly. We might be then poorer, like the Essenes, but more contented, accepting that God has already provided us with the stuff of heaven—or hell!—and is waiting to see what we do with it.

Christianity has blinded us to a simple truth.

Only by making the earth into heaven will we find Heaven's gates and become gods ourselves.

Christianity and Civilization

Renowned Historian

Arnold Joseph Toynbee, dubbed the last of the Victorian historians for his grandiose and imperial view of history and the role of religion in it, was hailed as a prophet in the USA when the abridged version of his monumental work *A Study of History* was published in 1947. Doubtless it was the excessive number of people holding their perverse superstition that still persist in the USA that led to this adulation, because Toynbee had a Christian's own admiration for the importance of this sorry synthetic cult. He was fond of the phrase "culmination in Christianity," which in itself would have had the dewy-eyed clappies agog.

The historical progress of religion in this world, as represented by the rise of the higher religions and by their culmination in Christianity, may, and almost certainly will, bring with it, incidentally, an immeasurable improvement in the conditions of human social life on Earth.

Christianity and Civilization 1940

This was a man who was not speaking under any delusion of eternal peace and happiness. He was at the centre of British government information services in two world wars in the twentieth century, mainly between Christian countries and in which about 75 million people—mainly Christians, or people with a Christian culture—died. He said this in a lecture during the phony war period of World War II, so perhaps things looked rosier than they might.

Now Toynbee is considered to have his feet firmly in the material world, unlike his rival Oswald Spengler, yet in [*Christianity and Civilization*](#) he can write purely supra-mundane twaddle, introducing soul and spirits like an occultist. The "deliberate aim and its true test" of the historical rise to Christianity "is the opportunity which it brings to individual souls for spiritual progress in this world during the passage from birth to death." The prayer, "Thy will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven." is for this spiritual progress, and the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come" will ensure that the salvation is open to all men of good will "pagan as well as Christian, primitive as well as civilized" who make the most of their spiritual opportunities on Earth. It is hard to believe this is a renowned historian's words and not those of a nickel-in-the-hat, out-on-parole evangelical shyster.

Barbarism

Toynbee reminds us in *Christianity and Civilisation* that an old and persistent view is that Christianity was the destroyer of the civilization it grew up in. Gibbon thought so. James Frazer did, Julian the Apostate did and Toynbee joins Gibbon in supposing Marcus Aurelius perhaps did too. Ending his also monumental *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* Gibbon wrote:

I have described the triumph of barbarism and religion.

He began it describing the Roman Empire, Pagan, prosperous and at peace in the age of the Antonines, only a hundred years after Christ. He considered that Rome was at its apex under Marcus Aurelius and thereafter it was a slide downhill. Simultaneously, and by no coincidence, the Christian religion increased its power in the state. Gibbon saw Christianity and barbarism as overthrowing civilization. The barbarism *was* Christianity!

Toynbee reminds us of this hypothesis because he wants to refute it, claiming, absurdly, but to fit his historic cycles, that the Graeco-Roman civilization stood at its height not in the age of the Antonines in the second century AD and only 300 years before its demise, but in the fifth century before Christ. Toynbee's refutation of Gibbon has to have the Graeco-Roman civilisation terminally ill as soon as it was born, but with an illness that did not lead to death for another millennium during which astonishing achievements were registered! For Toynbee, Hellenic civic life immediately destroyed itself by turning itself into “an idol to which men paid an exorbitant worship.” The idol on the crucifix was not like this in Toynbee's eyes. The consequence of exorbitantly worshipping civic life was the death of Rome a millennium later, it seems, and the idol on the crucifix, dominant in people's minds at the time, had nothing to do with it.

Gibbon refused to have the blinding light of Christianity shone into his face. From the eighteenth century, he looked back to the Antonine peak in the second century, across an open sewer of barbarism between, and the one unmistakable object standing proud in the medieval cesspit of barbarism was the cross of Christianity.

Christianity Preserved Civilization?

Toynbee adopted the view that Christians themselves do—that Christianity preserved civilization. Toynbee says it was a chrysalis between butterfly and butterfly, between the Graeco-Roman butterfly and the post-Renaissance butterfly. It bridged the gap between one civilization and another. Toynbee thought he could see equal examples elsewhere in the history of civilizations, that conformed to the same pattern—Islam, a chrysalis between the ancient civilization of Israel and Iran and the modern Islamic civilization of the Near and Middle East; Hinduism, bridging a gap in the history of civilization in India between the modern Hindu culture and the ancient culture of the Aryans; and the Mahayana form of Buddhism, which now prevails in the Far East, spanning the modern history of the Far East and the history of ancient China. These high religions preserved secular civilization, Toynbee says!

Even “rudimentary” religions served the same purpose. The worship of Tammuz and Ishtar, of Adonis and Astarte, of Attis and Cybele, of Osiris and Isis—declared rudimentary because they are “close to the nature-worship of the Earth and her fruits”—have in every case played the historical role of filling a gap where there was a break in the continuity of secular civilization.

So, it is a law of social history? Toynbee has studied 27 major civilizations in history so has the material available to decide. It is not a law! Behind the Graeco-Roman civilization was a Minoan civilization, but between it and the Graeco-Roman no higher religion spans the gap. Behind the ancient civilization of Aryan India are vestiges of a still more ancient pre-Aryan civilization in the Indus Valley, but here again no higher religion bridges the two. Nor is there any sign of the same phenomenon of religion saving secular civilization in the New World. Toynbee's rule applies only to recent history, or rather, it has happened in some prominent examples of mega-religions in the last few millennia, but otherwise it never happened. Could it be simply that mega-religions are less likely to die out because they are so widespread?

Toynbee seems to want us to think that, in recent centuries at least, the history of secular civilization is governed by the history of religion:

Successive rises and falls of civilizations may be subsidiary to the growth of religion.

Toynbee commences to leave the land of the sane and enter the kingdom of God—the rise and fall of civilizations are “stepping-stones to higher things on the religious plane.” He has in fact adopted the Judaeo-Christian interpretation of history as God's will, actually citing:

Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

Hebrews 12:6

This has to be an obscenity. Toynbee, speaking during a monstrous war, sees merit in the cruel deaths of millions because God loves us and thinks it is good for us! It helps our souls rise to higher things! And this man is challenging Gibbon for seeing Christianity as itself the main barbarism ever invented by humanity.

He reverts also to the pathetic ramblings of Justin of Samaria in claiming that the flowering of Christianity was foreshadowed in the mythical passions of Tammuz and Adonis and Attis and Osiris, and indeed the Suffering Servant of *Isaiah*. Toynbee has spent a lifetime studying ancient and modern civilizations and has not progressed a millimetre. He believes all the ancient myths of the bible, showing that with decades of comfortable living and plenty of time to study he has never doubted their historicity once, or rather he does in a way that simultaneously accepts them as real enough for him to extend his theory back to Sumer:

I do not know whether Moses and Abraham are historical characters, but I think it can be taken as certain that they represent historical stages of religious experience and Moses' forefather and forerunner Abraham received his enlightenment and his promise at the dissolution, in the nineteenth or eighteenth century before Christ, of the ancient civilization of Sumer and Akkad—the earliest case, known to us, of a civilization going to ruin.

How can such a weaselly character have received such adulation?

These men of sorrows were precursors of Christ; and the sufferings through which they won their enlightenment were Stations of the Cross in anticipation of the Crucifixion. That is, no doubt, a very old idea, but it is also an ever new one.

This address must have been given from a pulpit not from a lectern.

Civilizations, the Handmaids of Religion?

Toynbee wants to see religion rising monotonically throughout history while civilization loops through cycles of suffering so that God knows we are good. "Civilizations are the handmaids of religion," or the midwives perhaps: "Civilizations will have fulfilled their function when once they have brought a mature higher religion to birth."

Toynbee is speaking to us when Hitler and Stalin seemed to be in alliance and everyone waited to see whether Hitler would turn east or west. Standing against these totalitarian countries were the western democracies, mostly already subdued, or not yet openly committed. What does Toynbee, the liberal professor say in these circumstances?

Democracy... has certainly been half emptied of meaning by being divorced from its Christian context and secularized.

The solution, he suggests, is that we should believe Christianity as well as practice it, because practice without belief is empty. It is a remarkable thing that these preachers, lay or professional, can never see fault in the great religion itself. The fault is always that we do not have enough of it in some respect, and Toynbee, faced with the fact that we had as much as humanity could bear of this mostrosity for a thousand years, wants to persuade us that its faults lay back in Greek times, not in more recent ones. It is like the politicians who always blame the previous government of the opposition for their own present administration's failings. But here Toynbee

wants to put it on the grand scale he is used to in his studies. Christianity is not barbaric, it merely suffered from the failings of the previous government, a thousand years before!

For Toynbee, the modern world is a vain repetition of the failed Romano-Greek world. It is not new at all. Great thinkers had nothing to do with extracting us from the mire of theological claptrap that western human beings had been caught in for a millennium. Democracy and science and modern scientific achievements should not be admired. All of it is a “meaningless repetition of something that the Greeks and Romans did before us.” What is important is still the Crucifixion and its spiritual consequences. Why? Because on a cosmic timescale it is a very recent event. Toynbee does not doubt that it was indeed an event that once happened, but wants us to forget that Jesus was not thinking on the timescale of the stars but in decades at the most.

Toynbee continues with his aim of persuading us that history proves that Christianity is eternal. Religion is not subservient to civilization. The truth is the other way round. Civilization is the means and religion is the end. So, a civilization may break down and break up, but the replacement of one higher religion by another will not be a necessary consequence. If our secular Western civilization perishes, Christianity will endure and grow in wisdom and stature as the result of a fresh experience of secular catastrophe. The fact that the western civilization is world wide will help Christianity to spread even further, thus achieving its historical destiny as he sees it—Christianity as the spiritual heir of all religions and the Christian Church as the social heir of all others. Quite what Toynbee means by “Church,” in the singular, when there are thousands of them all opposed to something in the others, is a mystery.

The Kingdom of Heaven, the Culmination?

Ultimately, Toynbee rejects that the “kingdom of heaven” will be the “culmination” of the evolution of life “on earth,” though it seems as though that would be the logical consequence of his risings and fallings of civilizations. One reason is that human personality has an innate capacity for evil as well as for good, so, evil, as well as of good, will be born into the world afresh with every child, and will never be wholly ruled out as long as that child remains alive. Toynbee is telling us that human beings carry God's curse of original sin, so we have to put up with it, even within the Church.

The Church itself consists of the sacrifice of the mass and the hierarchy, and here Toynbee at least uses his authority to say what many Christians refuse to accept, that the mass is a latter-day adaptation of the “worship of the fertility of the earth and her fruits.” The hierarchy of the Church is simply the hierarchy of the Roman imperial civil service, that the Church self-consciously imitated as part of its scheme to achieve state power. Even supposing the Church ever won world wide acceptance, God would still be applying his rule of “chastening” and “scourging” those he “received” so we will be back in the situation of the Dark Ages, because the aim of the Church is to do God's will and when there is “chastening” and “scourging” to be done for God, then the Church will do it! Nevertheless, “the victorious Church Militant on Earth will be a province of the Kingdom of God,” so we had better all watch out.

Toynbee finishes his sermon talking about progress. If the higher religions are rising monotonically, unlike civilizations, what evidence of it is there? On a few occasions, Toynbee does enlighten us, and here he does by telling us that “spirit” is to be understood as “personality.” Doubtless, being a Greek scholar, he is reading soul as psyche. Spiritual progress is therefore individual progress. Yet the Christian understands as individual progress, the selfish concept of personal salvation, so spiritual progress would seem to be anti-social, being selfish. Toynbee asks: “Are spiritual and social values antithetical and inimical to each other?”

To answer this Toynbee again embarks on a sea of speculative nonsense, aimed purely at putting a scholarly gloss on Christian drivel. Seemingly forgetting that he has defined spirit as personality he now tells us that personality is spirit, and spirit implies spiritual relationships. Understand? God is spirit and seeking God is a social act. Since Christ is God, we must all sacrifice ourselves for our fellow humans. Toynbee has now returned to the belief of the original Christian martyrs, some of whom were determined to be eaten by lions in the sure faith that that was what God wanted them to do. For the same reason modern Moslems blow themselves up with Semtex.

Of course, he dilutes the word “sacrifice” to mean “service” to other humans, to make his arguments applicable—a typical Christian ploy. Utterly ignoring Christian precedent, something Toynbee is happy to blame on to the Greeks, Toynbee tells us “the spiritual progress of individual souls in this life will bring with it much more social progress than could be attained in any other way.” Why then did it not begin sooner, when the Church had social control?

End of the World

The answer is that unredeemed human nature cannot change while human life on Earth goes on. Toynbee has here again returned to the beliefs of the earliest gentile Christians. If he is the example of the modern Christian, then Christian ideas have not changed in 2000 years. He awaits the end of the world, just as Roman Christians did, the very reason why the Roman authorities “chastised” and “scourged” them thus obeying God's will. He can say:

The establishment of the best possible human society in this world, in the Christian belief, is not the true purpose, though it is an almost certain by-product of a pursuit of the true purpose.

How is it possible for Toynbee to argue the case that Christianity is socially progressive but that Christians like him can hardly wait for the world to end? Apparently, it is all a question of selfish individual salvation after all. That is all that spiritual progress is.

Increasing spiritual opportunity for souls in their passages through life on Earth, [offers] assuredly an inexhaustible possibility of progress in this world.

Toynbee tells us that the “possibilities, provided by God, of learning through suffering in this world have always afforded a sufficient means of salvation to every soul that has made the best of the spiritual opportunity offered to it here, however small that opportunity may have been. ”

That poses another question for him to answer.

If men on Earth have not had to wait for the advent of the higher religions, culminating in Christianity, in order to qualify, in their life on Earth, for eventually attaining, after death, the state of eternal felicity in the other world, then what difference has the advent on Earth of the higher religions, and of Christianity itself, really made?

His answer is that the illumination of the soul by the higher religions “culminating” in Christianity is more intense than the earlier form of illumination. So, in the end, God is unjust anyway, despite this long sermon of Toynbee's. He tells us “a Pagan soul, no less than a Christian soul, has ultimate salvation within its reach” but the Christian soul gets more irradiation. At least it will not be as bad as a bundle of lighted faggots around your feet, or even the torments of Toynbee's sermonizing.

Appendix

The Secret Testament

The Original Gospel Revealed

Jesus is baptized a leader of the Essenes

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus, which is God's saviour, whom they called Barabbas, which is the son of my father, for he was the Son of God, the messiah, a prince of Israel.

Even as it is written in the prophets:

The voice of one crying: in the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight a high way in the desert for our God. For the glory of God shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. Saith the Lord: Behold, I send my messenger, which shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple.

John appeared baptizing and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, saying:

Ye shall not enter the water to be cleansed unless ye turn from your wickedness, obeying the law, as He commanded you through Moses to do by His holy spirit; for all who transgress His word are unclean.

John was the nasi, which is prince of the congregation, the Master of the Nazarenes, the successor of the nasi Zacharias, but, being humble, called himself Enosh, which is man; and he was great in the sight of the Lord drinking neither wine nor strong drink for he was also nazir, which is consecrated to God. He went before God to make ready a righteous people ready for the day of the Lord. And multitudes from Judaea and from Jerusalem went out to him and were baptized in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

And John announced:

After me one who is mightier than me will come, and I am not fit to stoop and untie the latchet of his sandals. I have baptized you with water but he will baptize you with the holy spirit for it is written: Who may abide the day of His coming? For he is like a refiner's fire. And I will come near to you in judgement. When the day cometh it burneth as a furnace, and all the proud and all that work wickedness shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up; but ye that fear my name shall gambol as calves of the stall and ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.

Being interpreted, the angel Michael cometh to judge the world.

Now it came to pass in those days that a man of repute, a Nazarene, being thirty years old, was baptized by John in the Jordan, and Zadokite priests came from Damascus by the Dead Sea. One was the Angel of the Lord and one was the Satan and John was Joshua, the High Priest. And the Angel spake:

Be silent, all ye flesh, before the Lord, for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

And the Zadokites asked:

Where is he who shall be the prince of the congregation, a sceptre who shall smite all the children of Seth, for it is written: a star shall come out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel.

And straightway the Nazarene rose up from the water. And the Angel said:

Saith the Lord of hosts: If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by. Hear now, behold, I bring forth my servant the branch; and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

And Joshua, the High Priest spake:

Saith the Lord of Hosts: I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Thou shalt be called the Son of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the branch from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Joshua, the High Priest, sprinkled him with water, making the sign of the cross on his forehead so that he would be among the saved, as in the previous visitation. They named him Joshua, the salvation of God, which is Jesus.

And Joshua, the High Priest, spake unto Jesus:

The Lord saith: Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee in pure apparel.

And they gave him holy objects and clothed him in clean white garments, and the spirit of the Lord settled on him.

And Joshua said unto Jesus:

Master, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes hath seen salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of the people, a light to lighten the darkness and the glory of thy people Israel.

And Jesus replied saying:

My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour. For He hath regarded the low estate of His servant: and from henceforth all generations shall bless Him. For He that is mighty hath done great things; and holy is His name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to His seed for ever.

And Jesus blessed God, saying:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.

And the Satan tested him with promises of finery and glory. And they all called out:

The Lord bless Jesus, the salvation of God, and all the men of the lot of God who walked perfectly in His ways;

and they all called:

Truly, Truly.

And they called out:

The Lord rebuke thee Satan, and all the men of the lot of Satan for their wickedness and the darkness of their deeds; yea, the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee Satan, for is not this brand now plucked out of the fire?

And they all called:

Truly, Truly.

And he was tested by the Satan that he should stumble on the path to the kingdom of God. But Jesus was not tempted, rejecting all that Satan offered. And he said:

Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shall thou serve.

And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

Immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness; for the battle for the kingdom would be forty years and for every year a day and a night he fell down before the Lord in the wilderness lest Belial should triumph and the Lord look upon the stubbornness of His people, or on their wickedness, or sin, and destroy them. And the Lord hearkened to him that His people should enter the kingdom which He had promised. And the Angel and God's elect ministered to him.

Now Herod the tetrarch feared John as a disturber of the multitudes, which counted him a prophet and were ready to do anything he should advise, and went out to lay hold on him, and would have him killed. He took him and bound him, and held him in prison in the fortress of Machaerus. But Herod feared John knowing he was a righteous one and an holy one for he was an Essene, and kept him safe. And when he heard him, he heard him gladly.

And this is what became of John. Herod sought to divorce his wife, the daughter of the king of Petra, that he might marry a niece, his brother Philip's wife, Herodias. And John said unto him:

It is not lawful that a man should marry his niece, nor even the mother of his brother's children; yet thou wouldst uncover her nakedness though she hath four children, thy brother's.

And when he heard him Herod was sore perplexed, and Herodias had a quarrel against him; and Herod resolved to rid himself of John. And a day came that Herod on his birthday, made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee, for he was at war with the king of Petra who would avenge the wrong done to his daughter, and he said unto Herodias:

Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee.

And straightway she came in with haste unto the king, saying:

I will that thou give me by and by the head of John the Baptist.

And the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought for Herodias's sake. And he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head unto Herod. And he gave it to Herodias in a charger. And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

Jesus succeeds John the Baptist on his arrest and continues his work

After that John was handed over in Peraea, Jesus took up his mantle that had fallen from him, and he came thence into Galilee, by the sea that he might baptize, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. saying:

The time is now come; the kingdom of God is at hand; hear this gospel; repent and be saved by God's mercy.

And many heard, and Jesus spake unto them saying:

As the fishes that are caught in an evil net even so are the sons of men snared in an evil time. But, saith the Lord: I shall send for many fishers, and they shall fish them and I will bring them again unto their land that I gave unto their fathers. If thou wilt, follow me and thou shalt be fishers of men.

For the day of judgement is like a net cast into the sea which drew in fishes of every kind, clean and unclean. The fisher gathered the clean into baskets but cast away the unclean. In like wise shall the wicked be separated from the righteous in the end time. For the prophet Enoch said: The Most High will deliver the evil ones to His angels for punishment for they have oppressed His children but the righteous and elect shall be saved.

Cast ye nets on the wrong side and ye will gather in empty but cast ye nets on the right side and ye will gather in full, for every nation on earth will yield to the good net.

And they were astounded by his teaching, for he taught them with authority; and only a king's word hath authority.

And he saw Simon and Andrew his brother, and Jesus said unto each of them:

Wilt thou repent and be a fisher of men?

And they followed him and were baptized. And he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; and Jesus said unto each of them:

Wilt thou repent and be a fisher of men?

And they left their father Zebedee with the hired servants, and went after him and were baptized.

Jesus repared to the house of his disciple Simon, with Andrew and James and John, to offer the repentant the sacred meal of bread and new wine. But Simon's wife's mother would do naught for them for she was sick out of fear.

And speaking to them Jesus said:

When Hezekiah, the king, was sick unto death, he wept and prayed to the Lord: I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And the Lord heard his prayer and said: I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria.

For God hath created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation, the spirits of truth and deceit. For all who walk in the spirit of truth, it shall be healing, a long life and fruitfulness; but for all who walk in the spirit of deceit it shall be blindness of eye and dullness of ear and stubbornness of heart, All who walk in this spirit shall suffer a multitude of plagues and everlasting damnation by the avenging wrath of the fury of God. But God has ordained an end of deceit and at the time of the visitation He shall destroy it forever.

And he came and took her by the hand and rebuked her for her trembling knees, and did tell her privily that the Lord was as a fortified wall and as an iron bar against all destroyers for He would lead His elect in the way of everlasting life and in His paths. And the fever of fear left her; and she arose and ministered unto them.

Again Jesus taught of the kingdom, saying:

A certain mason was stricken and his right hand did wither. He was unable to practise his trade and his children hungered. And he prayed to the Lord, saying: I was a mason seeking my bread with mine hands, and for my sins mine hand hath withered; now my children hunger. Lord, forgive me my sins for I repent my vanity and deceit. And the Lord saw that he was sincere and said to the man: Stand forth and stretch forth thine hand; and it was made whole like as to the other. Then saith the Lord God: Go thou to Zion, and there thou shalt lay for me a stone, a foundation which shall not rock or sway in its place, for thine hand is now whole. And that foundation shall be an house of perfection and truth in Israel forever. And thou shalt inscribe it: who trusts will fear not; for this is my covenant with mine elect. The man did as the Lord commanded, and he did build a house of perfection to the Lord. And the house was the foundation of a great kingdom. In like wise shall the right hand of power be restored to Israel, and God shall build a kingdom, and the scornful men in Jerusalem shall be swept away. And judgement shall be the line and righteousness shall be the plummet.

And his fame spread abroad throughout all the region. And Jesus went about teaching in synagogues and preaching the gospel of the coming kingdom. Again Jesus came with his disciples to Capernaum and preached in the synagogue. Now there was a man who feared the retribution of the authorities who called out:

Let us alone, Jesus the Nazarene! You will destroy us all. Thou art the messiah, come to drive out the sons of Seth.

But Jesus halted him commanding:

Be silent! The spirit of Belial possesses thee. Let it be driven out.

And the disciples beat him sorely until the perverse spirit left him, and badly torn he cried:

Enough.

And they were all amazed, questioning among themselves:

What thing is this that the perverse spirit called him? For with authority and power he commandeth.

And His fame spread. And great multitudes gathered together unto him. And a large number of people followed him and many came from Judaea and the other side of the Jordan and even from Tyre and Sidon when they heard of his teaching of the kingdom.

And as Jesus spake the word to his disciples four men passed down a pallet on which lay an enfeebler of the law, and a profaner of the House of God, for he was Matthew the Levite, a tax collector, a Sadducee, who had been praying on a housetop. Recognizing him Jesus said:

Saith the Lord: if ye turn away from following me then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and though this house be never so high yet shall everyone that passeth by it hiss for they forsook the Lord, their God. Yet if my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear their prayers in heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land. Repent, Levite, discard your pallet and rise.

And the enfeebler of the law was overcome with shame, smiting his breast and calling out:

God be merciful to me, a sinner;

and he was healed of his polluted spirit. He cast aside his pallet and was received by the righteous. At this they were all amazed and glorified God, saying:

We never saw anything like it.

But the Sadducees were filled with fear for many of their number heard of it also and repented to follow after Matthew.

Now when he admitted the Levite to the sacred meal of bread and new wine at his house some of his disciples said:

How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans who are the worst sinners.

Hearing this Jesus said:

They that are whole have no need of a doctor, but they that are sick. They that are full have no need of bread, but they that hunger. I come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Saith the Lord: My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have caused them to go astray.

And he spake unto them a parable, saying:

What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the fold and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. Likewise there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine of God's righteous which need no repentance. To the lost sheep of the house of Israel this son of man is called and today hath one who was lost been found.

And Jesus expounded all things to his disciples, saying unto them:

This son of man will impart knowledge with discretion for it is written in the prophet Isaiah: Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. But with the remnant which held fast to the commandments of God, He made His covenant with Israel forever, revealing to them the hidden things in which all Israel had gone astray, the mysteries of amazing truth, that they may walk perfectly together in all that has been revealed to them. Unto you therefore it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand.

And it was the fast of the fifth month when pious Jews mourned the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar singing lamentations. And his disciples of the simple of Ephraim come and say unto him:

The Pharisees eat not wine nor meat, and wail and confess and repent. Why doest thou say unto us, brake bread and drink wine?

And Jesus said unto them:

God's righteous will enter into His kingdom and feast. Harken ye to the word of the Lord: I am returned unto Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.

The kingdom of God is like a bridegroom who is coming to the wedding feast, for it is written: I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord. After the fast the wedding feast begins, and the Lord is even now at the door. Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is without? This bread and new wine is like unto a wedding feast, for when the bridegroom is without, the fast is ended. Those hypocrites fast for the loss of the temple, when God drove Israel into captivity for her sins. But, on the third day of His visitation, the Lord will raise up to the righteous a new temple not built by hands.

No man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the clean will be mixed with the unclean contrary to the commandments of God. Better to wear the old until the tailor delivereth the new. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles, for only thus may the righteous partake of it. If these be what men do, will God do other wise. The Lord will destroy the polluted temple and in three days will raise up for the righteous a holy temple, as the prophet Ezekiel has written.

And they brought backsliders to him, children of Israel who had turned away from God to the gods of the Greeks, for they now sought the kingdom of God. And his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them:

Suffer all the children to come; forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Truly, Whosoever is not one of the children shall not enter therein, save who the Lord taketh unto him and blesseth.

And some of the simple of Ephraim came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven that the kingdom was indeed nigh. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith:

Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Truly, no further sign shall be given unto this generation save the day of God's vengeance.

And he left them.

Then Jesus took apart into the hillside twelve men of his disciples that they might be with him until he should ordain them and send them forth as shepherds to gather the lost sheep. There was Simon the brigand whom he called Rocky, for he was immovable; James and John, sons of Zebedaeus, whom he called the sons of tumult and the sons of the wild ox for they were untameable; Andrew, Simon's brother, Philip and Nathanael, his brother, sons of Tholomaeus, the Zealot; Matthew, the Levite; Thomas the twin; James the son of Alphaeus, Judas Thaddaeus which is broadchest; Simon the Zealot; Judas Iscariot which is the knifeman and the deliverer. And Jesus said:

You shall be twelve apostles as a covenant to Israel, one for each tribe.

And Jesus judged them for qualities and ordained Peter, James and John as pillar apostles who might act as priests when they praised God, and three more he appointed in their place that there were still twelve as a covenant to Israel.

And he resolved to baptize many of the simple of Ephraim. and he called unto him disciples and began to send them forth by two and two. Nor would they need take anything for their journey, no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse, neither two pairs of sandals, nor two coats, save only a staff; for the elect would provide. And Jesus commanded them:

Go not into the way of the gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And when ye stand before them, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the holy ghost. And as ye go preach, saying: The kingdom of God is at hand, repent that God might heal thee that thou might join the elect of God. Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the kingdom be come.

And thereby gained they power over sickness and unclean spirits.

And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them, and he said unto them:

Whosoever shall receive one of these children, the children of Israel, receiveth not this son of man but Him that sent him. For it is not for this son of man to receive the children into God's kingdom, but God alone. But whosoever shall mark them in baptism with the cross of water in God's name, because they belong to Him, truly, they shall not lose their reward when the kingdom comes. And whosoever shall offend any one of these little ones that believe that God cometh, yea, any one of these simple of Ephraim that have repented and entered the pure water of baptism, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea; for his punishment at God's appointed time will be an hundred fold.

So they went out and preached repentance; and they cast out demons and cured sick people admitting them into the new covenant by the sacrament of baptism.

And Jesus travelled through the countryside and villages speaking to them at even, when the sun did set lest the authorities did hear of it. And they that sought the kingdom brought unto him all that dispaired of it, and some that hated it, those blind and dumb and diseased, and those possessed with devils. And all gathered together and he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils that hated God's kingdom; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him as the prince.

Jesus conducts the Festival of the Renewal of the Covenant which appears in the gospels as the mass feedings

And he took the multitude of repentant apart into a desert place, for it was Pentecost, the festival for the renewal of the new covenant. And many ran afoot thither out of the camps, and came together unto him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties, and by tens.

And James and John, the priestly apostles, come unto him, saying:

Master, we would that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in the glory of God's kingdom.

But Jesus said unto them:

Ye know not what ye ask. Can ye drink of the cup of righteousness? and be baptized with the baptism of repentance?

And they said unto him:

We can.

And Jesus said unto them:

So be it. Withal shall ye be baptized, but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand in the kingdom is not mine to give. God only knowest what He hath prepared, seeing your works. Ye know that they which wish to rule over the gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among ye, shall be your servant. And whosoever of ye will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all; for even he that is greatest among ye shall be your servant, and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. For ye come not to be served, but to serve.

And he said unto those who had repented:

Your baptism is a binding oath, which dedicates you to god until ye shall enter His kingdom. Yet ye might not say to your father or mother: I have vowed myself to God, therefore that which I

wouldst provide for thee is corban (which is a gift to the temple), and thou must go destitute, for my vows to God are binding to me unto death. For corban is merely a tradition whereas Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth his father or mother, let him die the death. Make not the word of God of none effect, for no man on pain of everlasting death might swear to depart from God's law. If ye wouldst please God, your tradition must be to reserve for your household that which it needs, then give your surplus to God.

For there were those of Israel who would seek atonement from God by vowing the money of their family to the temple treasury.

And he stood on a high place, and began to teach them many things, blessing the men of the lot of God, saying:

Blessed are the poor and humble in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled with everlasting life. Blessed are they merciful unto the poor: for they shall obtain God's mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see the face of God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted in everlasting light.

Ye are the light of the world. Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then the righteous answered him, saying:

Master, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And Jesus in turn answered, saying unto them:

Truly, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Then he cursed them of the lot of Satan, saying:

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not

Then Satan led other voices answering him, saying:

Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then Jesus answered them, saying:

Truly, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, ye righteous: for great is your reward in heaven: for so rewarded were the prophets which were before you. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is

in heaven is perfect. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those that sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Truly. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses, and ye shall find the gates of the kingdom closed.

Ye are forgiven and baptized as repentant sinners but think not that the gates of the kingdom are wide open to ye all; think not that the glory of God's kingdom meaneth an end to the law. This son of man is come not to destroy the law, or the prophets: this son of man cometh not to destroy, but to fulfil. For till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall suffer everlasting death: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called into the kingdom of heaven, and have everlasting life. For except that ye hunger for righteousness, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And many people gathered unto Jesus, who stood with Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And behold, there cometh from the crowd one of the rulers of the council, Jair, which is God's enlightened. And he announced:

The bridegroom is without, but woe to us all; for His betrothed, a damsel coming to the age of marriage hath been ravished by the stranger, and must die.

While he yet spake, a voice said:

The damsel is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

And the people wept and wailed. And Jesus saith unto them:

Why make ye this ado, and weep? She shall live, and find favour once more with the bridegroom. Be not afraid, only believe; the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

And a voice, which was Satan, laughed him to scorn. And Jesus looked up, praying:

Lord, forgive thy children their trespasses, hear them repent and enter the sacred water. If it be thy will, let Israel be restored in thy sight. Talitha cumi, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

And a voice announced:

the damsel is arisen, and walketh.

And Jesus said unto them:

the bridegroom awaiteth

And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it. And he commanded that they should partake of the holy meal of the just.

And the day was now far spent, and he called out:

O ye poor ones! be ye ordained that God shall save you! The children shall have bread and be filled.

And a voice answered him:

Whence can a man in the wilderness be satisfied?

And he asked:

How many loaves have ye?

And the disciples called out:

Seven.

And he said:

This is the bread of life. If ye be repentant, ye who partake of it shall be filled and have everlasting life.

And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground. And when he had taken the seven loaves, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave morsels to his disciples that they might eat. And his disciples then took up, and blessed, and set before them twelve baskets of morsels of bread, full. And they did all eat, and were filled of the bread of life. And they that did eat of the loaves were about four thousand.

And he charged them, saying:

Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of the Sadducees, for leaven can be sour, and yield foul bread; or it can be sweet, and yield choice bread. If ye would have the bread of everlasting life, hearken ye not to these others, for they know not the kingdom of God.

And Jesus said to them a parable.

A certain woman had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, but none could heal her. And eventually she had spent all that she had, and was still nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. And a gazer came to her, and said: Doest thou know, and believe in your whole heart that thou hast only one Lord, the Lord thy God? And the woman wept and confessed her sins, and begged forgiveness, and repented. And the gazer forgave her sins. And when she stepped from the holy water, straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague and cleansed. And this son of man says unto you, truly Israel shall be healed of her plague.

And Jesus led a service of dedication of the repentant to God. And he said:

God's judgement will be as a refiners fire, and the wicked shall be burned as stubble; but for the righteous it shall be as warm milk; for the wicked will be punished in a fire that never shall be quenched: but the righteous shall be rewarded in everlasting life. Ye repentant, remain chaste and think not adulterous thoughts, so that ye be not tempted into sin, for the kingdom is nigh, and every one shall be salted with fire.

And he called out, chanting:

If thine hand offend thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell.

And they all sang:

Into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And again he called out, chanting:

And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell.

And they all sang:

Into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And again he called out, chanting:

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

And they all sang:

Into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And Jesus said:

Lord, let thy will be done; we are ready; salt us with thy fire, for every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost His saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

And being interpreted this is the meaning of the parable: Ye shall be salted with the salt of the covenant of thy God. Ye would not suffer thy lustful eye, or thy grasping hand, to tempt you into sin. Howbeit then that God would admit you into His kingdom, who do not hold to His covenant with His chosen. Know ye then that ye must honour God's covenant with His elect for it is good, for if no one honoureth it then what other good is there?

And last of all he said:

Ye of His new covenant! for ye, God hath ordained that the first is last and the last first. Ye who are most humble, ye who serve God, and his brothers, ye shall be first. And ye who would be first, ye vainglorious and ye who love esteem above all else, ye shall be last. For, all are judged in the fire of God's judgement. Put the covenant in your hearts and have peace with each other.

And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And they told Jesus of the cities at which they had to shake off the dust of their feet. And Jesus said:

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! It shall be more tolerable at the day of God's vengeance for Sodom and Gomorrha than for you. Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! It shall be more tolerable at the day of God's vengeance for Sodom and Gomorrha than for you. For if God's mighty works had been done even in Sodom and Gomorrha, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But ye reject God's message.

Jesus Flees from Herod over the border into Phoenicia then ventures back by another route convinced he has to free Jerusalem from the Romans to prove to God that the Children of Israel are still worthy.

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came running, a Sadducee, and kneeled to him, and asked him:

Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him: Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the law of Moses; obey God's commandments.

And he answered and said unto him:

Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him:

One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross of baptism, and be of God's elect.

And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples:

How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

And one of the scribes came, and hearing them reasoning together, and perceiving that he answered them well, asked him:

What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said:

What is written in the law?

And he answering said:

The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

And Jesus said:

Thou hast answered right; for this is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.

And one of the multitude said:

Master, I have brought unto thee my son, a man which hath a dumb spirit, for he denieth the kingdom of God.

And Jesus would have him brought him unto him. And when they brought him unto them, Jesus said unto him:

If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. The kingdom of God cometh.

But he raged and foamed at them, saying:

You will bring us all trouble; we have no king but Caesar.

Straightway they did tare him, until he fell on the ground. And he cried, and they rent him sore; and he was as one dead, insomuch that many said:

He is dead.

A man came to Jesus calling out and decrying him, for he was a leper, a high priest of the temple. And Jesus, moved with anger, put forth his hand and smote him, and they set their hands upon him, until he was beseeching him, and kneeling down to him. And he was cleansed. And Jesus took him and angrily ordered him:

Go seekest thou God with all thine heart and soul; repent and doest that which is good and right before Him as He commanded by the hand of Moses. And sayest thou nothing to any man, lest thy demon trip thee.

And forthwith he sent him away. But he walketh in the way of deceit, and goeth out and telleth the authorities, and blazeth abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter the city for fear of the authorities, for the towns were unsafe, and soldiers sought them; and they were without, in desert places.

Now when John had heard in the prison these works of Jesus, he was troubled, and sent two of his disciples, And said unto him:

Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Jesus answered and said unto them:

Go and shew John the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the glad tidings preached to them. But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying: We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came offering the bread and wine, and they say, He is mad. And this son of man came offering the bread and wine, and they say, Behold a friend of publicans and sinners. Is the wisdom of the just of her children?

And they departed.

And Jesus began to say unto the multitudes:

What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? A man clothed in soft raiment? They that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. A prophet? Yea, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger, which shall prepare the way before me. Truly, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. Notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

And the signs are that from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

And king Herod heard of it, for his name was spread abroad. And he asked:

is John the Baptist burst free from prison and again preaching sedition?

They replied:

No, it is Elias or that prophet.

But Herod said:

if it cannot be John, whom I imprisoned, then his successor is risen.

And in the night, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and escaped into a solitary place, and there prayed for he was sore afraid. And Simon and they that were with him followed him. And when they found him, they said unto him:

They seek thee everywhere.

And he said unto them:

Let us go away into another part, that I might start afresh: for therefore came I forth.

And they escaped into another part.

And it came to pass, as the Nazarenes went before Herod's soldiers that they went through corn fields, and it was the sabbath day; and his disciples hungered and said:

Would that we could enjoy this grain but on the sabbath day we cannot do that which is not lawful.

And Jesus said unto them:

Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Ahimelech the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? Or how that the priests offer up lambs in sacrifice on the sabbath, thereby profaning it, but are blameless.

And he said unto them:

The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore man, the son of man, is Lord also of the sabbath.

And his disciples understood and began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. But then yet others among them found fault saying, Master:

Howbeit that we can do that which is not lawful for we eat with unwashen hands that which is unclean and pleaseth not the Lord?

And he said unto them:

Hearken every one of you, and understand. It is written in the book of Isaiah, Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

And they looked one to the other, and Jesus said:

Are ye yet without understanding? Ye are cleansed by the holy waters, for ye have repented that ye be received into the kingdom. Do ye not then perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into God's perfect, it cannot defile him because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. If a man be truly repentant his heart is pure. If a man be not perfect in his heart then he shall not be cleansed whether he be washed by rivers, yea and even by seas.

And thence he fled into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it; but he could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by nation, but she had sought the kingdom of God, and had become a proselyte of the Nazarenes. And she besought him privately that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter, and prepare her for the kingdom. But Jesus said unto her:

Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. For I am come to save the children of Israel alone.

And she answered and said unto him:

Yes, Master, yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs,

for she knew there was a time to come when the gentiles would be called. And he said unto her:

For this saying, so be it; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

And he sent disciples to heal her. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laying bruised upon the bed.

Jesus fled with his disciples to the Great Sea to the north in the land of the gentiles where Herod could not go; but a vengeful throng followed him, and about Tyre and Sidon, this multitude came angrily unto him. And he charged his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should mob him and harm him. For, though he had straitly charged them not to make him known and they had fallen down before them, unclean spirits had exposed him, saying:

Thou art the Son of God.

And they did scream in anger when they saw him, and pressed upon him for to take hold of him, as many as had scourges to avenge them.

And the multitude cometh together again, besieging them in his house so that they could not so much as bring in bread for the holy meal. And his companions were fearful and went to lay hold on him, for they said:

He is beside himself.

And some of the Nazarenes said:

He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

And Jesus answered them, saying:

If this son of man hath Beelzebub he could not have cast out a single demon. Yet ye have repented. How can Satan cast out Satan? If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand, not even Satan's house. And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand, not even Satan's kingdom. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. Yet he doth not end. How then can Satan be cast out? When a strong man is armed and defendeth his house, his possessions are in peace; but when a man stronger than he first binds him then takes away his weapons, his possessions are lost. In like wise must we be stronger than Satan and bind him. But if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand; and if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. The house of Israel must needs stand as one if Satan is to be bound and cast out. And for this reason all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men who repent, save a blasphemy against His holy spirit. He that is not with God is against God; and he that gathereth not with God scattereth. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister in God's remnant. But whoever hath slandered the congregation shall be expelled from among them and shall return no more. And whoever hath murmured against the authority of the community shall be expelled and shall not return. Every idle word that men speak, they shall give account of in God's day of vengeance, for by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

And they murmured no more.

Jesus is Transfigured—crowned as That Prophet making him The Messiah in preparation for his attempt to capture the Holy City and cleanse the Temple.

And Jesus goeth out, and his disciples, into the region of Caesarea Philippi. And he saith unto them:

Whom say ye that I am?

And Peter answereth and saith unto him:

Thou art the nasi, the prince of the many.

And Jesus said:

Blessed art thou Simon barjona, for is not the prince the messiah at the holy meal of the saints? And saith the Lord: Is not this a brand that must be plucked from the fire? This son of man must lead you upon Jerusalem.

And Peter was perplexed, saying he was beside himself. And Jesus taught them that, at God's appointed time, Israel would have a prince, and a priest, and a prophet; and, like Moses, the prince, and the priest, and the prophet would lead them into a promised land. And they heard him and wondered. And he charged them that they should tell no man. And from that time forth he began to teach them that they must go unto Jerusalem, and must suffer many things in the coming battle, even death but, on the third day would rise again in God's kingdom, with God's elect; for God had sent His messiah. And he spake that saying privily.

And they stood before him, saying:

Before the messiah cometh, it is written, Elias must first come.

And he told them:

Elias truly cometh first, and restoreth all things; but, that Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

For he was imprisoned. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him but when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter.

And after six days of purification in readiness Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves. And Peter said to Jesus:

Master, this is a good place. Let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

And they built a smoky fire, and he appeared, transfigured, before them, in raiment, shining exceeding white. And there appeared the prophets Elias and Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying:

This is my beloved Son: hear him,

as it is written that the prophet must be heard. And Satan came and he rebuked him, saying:

Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men

And, suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, for first they must go up to Jerusalem. And there they would commence the battle for the kingdom in which they would die; but God would resurrect them all, the righteous, on the third day, as it is written in the prophet Hosea. And they kept it close, with themselves.

And returning thence to Galilee he came to some of his disciples with a great multitude about them, and the disciples questioning with each other. And straightway all the people, when they

beheld him, were greatly amazed that he had appeared again in Galilee, for Herod would imprison him, and running to him saluted him.

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them:

Whosoever would be saved, let him take the cross of repentance in baptism, obey God and fear not. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for God's sake, the same will save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed to take the cross of repentance in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of God with the holy angels.

And addressing a multitude, Jesus spoke a parable, saying:

Hearken! A sower went out to sow and as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside and perished, for it is written: Those who hearken not to the voice of God shall be meat unto the fowls of the air. And some seed fell upon stony ground, and immediately it sprang up, and because it had no depth of earth, when the sun was up, it was scorched because it had no root and it withered away, for it is written: Their stock shall not take root in the earth. And some seed fell among thorns and the thorns sprang up and choked them and they yielded no fruit, for it is written: Sow not among thorns. But other seed fell on good ground and did yield fruit that increased and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred, for it is written: The seed shall be prosperous and the ground shall give her increase. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And he said unto them:

Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed and not to be set on a candlestick? The Lord hath seven eyes and, from Him, nothing is hid. For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested to the elect in God's kingdom; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad in God's kingdom. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

And he said unto them:

Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For if what ye mete is God's will then it pleaseth the Lord and ye shall be rewarded with everlasting life.

And Jesus said:

Hearken ye to this other parable: the kingdom of God is as if a man cast good seed upon the earth, and he slept and went not by night or day and cared not how the seed should spring up and grow. But the earth beareth fruit of herself and when the blade was sprung up so too were tares. And the man's servants said unto him: wilt thou that we go and gather up these tares? But he said: Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is ripe, straightway putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come. Then separate the wheat from the tares that it be saved for me, and put the tares in a heap that they may be destroyed by fire. For it is written: Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe, for their wickedness is great. Then shall Jerusalem be holy and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. And the Lord shall roar from Zion; and the heavens and earth shall shake; but the Lord will be a refuge unto his people and a strong hold to the children of Israel. For David said to the Lord: thine hand shall find out all thine enemies; thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt

make them as a fiery furnace in the time of thine anger. Thou shalt swallow them up in thy wrath; and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men. And the Lord said to David: My covenant shall stand fast with thee; and thy seed will I make to endure forever.

And Jesus still speaking in parables, said:

Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it falleth to earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth; but when it groweth up it becometh greater than all the herbs and shooteth out great branches; so that all the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it. For it is written: the Lord will bring down the high tree and will exalt the low tree; and it shall bring forth boughs and bear fruit, and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.

And when he was alone, they that were about him asked of him the parables. And he said unto them:

Know ye not the parable of the sower? and how then will ye know all parables? The parable being interpreted is this. The sower soweth the word of God. And these are they by the way side, who understandeth not the word, and to whom Satan cometh immediately and catcheth away that which was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise in which the word is sown on stony ground, who immediately receive the word with gladness, but have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time, and are tempted by hypocrisy. And these are they in which the word is sown among thorns, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they in which the word is sown on good ground, such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred. For it is written in the prophet Zechariah, in the word of the Lord: The seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things. And ye righteous shall receive that inheritance when the kingdom comes.

Bibliography

1. ALL-DSS

Allegro, J, "The Dead Sea Scrolls", London 1964

2. GA-TV

Ashe, G, "The Virgin", Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1976

3. BL-DSSD

Baigent, M, & Leigh, R, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception", London 1991

4. BAR-ROC

Barnes, E W, "The Rise of Christianity", London 1948

5. BAR-TLP

Barker, M, "The Lost Prophet", London 1988

6. BR-PCOB

Black, M, & Rowley, H H, (Eds), "Peake's Commentary on the Bible", London 1962

7. JB-JTUQ

Bowden, J, "Jesus: The Unanswered Questions", London 1988

8. MB-HZ1

Boyce, Mary, "A History of Zoroastrianism I", LeidenKöln 1975

9. MB-HZ2

Boyce, Mary, "A History of Zoroastrianism II", LeidenKöln 1982

10. PC-HOD

Carus, Paul, "The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil from the Earliest Times to the Present Day", 1900 (On Line)

11. JHC-JDSS

Charlesworth, J H, "Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls", New York, 1993

12. RDC-FDL

Chesnutt, R D, "From Death to Life", Sheffield, 1995

13. NC-TPM
Cohn, N, "The Pursuit of the Millennium", London 1970
14. CRU-CCC
Cruden, A, "Cruden's Complete Concordance", London 1963
15. DAV-PAE
Davies, E W, "Prophecy and Ethics", Sheffield, 1981
16. DOD-FOC
Dodd, C H, "The Founder of Christianity", London 1971
17. DOU-NBD
Douglas, J D (Ed), "New Bible Dictionary", Leicester 1982
18. EW-DSSU
Eisenman, R, & Wise, M, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered", Shaftesbury, 1992
19. ER-STSS
Eshkenazi, T C, & Richards, K E, "Second Temple Studies 2", Sheffield, 1994
20. FOR-PJNTT
Forster, W., "Palestinian Judaism in New Testament Times", London, 1964
21. VF-AIBA
Fritz, V, "An Introduction to Biblical Archaeology", Sheffield, 1994
22. FUR-OSS
Furieux, R, "The Other Side of the Story", London 1953
23. GG-HIAI
Garbini, G, "History and Ideology in Ancient Israel", London 1988
24. GHIRS-I
Ghirshman, R, "Iran", London 1954
25. GOD-MRAW
Godwin, J, "Mystery Religions in the Ancient World", London 1981

26. GH-WWCM

Grant, M, & Hazel, J, "Who's Who in Classical Mythology", London 1979

27. GP-TNGR

Graves, R, and Podro, J, "The Nazarene Gospel Restored", London 1953

28. GRA-GAEC

Grant, R M, "Gnosticism and Early Christianity", NY 1959

29. HH-TPIB

Holloway, S W, & Handy, L K (Eds), "The Pitcher is Broken", Sheffield 1995

30. BSJI-TI

Isserlin, B S J, "The Israelites", London 1998

31. KNOW-OPSC

Knowlson, T S, "The Origin of Popular Superstitions and Customs", London 1910

32. KNO-NTCAE

Knox, R, "New Testament Commentary: Acts, Epistles", London, 1954

33. KRA-AAI

Kraeling, E G H, "Aram and Israel", New York 1966 (reprint of 1918 work)

34. LAF-PAC

Lane Fox, R, "Pagans and Christians", London and NY, 1986

35. MAC-MPIC

Maccoby, Hyam, "The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity", London 1986

36. MAG-MOB

Magee, M D, "The Mystery of Barabbas", AskWhy!, 1995

37. MAG-THJ

Magee, M D, "The Hidden Jesus", AskWhy!, 1997

38. MAN-TOJ

Manson, T W, "The Teaching of Jesus", Cambridge 1951

39. MPR-OTI

Mays, J L, Petersen, D L, Richards, K H, "Old Testament Interpretation", Edinburgh 1995

40. MIL-ZPAI

Mills, L H, "Zoroaster, Philo, the Achaemenids and Israel", Oxford 1903

41. MIL-AE

Mills, L H, "Avesta Eschatology", Chicago 1908

42. MIL-OORAP

Mills, L H, "Our Own Religion in Ancient Persian", Oxford 1913

43. MOS-MTSJCC

Moses, A D A, "Matthews Transfiguration Story and Jewish-Christian Controversy", Sheffied 1996

44. MOS-MTSJCC

Morby, J E, "Handbook of Kings and Queens", Ware 1994

45. MOU-M

Moule, C D F, "Miracles", London 1965

46. OTT-KOGSOM

Otto, R., "The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man", Lutterworth 1943

47. PAG-TGG

Pagels, E, "The Gnostic Gospels", New York, 1979

48. PAT-THG

Patai, R, "The Hebrew Goddess", Detroit, 1990

49. RAM-TQHI

Ramsey, G W, "The Quest for the Historical Israel", London 1982

50. REN-LOJ

Renan, E, "The Life of Jesus", London 1935

51. ROW-JRV

- Rowlett, L L, "Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence", Sheffield 1996
52. SHA-UDSS
- Shanks, H (Ed), "Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls", London 1993
53. SIN-RAS
- Singer, C, "Religion and Science", London 1928
54. TAY-YTS
- Taylor, J Glen, "Yahweh and the Sun", Sheffield 1993
55. TAY-FGT
- Taylor, V, "The Formation of the Gospel Tradition", London 1933
56. THI-JTM
- Thiering, B, "Jesus the Man", London 1992
57. TLT-BIH
- Thompson, T L, "The Bible in History", London 1999
58. TOY-HAR
- Toynbee, A, "An Historians Approach to Religion", London 1956
59. ULA-TOMM
- Ulansey, D, "The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries", Oxford 1991
60. VAN-DSST
- VanderKam, J. C., "The Dead Sea Scrolls Today", London 1994
61. WVS-TAO
- Von Soden, W, "The Ancient Orient", Grand Rapids 1994
62. VER-JTJ
- Vermes, Geza, "Jesus the Jew", London 1973
63. VER-DSSE
- Vermes, Geza, "The Dead Sea Scrolls in English", London 1990
64. WAK-IPI

Wake, C S, "Influence of the Phallic Idea in the Religions of Antiquity", London 1875

65. WAT-ZOR

Waterhouse, J W, "Zoroastrianism", London, undated

66. WATT-PT

Watts, J W (Ed), "Persia and Torah", Atlanta, 2001

67. WEI-PIC

Weigell, A, "The Paganism in our Christianity", London, undated

68. WEL-JEC

Wells, G A, "The Jesus of the Early Christians", London 1971

69. WHI-TWJ

Whiston, W (Trans), "The Works of Josephus", London, undated

70. WIL-SDS

Wilson, E, "The Scrolls from the Dead Sea", New York, 1955

71. WOR-PIEC

Workman, H B, "Persecution in the Early Church", London 1906