

THE ROOTS OF RITUALISM IN CHURCH AND MASONRY

by **H.P.Blavatsky**

Part 1 of 2

January 1920
Reprinted from *Lucifer* Volume IV - March 1889

Theosophical Publishing House
Adyar, Madras, India

THEOSOPHISTS are very often, and very unjustly too, accused of infidelity and even of Atheism. This is a grave error, especially with regard to the latter charge.

In a large society, composed of so many races and nationalities, in an association wherein every man and woman is left to believe in whatever he or she likes, and to follow or not to follow — just as they please — the religion they were born and brought up in, there is but little room left for Atheism. As for “infidelity”, it becomes a misnomer and a fallacy. To show how absurd is the charge, in any case, it is sufficient to ask our traducers to point out to us, in the whole civilized world, that person who is not regarded as an “infidel” by some other person belonging to some different creed. Whether one moves in highly respectable and orthodox circles, or in a so-called heterodox “society”, it is all the same. It is a [Page 2] mutual accusation, tacitly, if not openly, expressed; a kind of a mental game at shuttlecock and battledore flung reciprocally, and in polite silence, at each other's heads. In sober reality, then, no theosophist any more than a non-Theosophist can be an infidel; while, on the other hand, there is no human being living who is not an infidel in the opinion of some sectarian or other. As to the charge of Atheism, it is quite another question.

What is *Atheism*, we ask, first of all? Is it disbelief in and denial of the existence of a God, or Gods, or simply the refusal to accept a personal deity on the somewhat gushy definition of R. Hall, who explains Atheism as “a ferocious system” because, “it leaves nothing *above* (?) us to excite awe, nor around us to awaken tenderness” (!) If the former, then most of our members — the hosts in India, Burma, and elsewhere — would demur, as they believe in Gods and supernal beings, and are in great awe of some of them. Nor would a number of Western Theosophists fail to confess their full belief in spirits, whether spatial or planetary, ghosts or angels. Many of us accept the existence of high and low Intelligences, and of Beings as great as any “personal” God. This is no occult secret. Most of us believe in the survival of the Spiritual Ego, in Planetary Spirits and Nirmânakâyas, those great Adepts of the past ages, who, renouncing their right to Nirvâna, remain in our spheres of being, not as [Page 3] “spirits” but as complete spiritual human Beings. Save their corporeal, visible envelope, which they leave behind, they remain as they were, in order to help poor humanity, as far as can be done without sinning against Karmic law. This is the “Great Renunciation”, indeed; an incessant, conscious self-sacrifice throughout aeons and ages till that day when the eyes of blind mankind will open and, instead of the few, *all* will see the universal truth.

These Beings, may well be regarded as God and Gods — if they would but allow the fire in our hearts, at the thought of that purest of all sacrifices, to be fanned into the flame of adoration, or the smallest altar in their honour. But they will not. Verily, “the secret heart is fair Devotion’s (only) temple”, and any other, in this case, would be no better than profane ostentation.

Now with regard to other invisible Beings, some of whom are still higher, and others far lower on the scale of divine evolution. To the latter we will have nothing to say; the former will have nothing to say to us: for we are as good as non-existent for them. The homogeneous can take no cognizance of the heterogeneous; and unless we learn to shuffle off our mortal coil and commune with them “spirit to spirit”, we can hardly hope to recognize their true nature. Moreover, every true Theosophist holds that the divine HIGHER SELF of every mortal man is of the same essence as the essence of these Gods. Being, [Page 4] moreover, endowed with free-will, hence having, more than they, responsibility, we regard the incarnated Ego as far superior to, if not more divine than, any spiritual intelligence *still awaiting incarnation*. Philosophically, the reason for this is obvious, and every metaphysician of the Eastern school will understand it. The incarnated Ego has odds against it which do not exist in the case of a pure divine Essence unconnected with matter; the latter has no personal merit, whereas the former is on his way to final perfection through the trials of existence, of pain and suffering.

The shadow of Karma does not fall upon that which is divine and unalloyed, and so different from us that no relation can exist between the two. As to those deities which are regarded in the Hindû esoteric Pantheon as finite and therefore under the sway of Karma, no true philosopher would ever worship them; they are signs and symbols.

Shall we then be regarded as atheists, only because while believing in Spiritual Hosts — those beings who have to be worshipped in their collectivity as a *personal* God — we reject them absolutely as representing the One Unknown? and because we affirm that the eternal Principle, the All in All, or the ABSOLUTENESS of the Totality, cannot be expressed by limited words, nor be symbolized by anything with conditioned and qualificative attributes? Shall we, more over, permit to pass without protest the charge [Page 5] against us of idolatry — by the Roman Catholics, of all men? They, whose religion is as pagan as any other of the solar and element worshippers; whose creed was framed out for them, cut and dry, ages before the year 1 of Christian era; and whose dogmas and rites are the same as those of every *idolatrous* nation — if any such nation still exists in spirit anywhere at this day. Over the whole face of the earth, from the North to the South Pole, from the frozen gulfs of Northland to the torrid plains of Southern India, from Central America to Greece and Chaldea, the Solar Fire, as the symbol of divine Creative Power, of Life and Love, was worshipped. The union of the Sun (male element) with Earth and the Water (matter, the female element) was celebrated in the temples of the whole Universe. If Pagans had a feast commemorative of this union — which they celebrated nine months ere the Winter Solstice, when Isis was said to have conceived — so have the Roman Catholic Christians. The great and *holy day* of the *Annunciation*, the day on which the Virgin Mary “found favour with (her) God” and conceived “the Son of the *Highest*”, is kept by Christians *nine months before Christmas*. Hence, the worship of the Fire, lights and lamps in the churches. Why? Because Vulcan, the fire-God, married Venus, the daughter of the Sea; that the Magi watched over the sacred fire in the East, and the Virgin-Vestals in the West. The Sun was the “Father”, Nature, the eternal [Page 6] Virgin Mother: Osiris and Isis, Spirit-Matter, the latter worshipped under each of its three states by Pagan and Christian. Hence the Virgins — even in Japan — clothed with star-spangled blue, standing on the lunar crescent, as symbolical of female Nature (in her three elements of Air, Water, Earth); Fire or the male Sun, fecundating her yearly with his radiant beams (the “cloven tongues like as of fire” of the Holy Ghost).

In *Kalevala* the oldest epic Poem of the Finns, of the pre-Christian antiquity of which there remains no doubt in the minds of scholars, we read of the gods of Finland, the gods of air and water, of fire and the forest, of Heaven and the Earth. In the superb translation by J. M. Crawford, in Rune L (Vol. II) the reader will find the whole legend of the Virgin Mary in

Mariatta, child of beauty,
Virgin-Mother of the Northland.....(page 720)

Ukko, the great Spirit, whose abode is in Yûmäla, the sky or Heaven, chooses the Virgin Mariatta as his vehicle to incarnate through her in a Man-God. She becomes pregnant by plucking and eating a red berry (*marja*), when, repudiated by her parents, she gives birth to a "Son immortal", in the *manger of a stable*. Then the "Holy Babe" disappears, and *Mariatta* is in search of him. She asks a star, "the guiding star of Northland", where her "holy baby lies hidden", but the star answers her angrily: **[Page 7]**

If I knew, I would not tell thee;
'Tis thy child that me created,
In the cold to shine for ever. . . .

and tells the Virgin nothing. Nor will the golden moon help her, because, Mariatta's babe having created her, left her in the great sky:

Here to wander in the darkness,
All alone at eve to wander,
Shining for the good of others. . . .

It is only the "Silver Sun" who, taking pity upon the Virgin-Mother, tells her:

Yonder is thy golden infant,
There thy holy babe lies sleeping,
Hidden to his belt in water,
Hidden in the reeds and rushes.

She takes the holy baby home, and while the mother calls him "Flower",

Others named him *Son of Sorrow*.

Is this a post-Christian legend? Not at all; for, as said, it is *essentially Pagan in origin* and recognized as pre-Christian. Hence, with such data in hand in literature, the ever-recurring taunts of idolatry and atheism, of infidelity and paganism, ought to cease. The term *idolatry*, moreover, is of Christian origin. It was used by the early Nazarenes, during the two and a half centuries of our era, against those nations who used temples and churches, statues and images, because they, the early Christians themselves, had *neither temples, statues, nor images*, all of which they abhorred. **[Page 8]** Therefore the term "idolatrous" fits far better our accusers than ourselves, as this article will show. With Madonnas on every cross road, their thousands of statues, from Christs and Angels in every shape down to Popes and Saints, it is rather a dangerous thing for a Catholic to taunt any Hindu or Buddhist with idolatry. The assertion has now to be proved.

II

We may begin by the origin of the word God. What is the real and primitive meaning of the term? Its meanings and etymologies are as many as they are various. One of them shows the word derived from an old Persian and mystic term *goda*. It means “itself”, or something self-emanating from the absolute Principle. The root word was *godan* — whence Wotan, Woden, and Odin, the Oriental radical having been left almost unaltered by the Germanic races. Thus they made of it *gotz*, from which the adjective *gut* — “good”, as also the term *gota*, or idol, were derived. In ancient Greece, the word *Zeus* and *Theos* led to the Latin *Deus*. This *goda*, the emanation, is not, and cannot be, identical with that from which it radiates, and is, therefore, but a periodical, finite manifestation. Old Aratus, who wrote “full of Zeus are all the streets and the markets of man; full of Him is the sea and the harbours”, did not limit his deity to such a temporary reflection on our terrestrial [Page 9] plane as Zeus, or even its antetype — Dyaus, but meant, indeed, the universal, omnipresent Principle. Before the radiant god Dyaus (the sky) attracted the notice of man, there was the Vedic Tad (“that”) which, to the Initiate and philosopher, would have no definite name, and which was the absolute Darkness that underlies every manifested radiancy. No more than the mythical Jupiter — the later reflection of Zeus — could Sūrya, the Sun, the first manifestation in the world of Mâyâ and the Son of Dyaus, fail to be termed “Father” by the ignorant. Thus the Sun became very soon interchangeable and one with Dyaus; for some, the “Son”, for others, the “Father” in the radiant sky; Dyaus-Pitar, the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father, truly shows, however, his finite origin by having the Earth assigned to him as a wife. It is during the full decadence of metaphysical philosophy that Dyâva-prthivi “Heaven and Earth” began to be represented as the Universal cosmic parents, not alone of men, but of the gods also. From the original conception, abstract and poetical, the ideal cause fell into grossness. Dyaus, the sky, became very soon Dyaus or Heaven, the abode of the “Father”, and finally, indeed, that Father himself. Then the Sun, upon being made the symbol of the latter, received the title of Dina-Kara “day-maker”, of *Bhâskara* “light-maker”, now the Father of his Son, and *vice versa*. The reign of ritualism and of anthropomorphic [Page 10] cults was henceforth established and finally degraded the whole world, retaining supremacy to the present civilized age.

Such being the common origin, we have but to contrast the two deities — the god of the Gentiles and the god of the Jews — on their own revealed Word ; and judging them on their respective definitions of themselves, conclude intuitively which is the nearest to the grandest ideal. We quote Colonel Ingersoll, who brings Jehovah and Brahma parallel with each other. The former, “from the clouds and darkness of Sinai”, said to the Jews:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me”. Contrast this with the words put by the Hindu into the mouth of Brahm: “I am the same to all mankind. They who honestly serve other gods, involuntarily worship me. I am he who partaketh of all worship, and I am the reward of all worshippers.” Compare these passages. The first, a dungeon where crawl the things begot of jealous slime; the other, great as the domed firmament inlaid with suns. . . .

The “first” is the god who haunted Calvin's fancy, when he added to his doctrine of predestination that of Hell being paved with the skulls of *unbaptized* infants. The beliefs and dogmas of our churches are far more blasphemous in the ideas they imply than those of the *benighted* Heathen. The *amours* of Brahmâ, under the form of a buck, with [Page 11] his own daughter, as a deer, or of Jupiter with Leda, under that of a swan, are grand *allegories*. They

were never given out as a revelation, but known to have been the products of the poetic fancy of Hesiod and other mythologists. Can we say as much of the *immaculate daughters* of the god of the Roman Catholic Church — Anna and Mary? Yet, even to breathe that the Gospel narratives are allegories too, as they would be most sacrilegious were they accepted in their dead letter, constitutes in a Christian born the *acme* of blasphemy!

Verily, they may whitewash and mask as much as they like the god of Abraham and Isaac, they shall never be able to disprove the assertion of Marcion, who denied that the God of *Hate* could be the same as the “Father of Jesus”. Heresy or not, but the “Father in Heaven” of the Churches has remained since then a hybrid creature; a mixture between the Jove of the Pagan mobs and the “jealous God” of Moses, exoterically the Sun, whose abode is in Heaven, or the sky, esoterically.

Does he not give birth to Light “that shineth in Darkness”, to the Day, the bright Dyaus, the Son, and is he not the Most High — *Deus Coelum*? And is it not again *Terra*, the “Earth”, the ever immaculate as the ever prolific Virgin who, fecundated by the ardent embraces of her “Lord” — the fructifying rays of the Sun — becomes, in this terrestrial sphere, the mother of all that lives [Page 12] and breathes on her vast bosom? Hence, the sacredness of her products in Ritualism — the *bread* and the *wine*. Hence also, the ancient *messis*, the great sacrifice to the goddess of harvest (Ceres Eleusina, the Earth again): *messis*, for the Initiates, *missa* for the profane, [From pro, “before”, and fanum, “the temple”, *i.e.*, the non-initiates who stood before the fane, but dared not enter it. (Vide the Works of Ragon.)] now transformed into the Christian mass or liturgy. The ancient oblation of the fruits of the Earth to the Sun, the *Deus Altissimus*, “the Most High”, the symbol of the G. A. O. T. U. of the Masons to this day, became the foundation of the most important ritual among the ceremonies of the new religion. The worship offered to Osiris-Isis (the Sun and the Earth), [The Earth, and the Moon, its parent, are interchangeable. Thus all the lunar goddesses were also the representative symbols of the Earth. — Vide *The Secret Doctrine*, “Symbolism”.] to Bel and the cruciform Astarte of the Babylonians; to Odin or Thor and Friga, of the Scandinavians; to Belen and the *Virgo Paritura* of the Celts; to Apollo and the *Magna Mater* of the Greeks; all these couples having the same meaning, passed bodily to, and were transformed by, the Christians into the Lord God or the Holy Ghost descending upon the Virgin Mary.

Deus Sol or Solus, the Father, was made interchangeable with the Son: the “Father” in his noon glory, he became the “Son” at Sun-rise, when he was said to “be born”. This idea received its full apotheosis annually on December the 25th, during [Page 13] the Vernal Solstice, when the Sun — hence the solar gods of all the nations — was said to be born. *Natalis solis invicte*. And the “precursor” of the resurrecting Sun grows, and waxes strong, until the Vernal Equinox, when the god Sol begins its annual course, under the sign of the Ram or the *Lamb*, the first lunar week of the month. The 1st of March was feasted throughout all pagan Greece, as its *neomenia* was sacred to Diana. Christian nations celebrate their Easter, for the same reason, on the first Sunday that follows the full moon, at the Vernal Equinox. With the *festivals* of the Pagans, the *canonicals* of their priests and Hierophants were copied by Christendom. Will this be denied? In his *Life of Constantine* Eusebius confesses thus saying, perhaps, the only truth he ever uttered in his life — that “*in order to render Christianity more attractive to the Gentiles, the priests (of Christ) adopted the exterior vestments and ornaments used in the pagan cult*”. He might have added “their rituals and dogmas” also.

III

It is a matter of History — however unreliable the latter — for a number of facts preserved by ancient writers corroborate it, that Church Ritualism and Freemasonry have sprung from the same source, and developed hand in hand. But as Masonry, even with its errors and later innovations, was far nearer the [Page 14] truth than the Church, the latter began very soon her persecutions against it. Masonry was, in its origin, simply archaic Gnosticism, or early esoteric Christianity; Church Ritualism was, and *is*, *exoteric paganism*, pure and simple — *remodelled*, we do not say *reformed*. Read the works of Ragon, a Mason who forgot more than the Masons of today know. Study, collating them together, the casual but numerous statements made by Greek and Latin writers, many of whom were Initiates, most learned Neophytes and partakers of the Mysteries. Read finally the elaborate and venomous slanders of the Church Fathers against the Gnostics, the Mysteries and their Initiates — and you may end by unravelling the truth. It is a few philosophers who, driven by the political events of the day — tracked and persecuted by the fanatical Bishops of early Christianity — who had yet neither fixed ritual nor dogmas nor Church — it is these Pagans who founded the latter. Blending most ingeniously the truths of the Wisdom-religion with the exoteric fictions so dear to the ignorant mobs, it is *they* who laid the first foundations of ritualistic Churches and of the Lodges of modern Masonry. The latter fact was demonstrated by Ragon in his ANTE-OMNLAE of the modern Liturgy compared with the ancient Mysteries, and showing the rituals conducted by the early Masons; the former may be ascertained by a like comparison of the Church canonicals, the sacred vessels, and the [Page 15] festivals of the Latin and other Churches, with those of the pagan nations. But Churches and Masonry have widely diverged since the days when both were one. If asked how a profane can know it, the answer comes: ancient and modern Freemasonry are an obligatory study with every Eastern Occultist.

Masonry, its paraphernalia and modern innovations (the Biblical Spirit in it especially) notwithstanding, does good both on the moral and physical planes — or did so, hardly ten years ago, at any rate. [Since the origin of Masonry. the split between the British and American Masons and the French “Grand Orient” of the “Widow’s Sons” is the first one that has ever occurred. It bids fair to make of these two sections of Masonry a Masonic Protestant and a Roman Catholic Church, as far as regards ritualism and brotherly love, at all events.] It was a true *ecclesia* in the sense of fraternal union and mutual help, the only *religion* in the world, if we regard the term as derived from the word *religare*, “to bind” together, as it made all men belonging to it “brothers” — regardless of race and faith. Whether with the enormous wealth at its command it could not do far more than it does now, is no business of ours. We see no visible, crying evil from this institution, and no one yet, save the Roman Church, has ever been found to show that it did any harm. Can *Church* Christianity say as much? Let ecclesiastical and profane history answer the question. For one, it has divided the whole mankind into Cains and Abels; it has slaughtered millions in the name of her God — the Lord of *Hosts*, truly, the ferocious Jehovah Sabbaoth — and instead of giving an impetus to civilization, the favourite boast of her followers — it has retarded it during the long and weary Mediaeval ages. It is only under the relentless assaults [Page 16] of science and the revolt of men trying to free themselves, that it began to lose ground and could no longer arrest enlightenment. Yet has it not softened, as claimed, the “barbarous spirit of Heathendom”? We say no, most emphatically. It is Churchianity with its *odium theologicum*, since it could no longer repress human progress, which infused its lethal spirit of intolerance, its ferocious selfishness, greediness, and cruelty into modern civilization under the mask of *cant* and meek Christianity. When were the Pagan Caesars more bloodthirsty or more coolly cruel than are the modern Potentates and their armies? When did the millions of the Proletariat starve as they do now? When has mankind shed more tears and suffered than at present? Yes; there was a day when the Church and Masonry were

one. These were centuries of intense moral reaction, a transitional period of thought as heavy as a nightmare, an age of strife. Thus, when the creation of new ideals led to the apparent pulling down of the old fanes and the destruction of old idols, it ended in reality with the rebuilding of those temples out of the old materials, and the erection of the same idols under new names. It was a universal rearrangement and whitewashing — but only skin deep. History will never be able to tell us — but tradition and judicious research do — how many semi-Hierophants and even high Initiates were forced to become renegades in order to ensure the survival of the secrets of [Page 17] Initiation. Praetextatus, pro-consul at Achaia, is credited with remarking in the fourth century of our era, that “to deprive the Greeks of the sacred mysteries *which bind together the whole mankind* was equivalent to depriving them of their life”. The Initiates took perhaps the hint, and thus joining *volens nolens* the followers of the new faith, then becoming all domineering, acted accordingly. Some hellenized Jewish Gnostics did the same; and thus more than one “Clemens Alexandrinus” — a convert to all appearance, an ardent Neo-Platonist and the same philosophical pagan at heart — became the instructor of ignorant Christian Bishops. In short the convert *malgré lui* blended the two external mythologies, the old and the new, and while giving out the compound to the masses, kept the sacred truths for himself.

The kind of Christians they made may be inferred from the example of Synesius, the Neo-Platonist. What scholar is ignorant of the fact, or would presume to deny, that the favourite and devoted pupil of Hypatia — the virgin-philosopher, the martyr and victim of the infamous Cyril of Alexandria — had not even been baptised when first offered by the bishops of Egypt the Episcopal See of the Ptolemaïd? Every student is aware that, when finally baptised, after having accepted the office proffered, it was so *skin-deep* that he actually signed his consent only after his conditions had been complied with and his future privileges guaranteed. What the chief clause [Page 18] was, is curious. It was a *sine quâ non* condition that he was to be allowed to abstain from professing the (Christian) doctrines, that he, the new Bishop, did not believe in! Thus, although baptised and ordained in the degrees of deaconship, priesthood, and episcopate, he never separated himself from his wife, never gave up his Platonic philosophy, nor even his sport so strictly forbidden to every other bishop. This occurred as late as the fifth century.

Such transactions between initiated philosophers and ignorant priests of reformed Judaism were numerous in those days. The former sought to save their “mystery-vows” and personal dignity, and to do so they had to resort to a much-to-be-regretted compromise with ambition, ignorance, and the rising wave of popular fanaticism. They believed in Divine Unity, the ONE or Solus, unconditioned and unknowable; and still they consented to render public homage and pay reverence to Sol, the Sun moving among his twelve apostles, the twelve signs of the Zodiac, *alias* the twelve Sons of Jacob. The *hoi polloi* remaining ignorant of the former, worshipped the latter, and in them, their old time-honoured gods. To transfer that worship from the solar-lunar and other cosmic deities to the Thrones, Archangels, Dominions, and Saints was no difficult matter; the more so since the said sidereal dignities were received into the new Christian Canon with their old names almost unchanged. Thus, while, during Mass, the “Grand [Page 19] Elect” reiterated, under his breath, his absolute adherence to the Supreme Universal Unity of the “incomprehensible Workman”, and pronounced in solemn and loud tones the “Sacred Word” (now substituted by the Masonic “Word at low breath”), his assistant proceeded with the chanting of the *Kyriel* of names of those inferior sidereal beings whom the masses were made to worship. To the profane catechumen, indeed, who had offered prayers but a few months or weeks before to the Bull Apis and the holy Cynocephalus, to the sacred ibis and the hawk-headed Osiris, St. John's eagle [It is an error to say that John the Evangelist became the patron Saint of Masonry only after the sixteenth century, and it implies a double mistake. Between John the “Divine”, the “Seer” and the writer of *Revelation*, and John the Evangelist who is now shown in company of the Eagle, there is a

great difference, as the latter John is a creation of Irenaeus, along with the fourth gospel. Both were the result of the quarrel of the Bishop of Lyons with the Gnostics, and no one will ever tell what was the real name of the writer of the grandest of the Evangels. But what we do know is, that the Eagle is the legal property of John, the author of the *Apocalypsis*, written originally centuries B.C., and only re-edited, before receiving canonical hospitality. This John, or *Oannes*, was the accepted patron of all the Egyptian and Greek Gnostics (who were the early Builders or *Masons* of "Solomon's Temple", as, earlier, of the Pyramids) from the beginning of time. The *Eagle* was his attribute — the most archaic of symbols — being the Egyptian Ah, the bird of Zeus, and sacred to the Sun with every ancient people. Even the Jews adopted it among the Initiated Kabalists, as "the symbol of the *Sephirah Tiph-e-reth*, the spiritual Aether or air", says Mr. Myer's "*Qabbalah*". With the Druids the eagle was the symbol of the Supreme Deity, and again a portion of the cherubic symbol. Adopted by the pre-Christian Gnostics, it could be seen at the foot of the *Tau* in Egypt, before it was placed in the Rose-Croix degree at the foot of the Christian cross. Pre-eminently the bird of the Sun, the Eagle is necessarily connected with every solar god, and is the symbol of every seer who looks into the astral light, and sees in it the shadows of the Past, Present, and Future, as easily as the Eagle looks at the Sun.] and the divine Dove [Page 20] (witness of the Baptism while hovering over the Lamb of God), must have appeared as the most natural development and sequence to his own national and sacred zoology, which he had been taught to worship since the day of his birth.

IV

It may thus be shown that both modern Freemasonry and Church ritualism descend in direct line from initiated Gnostics, Neo-Platonists, and renegade Hierophants of the Pagan Mysteries, the secrets of which they have lost, but which have been nevertheless preserved by those who would not compromise. If both Church and Masons are willing to forget the history of their true origin, the Theosophists are not. They repeat: Masonry and the three great Christian religions are all inherited goods. The "ceremonies and passwords" of the former, and the prayers, dogmas, and rites of the latter, are travestied copies of pure Paganism (copied and borrowed as diligently by the Jews), and of Neo-Platonic Theosophy. Also, the "passwords" used even now by Biblical Masons and connected with "the tribe of Judah", "Tubal-Cain", and other Zodiacal dignitaries of the Old Testament, are the Jewish aliases of the ancient gods of the heathen mobs, not of the gods of the Hierogrammatists, the interpreters of the true mysteries. That which follows proves it well. The good Masonic [Page 21] Brethren could hardly deny that in name they are Solicoles indeed, the worshippers of the Sun in heaven, in whom the erudite Ragon saw such a magnificent symbol of the G.A.O.T.U. — which it surely is. Only the trouble he had was to prove — which no one can — that the said G. A. O. T. U. was not rather the *Sol* of the small exoteric fry of the *Pro-fanes* than the *Solus* of the High *Epoptai*. For the secret of the fires of Solus, the spirit of which radiates in the "Blazing Star", is a Hermetic secret which, unless a Mason studies true Theosophy, is lost to him for ever. He has ceased to understand now, even the little indiscretions of Tshuddi. To this day Masons and Christians keep the Sabbath sacred, and call it the "Lord's" day; yet they know as well as any that both *Sunday*, and the *Sonntag* of Protestant England and Germany, mean the *Sun-day* or the *day of the Sun*, as it meant 2,000 years ago.

And you, Reverend and good Fathers, Priests, Clergymen, and Bishops, you who so charitably call theosophy "idolatry" and doom its adherents openly and privately to eternal perdition, can you boast of one single rite, vestment, or sacred vessel in church or temple that does not come to you from paganism? Nay, to assert it would be too dangerous, in view, not only of history, but also of the confessions of your own priestly craft.

Let us recapitulate if only to justify our assertions. [Page 22]

“Roman sacrificators had to confess before sacrificing”, writes du Choul. “The priests of Jupiter donned a tall, square, black cap (Vide Armenian and Greek modern priests), the head dress of the *Flamines*. The black *soutane* of the Roman Catholic priest is the black *hierocoraces*, the loose robe of the Mithraic priests, so-called from being *raven* coloured (raven, *corax*). The King-Priest of Babylon had a golden seal-ring and slippers kissed by the conquered potentates, a white mantle, a tiara of gold, to which two bandelets were suspended. The popes have the seal-ring and the slippers for the same use; a white satin mantle bordered with golden stars, a tiara with two bejewelled bandelets suspended to it, etc., etc. The white linen alb (*alba vestis*) is the garment of the priests of Isis; the top of the heads of the priests of Anubis was shaven (Juvenal), hence the *tonsure*; the *chasuble* of the Christian “*Father*” is the copy from the upper garment of the Phoenician priest-sacrificers, a garment called *calasiris*, tied at the neck and descending to their heels. The stole comes to our priests from the female garment worn by the Galli, the male nautches of the temple, whose office was that of the Jewish Kadashim; (Vide II Kings 23:7, for the true word) their *belt of purity* (?) from the ephod of the Jews, and the *Isiac* cord; the priests of Isis being vowed to chastity. (Vide Ragon, for details.)

The ancient pagans used *holy water* or lustrations to purify their cities, fields, temples, and men, just as it is being done now in Roman Catholic countries. Fonts stood at the door of every temple, full of lustral water and called *favisses* and *aquiminaria*. Before sacrificing, the pontiff or the *curion* (whence the French *curé*), dipping a laurel branch into the lustral water, sprinkled with it the pious congregation assembled, and that which was then termed *lustrica* and *aspergilium* is now called sprinkler (or [Page 23] *goupillon*, in French). The latter was with the priestesses of Mithra the symbol of the Universal *lingam*. Dipped during the Mysteries in lustral milk, the faithful were sprinkled with it. It was the emblem of Universal fecundity; hence the use of the holy water in Christianity, a rite of phallic origin. More than this; the idea underlying it is purely occult and belongs to ceremonial magic. Lustrations were performed by fire, sulphur, air, and water. To draw the attention of the celestial gods, *ablutions* were resorted to; to conjure the nether gods away, *aspersion* was used.

The vaulted ceilings of cathedrals and churches, Greek or Latin, are often painted blue and studded with golden stars, to represent the canopy of the heavens. This is copied from the Egyptian temples, where solar and star worship was performed. Again, the same reverence is paid in Christian and Masonic architecture to the Orient (or the Eastern point) as in the days of Paganism. Ragon described it fully in his destroyed volumes. The *princeps porta*, the door of the World, and of the “King of Glory”, by whom was meant at first the Sun, and now his human symbol, the Christ, is the door of the Orient, and faces the East in every church and temple. [Except, perhaps, the temples and chapels of dissident Protestants, which are built anywhere, and used for more than one purpose. In America I know of chapels hired for fairs and shows, and even theatres; to-day a chapel, the day after sold for debts, and fitted for a gin shop or a public house. I speak of chapels, of course, not of Churches and Cathedrals.] It is through this “door of life” — the solemn pathway, through which the daily entrance of the luminary into the *oblong square* [A Masonic term; a symbol of the Arks of Noah, and of the Covenant, of the Temple of Solomon, the Tabernacle, and the Camp of the Israelites, all built as “oblong squares”. Mercury and Apollo were represented by oblong cubes and squares, and so is Kaaba, the great temple at Mecca.] of the earth or the Tabernacle of the [Page 24] Sun is effected every morning — that the “newly born” babe is ushered, and carried to the baptismal font; and it is to the left of this edifice (the gloomy north whither start the “apprentices”, and where the candidates got their *trial by water*) that now the fonts, and in the days of old the well (piscinas) of lustral waters, were placed in the ancient churches, which had been pagan fanes. The altars of heathen Lutetia were buried, and

found again under the choir of Notre-Dame of Paris, its ancient lustral wells existing to this day in the said Church. Almost every great ancient Church on the Continent that antedates the Middle Ages was once a pagan temple in virtue of the orders issued by the Bishops and Popes of Rome. Gregory the Great (Platine *en sa Vie*) commands the monk Augustine, his missionary in England, in this wise: "Destroy the idols, never the temples! Sprinkle them with holy water, place in them relics, and let the nations worship in the places they are accustomed to". We have but to turn to the works of Cardinal Baronius, to find in the year XXXVIth of his Annals his confession. The Holy Church, he says, *was permitted to appropriate the rites and ceremonies used by the pagans in their idolatrous cult*, since she (the Church) *expiated them by her consecration!* In the *Antiquités Gauloises* (Book II, Ch. 19) by Fauchet, we read that the Bishops of France adopted [Page 25] and used the pagan ceremonies in order to convert followers to Christ.

This was when Gaul was still a pagan country. Are the same rites and ceremonies used now in Christian France, and other Roman Catholic countries, still going on in grateful remembrance of the pagans and their gods?

V

Up to the fourth century the churches knew of no altars. Up to that date the altar was a table raised in the middle of the temple, for purposes of *Communion*, or fraternal repasts (the Caena, as mass was originally said in the evening). In the same way now the table is raised in the "Lodge" for Masonic Banquets, which usually close the proceedings of a Lodge and at which the resurrected Hiram Abifs, the "Widow's Sons", honour their toasts by fining, a Masonic mode of transubstantiation. Shall we call their banquet tables *altars*, also? Why not? The altars were copies from the *ara maxima* of pagan Rome. The Latins placed square and oblong stones near their tombs, and called them *ara*, altar; they were consecrated to the gods *Lares* and *Manes*. Our altars are a derivation from these square stones, another form of the boundary stones known as the gods *Termini* — the Hermeses, and the Mercuries, whence *Mercurius quadratus*, *quadriiceps*, *quadrifrons*, [Page 26] etc., etc., the *four-faced gods*, whose symbols these square stones were, from the highest antiquity. The stone on which the ancient kings of Ireland were crowned was such an "altar". Such a stone is in Westminster Abbey, endowed, moreover, with a voice. Thus our altars and thrones descend directly from the priapic boundary stones of the pagans — the gods *termini*.

Shall the church-going reader feel very indignant if he is told that the Christians adopted the *pagan way* of worshipping in a temple, only during the reign of Diocletianus? Up to that period they had an insurmountable horror for altars and temples, and held them in abomination for the first two hundred and fifty years of our era. These primitive Christians were Christians indeed; the moderns are more pagan than any ancient idolators. The former were the *Theosophists* of those days; from fourth century they became Helleno-Judaic Gentiles minus the philosophy of the Neo-Platonists. Read what Minutius Felix says in the third century to the Romans:

You fancy that we (Christians) conceal that which we worship because *we will have neither temples nor altars*? But what image of God shall we raise, since Man is himself God's image? What temple can we build to the Deity, when the Universe, which is Its work, can hardly contain It? How shall we enthrone the power of such Omnipotence in a single building? Is it not far better to consecrate to the Deity a temple in our heart and spirit?

But then the Christians of the type of Minutius Felix had in their mind the commandment [Page 27] of the Master-Initiate, not to pray in the synagogues and temples as the hypocrites

do, "that they may be seen of men". (Matthew 6:5.) They remembered the declarations of Paul, the Apostle-Initiate, the "Master Builder" (I Corinthians 3:10), that MAN was the one temple of God, in which the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, dwelleth. (Ibid.); they obeyed the truly Christian precepts, whereas the modern Christians obey but the arbitrary canons of their respective Churches, and the rules of their Elders. "Theosophists are notorious Atheists", exclaims a writer in the "*Church Chronicle*". "Not one of them is ever known to attend divine service . . . the Church is obnoxious to them"; and forthwith uncorking the vials of his wrath, he pours out their contents on the infidel, heathen F.T.S.. The modern Churchman stones the Theosophist as his ancient forefather, the Pharisees of the "Synagogue of the Libertines" (Acts 6:9) stoned Stephen, for saying that which even many Christian Theosophists say, namely that "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Ibid. 48); and they "suborn men" just as these iniquitous judges did (Ibid. II) to testify against us.

Forsooth, friends, you are indeed the righteous descendants of your predecessors, whether of the colleagues of Saul, or of those of Pope Leo X, the cynical author of the ever famous sentence: "How useful to us this fable of Christ", "*Quantum nobis prodest hac fabula Christi!*" [Page 28]

VI

The "Solar Myth" theory has become in our day stale — *ad nauseam* — repeated as we hear it from the four cardinal points of Orientalism and Symbolism, and applied indiscriminately to all things and all religions, except Church Christianity and State-religion. No doubt the Sun was throughout the whole antiquity and since days immemorial the symbol of the Creative Deity — with every nation, not with the Pärsis alone; but so he is with the Ritualists. As in days of old, so it is now. Our central star is the "Father" for the pro-fanes, the Son of the ever unknowable Deity for the *Epoptai*. Says the same Mason, Ragon, "The Sun was the most sublime and natural image of the Great Architect, as the most ingenious of all the allegories under which the moral and good man (the true *sage*) had ever endowed infinite and limitless *Intelligence*". Apart from the latter assumption, Ragon is right; for he shows this symbol gradually receding from the ideal so represented and conceived, and becoming finally from a symbol the original, in the minds of his ignorant worshippers. Then the great Masonic author proves that it is the *physical* Sun which was regarded as both the Father and the Son by the early Christians.

"Oh, initiated Brethren", he exclaims, "can you forget that in the temples of the existing religion a large lamp [Page 29] burns night and day? It is suspended in front of the chief altar, the depository of the ark of the *Sun*. Another *lamp* burning before the altar of the virgin-mother is the emblem of the light of the *moon*. Clemens Alexandrinus tells us that the Egyptians were the first to establish the religious use of the lamps. . . . Who does not know that the most sacred and terrible duty was entrusted to the Vestals? If the Masonic temples are lighted with three astral lights, the sun, the moon and the geometrical star, and with three vital lights, this hierophant and his two Episcopos (Wardens, in French *Surveillants*), it is because one of the Fathers of Masonry, the learned Pythagoras, ingenuously suggests that we should not speak of divine things without a light. Pagans celebrated a festival of lamps called *Lampadophories* in honour of Minerva, Prometheus, and Vulcan. But Lactantius and some of the earliest fathers of the new faith complained bitterly of this pagan introduction of lamps in the Churches; "If they deigned", writes Lactantius, "*to contemplate that light which we call the Sun*, they would soon recognise that God has no need of their lamps". And Vigilantius adds: 'Under the pretext of religion the Church established a Gentile custom of lighting vile candles. while the Sun is there illuminating us with a thousand lights. Is it not a

great honour for the Lamb of God (the sun thus represented), *which placed in the middle of the throne (the Universe) fills it with the radiance of his Majesty?* Such passages prove to us that in those days the primitive Church worshipped The Great Architect of the World in its image the Sun, sole of its kind". (*The Mass and its Mysteries*, pp. 19 and 20.)

Indeed, while Christian candidates have to pronounce the Masonic oath turned to the East and that their "Venerable" keeps in the Eastern corner, because the Neophytes were made to do the same during the Pagan Mysteries, the Church has, in her turn, preserved the identical rite. During the High [Page 30] Mass, the High-Altar (*ara maxima*) is ornamented with the Tabernacle, or the *pyx* (the box in which the Host is kept), and with six lighted tapers. The esoteric meaning of the *pyx* and contents — the symbol of the Christ-Sun — is that it represents the resplendent luminary, and the six tapers the six planets (the early Christians knowing of no more), three on his right and three on his left. This is a copy of the seven branched candlestick of the synagogue, which has an identical meaning. "*Sol est Dominus Meus*". "The Sun is my Lord!" exclaims David in Psalm 95, translated very ingeniously in the authorized version by "The Lord is a great God", "a great King *above* all Gods" (v. 3), or planets truly! Augustin Chalis is more sincere in *Philosophie des Religions Comparées* (Vol. II, p. 18), when he writes:

All are devils (demons), on this Earth, save the God of the Seers (Initiates) the sublime IAO; and if in Christ you see aught than the SUN, then you adore a devil, a phantom such as are all the children of night.

The East being the cardinal point whence arises the luminary of the Day, the great giver and sustainer of life, the creator of all that lives and breathes on this globe, what wonder if all the nation of the Earth worshipped in him the visible agent of the invisible Principle and Cause; and that *mass* should be said in the honour of him who is the giver of *mensis* or "harvest". But, between worshipping the ideal as a *whole*, and the physical symbol, a part [Page 31] chosen to represent that whole and the ALL, there is an abyss. For the learned Egyptian, the Sun was the "eye" of Osiris, not Osiris himself; the same for the learned Zoroastrians. For the early Christians the Sun became *the* Deity, *in toto*; and by dint of casuistics, sophistry, and dogmas not to be questioned, the modern Christian churches have contrived to force even the educated world to accept the same, while hypnotising it into a belief that their god is the one living true Deity, the maker of, *not the Sun* — a demon worshipped by the "heathen". But what may be the difference between a wicked demon, and the anthropomorphic God, *e.g.*, as represented in Solomon's *Proverbs*? That "God", unless poor, helpless, ignorant men call upon him, when their "fear cometh as desolation" and their "destruction as a whirlwind", threatens them in such words as these "I will laugh at your calamities, I will mock when your fear cometh!" (Prov. 1:27) Identify this God with the great Avatar on whom the Christian legend is hung; make him one with that true Initiate who said, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted": and what is the result? Such identification alone quite sufficient to justify the fiendish joy of Tertullian, who laughed and rejoiced at the idea of his *infidel* next of kin roasting in hell-fire; the advice of Hieronymus to the Christian convert to trample over the body of his pagan mother, if she seeks to prevent him *leaving her for ever* to [Page 32] follow Christ; and it makes of all the Church tyrants, murderers, and *omnes gentes* of the Inquisition, the grandest and noblest exemplars of practical Christianity that have ever lived!

THE ROOTS OF RITUALISM IN CHURCH AND MASONRY

by H.P. Blavatsky

Part 2

February 1920

Reprinted from *Lucifer* Volume IV - May 1889

Theosophical Publishing House
Adyar, Madras, India

VII

The ritualism of primitive Christianity — as now sufficiently shown — sprang from ancient Masonry. The latter was, in its turn, the offspring of the, then, almost dead Mysteries. Of these we have now a few words to say.

It is well known that throughout antiquity, besides the popular worship composed of the dead-letter forms and empty exoteric ceremonies, every nation had its secret cult known to the world as the MYSTERIES. Strabo, one among many others, warrants for this assertion. (*Georg, lib. 10*) No one received admittance into them save those prepared for it by special training. The neophytes instructed in the upper temples were initiated into the final Mysteries in the crypts. These instructions were the last surviving heirlooms of archaic wisdom, and it is [Page 2] under the guidance of high Initiates that they were enacted. We use the word “enacted” purposely; for the oral instructions at low breath were given only in the crypts, in solemn silence and secrecy. During the public classes and general teachings, the lessons in cosmogony and theogony were delivered in allegorical representation, the *modus operandi* of the gradual evolution of Kosmos, worlds, and finally of our earth, of gods and men, all was imparted in a symbolical way. The great public performances during the festivals of the Mysteries, were witnessed by the masses and the personified truths worshipped by the multitudes — blindly. Alone the high Initiates, the Eoptae, understood their language and real meaning. All this, and so far, is well known to the world of scholars.

It was a common claim of all the ancient nations that the real mysteries of what is called so unphilosophically, *creation*, were divulged to the elect of our (fifth) race by its first dynasties of *divine* Rulers — gods in flesh, “divine incarnations”, or Avatars, so called. The last Stanzas, given from the Book of Dzyan in *The Secret Doctrine* (Vol. II, p. 21), speak of those who ruled over the descendants “produced from the holy stock”, and . . . “who re-descended, who made peace with the fifth (race) who taught and instructed it”.

The phrase “made peace” shows that there had been a previous quarrel. The fate of the Atlanteans in our philosophy, and that of the *prediluvians* in the [Page 3] Bible, corroborates the idea. Once more — many centuries before the Ptolemies — the same abuse of the

sacred knowledge crept in amongst the initiates of the Sanctuary in Egypt. Preserved for countless ages in all their purity, the sacred teachings of the gods, owing to personal ambition and selfishness, became corrupted again. The meaning of the symbols found itself but too often desecrated by unseemly interpretations, and very soon the Eleusinian Mysteries remained the only ones pure from adulteration and sacrilegious innovations. These were in honour of (Ceres) Demeter, or Nature, and were celebrated in Athens, the flowers of the intellect of Asia Minor and Greece being initiated thereinto. In his 4th Book, Zosimus states that these Initiates embraced *the whole of mankind*; [Says Cicero in *De Nat. Deorum*, lib. I : "Omitto Eleusinem sanctam illam et augustam; ubi initiantur gentes orarum ultime".] while Aristides calls the Mysteries the *common temple of the earth*.

It is to preserve some reminiscence of this "temple", and to rebuild it, if need be, that certain elect ones among the initiated began to be set apart. This was done by their High Hierophants in every century, from the time when the sacred allegories showed the first signs of desecration and decay. For the great Elusinia finally shared the same fate as the others. Their earlier excellency and purpose are described by Clement of Alexandria who shows the greater Mysteries divulging the secrets and the mode of [Page 4] construction of the Universe, this being the beginning, the end and the ultimate goal of human knowledge, for in them was shown to the initiated Nature and all things as they are. (Strom. 8.) This is the Pythagorean Gnosis, Epictetus speaks of these instructions in the highest terms: "All that is ordained therein was established by our masters for the instruction of men and the correction of our customs." (Apud Arrian. Dissert. lib. cap. 21.) Plato asserts in the *Phaedo* the same: the object of the Mysteries was to re-establish the soul in its primordial purity, or *that state of perfection from which it had fallen*.

VIII

But there came a day when the Mysteries deviated from their purity in the same way as the exoteric religions. This began when the State bethought itself, on the advice of Aristogeiton (510 B.C.), of drawing from the Eleusinia a constant and prolific source of income. A law was passed to that effect. Henceforth, no one could be initiated without paying a certain sum of money for the privilege. That boon which could hitherto be acquired only at the price of incessant, almost superhuman effort, toward virtue and excellency, was now to be purchased for so much gold. Laymen — and even priests themselves — while [Page 5] accepting the desecration lost eventually their past reverence for the inner Mysteries, and this led to further profanation of the Sacred Science. The rent made in the veil widened with every century; and more than ever the Supreme Hierophants, dreading the final publication and distortion of the most holy secrets of nature, laboured to eliminate them from the inner programme, limiting the full knowledge thereof but to the few.

It is those *set apart* who soon became the only custodians of the divine heirloom of the ages.

Seven centuries later, we find Apuleius, his sincere inclination toward magic and the mystical notwithstanding, writing in his *Golden Age* a bitter satire against the hypocrisy and debauchery of certain orders of *half-initiated* priests. It is through him also, that we learn that in his day (second century A.D.) the Mysteries had become so universal that persons of all ranks and conditions, in every country, men, women, and children all were *initiated*! Initiation had become as necessary in his day as baptism has since become with the Christians; and, as the latter is now, so the former had become then — *i.e.*, meaningless, and a purely dead-letter ceremony of mere form. Still later, the fanatics of the new religion laid their heavy hand on the Mysteries.

The *Epoptae*, they “who see things as they are” disappeared one by one, emigrating into regions [Page 6] inaccessible to the Christians. The *Mystae* (from *Mystes* “or veiled”) “they who see things only as they appear” remained very soon, alone, sole masters of the situation.

It is the former, the “set apart”, who have preserved the true secrets; it is the *Mystae*, those who knew them only superficially, who laid the first foundation stone of modern Masonry; and it is from this half pagan, half converted primitive fraternity of Masons that Christian ritualism and most of dogmas were born. Both the *Epoptae* and the *Mystae* are entitled to the name of Masons: for both carrying out their pledges to, and the injunction of their long departed Hierophants and “Kings” *rebuilt*, the *Epoptae*, their “lower”, and the *Mystae*, their “upper temples. For such were the irrespective appellations in antiquity, and are so to this day in certain regions. Sophocles speaks in the *Electra* (Act 2) of the foundations of Athens — the site of the Eleusinian Mysteries — as being the “sacred edifice of the gods”, *i.e.*, built by the gods. Initiation was spoken of as “walking into the temple”, and “cleaning”, or *rebuilding the temple* referred to the *body* of an initiate on his last and supreme trial. (Vide St. John's Gospel, 2:19). The esoteric doctrine, also, was sometimes called by the name of “temple” and popular exoteric religion, by that of “city”. To *build a temple* meant to found an esoteric school; to “build a city temple” signified [Page 7] to establish a public cult. Therefore, the true surviving “Masons” of the *lower Temple*, or the *crypt*, the sacred place of initiation, are the only custodians of the true *Masonic* secrets now lost to the world. We yield willingly to the modern Fraternity of Masons the title of “Builders of the higher Temple”, as the *à priori* superiority of the comparative adjective is as illusionary as the blaze of the burning bush of Moses itself in the Templars' Lodges.

IX

The misunderstood allegory known as the Descent into *Hades*, has wrought infinite mischief. The exoteric “fable” of Hercules and Theseus descending *into the infernal regions*; the journey thither of Orpheus, who found his way by the power of his lyre (*Ovid Metam.*); of Krishna, and finally of Christ, who “descended into Hell and the third day rose again from the dead” — was twisted out of recognition by the non-initiated *adapters* of pagan rites and transformers thereof, into Church rites and dogmas.

Astronomically, this *descent into hell* symbolized the Sun during the autumnal equinox when abandoning the higher sidereal regions, there was a supposed fight between him and the Demon of Darkness who got the best of our luminary. Then the Sun was imagined to undergo a temporary death and to descend into the infernal regions. But mystically, [Page 8] it typified the initiatory rites in the crypts of the temple, called the Underworld. Bacchus, Herakles, Orpheus, Asklepios and all the other visitors of the crypt, all descended into hell and ascended thence on the third day, for all were initiates and “Builders of the lower Temple”. The words addressed by Hermes to Prometheus, chained on the arid rocks of the Caucasus — *i. e.*, bound by ignorance to his physical body and devoured therefore by the vultures of passion — apply to every neophyte, to every *Chrestos* on trial. “To such labours look thou for no termination until the (or a) god shall appear as a substitute in thy pangs and shall be willing to go both to gloomy Hades and to the murky depths around Tartarus.” (*Aeschylus: Prometheus*, 1027, ff.) They mean simply that until Prometheus (or man) could find the “God”, or Hierophant (the Initiator) who would willingly descend into the crypts of initiation, and walk around Tartarus with him, the vulture of passion would never cease to gnaw his vitals.[The dark region in the crypt, into which the candidate under initiation was supposed to throw away for ever his worst passions and lusts. Hence the allegories by Homer, Ovid, Virgil, etc., all accepted literally by the modern scholar. Phlegethon was the

river in Tartarus into which the initiate was thrice plunged by the Hierophant, after which the trials were over and the new man born anew. He had left in the dark stream the old sinful man for ever, and issued on the third day, from Tartarus, as an *individuality*, the *personality* being dead. Such characters as Ixion, Tantalus, Sisyphus, etc., are each a personification of some human passion.] Aeschylus as a pledged Initiate could say no more; but Aristophanes less pious, or more daring, divulges [Page 9] the secret to those who are not blinded by a too strong preconception, in his immortal satire on Heracles' *descent into Hell*. (*Frogs*.) There we find the chorus of the "blessed ones" (the initiated), the Elysian Fields, the arrival of Bacchus (the god Hierophant) with Herakles, the reception with lighted torches, emblems of new LIFE and RESURRECTION from the darkness of human ignorance to the light of spiritual knowledge — eternal LIFE. Every word of the brilliant satire shows the inner meaning of the poet:

Wake, burning torches ... for thou comest
Shaking them in thy hand, lacche,
Phosphoric *star of the nightly rite*.

All such final initiations took place during the night. To speak, therefore, of anyone as having descended into Hades, was equivalent in antiquity to calling him a *full Initiate*. To those who feel inclined to reject this explanation, I would offer a query. Let them explain, in that case, the meaning of a sentence in the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*. What can the poet mean, if not that which is asserted above, when introducing the aged Anchises in the Elysian fields, he makes him advise Aeneas his son, to travel to Italy . . . where he would have to fight in Latium, a rude and barbarous people; therefore, he adds, before you venture there "*Descend into Hades*", *i. e.*, get yourself initiated.

The benevolent clericals, who are so apt to send us on the slightest provocation to Tartarus and the [Page 10] infernal regions, do not suspect what good wishes for us the threat contains; and what a holy character one must be before one gets into such a sanctified place.

It is not pagans alone who had their Mysteries. Bellarmin (*De Eccl. Triumph*. lib. 2, cap. 14) states that the early Christians adopted, after the example of pagan ceremonies, the custom of assembling in the church during the nights preceding their festivals, to hold vigils or "wakes". Their ceremonies were performed at first with the most edifying holiness and purity. But very shortly after that, such immoral abuses crept into these "assemblies" that the bishops found it necessary to abolish them. We have read in dozens of works about the licentiousness in the pagan religious festivals. Cicero is quoted (*de Leg*. lib. 2, cap. 15) showing Diagondas, the Theban, finding no other means of remedying such disorders in the ceremonies than the suppression of the Mysteries themselves. When we contrast the two kinds of celebrations, however, the Pagan Mysteries hoary with age centuries before our era, and the Christian Agape and others in a religion hardly born and claiming such a purifying influence on its converts, we can only pity the mental blindness of its defenders and quote for their benefit Roscommon, who asks:

When you begin with so much pomp and show,
Why is the end so little and so low? [Page 11]

X

Primitive Christianity — being derived from the primitive Masonry — had its grip. pass-words, and degrees of initiation. "Masonry" is an old term but it came into use very late in our era.

Paul calls himself a “master-builder” and he was one. The ancient Masons called themselves by various names and most of the Alexandrian Eclectics, the Theosophists of Ammonias Saccas and the later Neo-Platonists, were all virtually Masons.

They were all bound by oath to secrecy, considered themselves a Brotherhood, and had also their signs of recognition. The Eclectics or Philalatheians comprised within their ranks the ablest and most learned scholars of the day. as also several crowned heads. Says the author of *The Eclectic Philosophy*:

Their doctrines were adopted by pagans and Christians in Asia and Europe, and for a season everything seemed favourable for a general fusion of religious belief. The Emperors Alexander Severus and Julian embraced them. Their predominating influence upon religious ideas excited the jealousy of the Christians of Alexandria. The school was removed to Athens, and finally closed by the Emperor Justinian. Its professors *withdrew* to Persia, [And we may add, beyond, to India and Central Asia, for we find their influence everywhere in Asiatic countries.] where they made many disciples.

A few more details may prove perchance, interesting. We know that the Eleusinian Mysteries [Page 12] survived all others. While the secret cults of the minor gods such as the *Curates*, the *Dactyli*, the worship of Adonis, of the *Kabiri*, and even those of old Egypt had entirely disappeared under the revengeful and cruel hand of the pitiless Theodosius, [The murderer of the Thessalonians, who were butchered by this pious son of the Church.] the Mysteries of Eleusis could not be so easily disposed of. They were indeed the religion of mankind, and shone in all their ancient splendour if not in their primitive purity. It took several centuries to abolish them, and they could not be entirely suppressed before the year 396 of our era. It is then that the “Builders of the higher, or City Temple” appeared first on the scene and worked unrelentingly to infuse their rituals and peculiar dogmas into the nascent and ever fighting and quarrelling church.

The triple Sanctus of the Roman Catholic Mass is the triple S.S.S. of these early Masons, and is the modern prefix to their documents or “any written *balustre* — the initial of *Salutem*, or Health” as cunningly put by a Mason. “This triple masonic salutation is the most ancient among their greetings.” (Ragon.)

XI

But they did not limit their grafts on the tree of the Christian religion to this alone. During the [Page 13] Mysteries of Eleusis, wine represented Bacchus and Ceres — wine and bread, or corn. [Bacchus is certainly of Indian origin. Pausanias shows him the first to lead an expedition against India, and the first to throw a bridge over the Euphrates. “The cable which served to unite the two opposite shores being exhibited to this day”, writes this historian, “it being woven from vine-branches and trailings of ivy”. (X 29. 4.) Arrianus and Quintus-Curtius explained the allegory of Bacchus' birth from the thigh of Zeus, by saying that he was born on the Indian Mount *Meru* (from thigh). We are aware that Eratosthenes and Strabo believed the Indian Bacchus had been invented by flatterers to simply please Alexander, believed to have conquered India as Bacchus is supposed to have done. But on the other hand, Cicero mentions the god as a Son of Thyoné and Nisus; and Dionysus or means the god Dis from Mount Nys in India. Bacchus crowned with ivy, or Kissos, is Krshna, one of whose names was Kissen. Dionysus was pre-eminently the god who was expected to liberate the souls of men from their prisons of flesh — Hades and the human Tartarus, in one of its symbolical senses. Cicero calls Orpheus a son of Bacchus, and there is a tradition which not only makes Orpheus come from India (he being called dark, of tawny complexion) but identifies

him with Arjuna, the chela and adoptive son of Krshna. (Vide *Five Years of Theosophy*: “Was writing known before Pānini?”)] Now Ceres or Demeter was the female productive principle of the Earth; the spouse of Father Aether, or Zeus; and Bacchus, the son of Zeus-Jupiter, was his father manifested: in other words, Ceres and Bacchus were the personifications of Substance and Spirit, the two vivifying principles in Nature and on Earth. The hierophant Initiator presented symbolically, before the final *revelation* of the mysteries, wine and bread to the candidate, who ate and drank, in token that the spirit was to quicken matter: *i.e.* the divine wisdom of the Higher-Self was to enter into and take possession of his inner Self or Soul through what was to be revealed to him. [Page 14]

This rite was adopted by the Christian Church. The Hierophant who was called the “Father”, has now passed, part and parcel — *minus* knowledge — into the “Father” priest, who today administers the same communion. Jesus calls himself a vine and *his* “Father” the husbandman; and his injunction at the Last Supper shows his thorough knowledge of the symbolical meaning (*Vide infra*, note) of bread and wine, and his identification with the *logoi* of the ancients. “Whose eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life”. “This is a hard saying”, he adds. . . . “The words (*rhemata*, or arcane utterances) that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life”. They are; because “it is the Spirit that quickeneth”. Furthermore these *rhemata* of Jesus are indeed the arcane utterances of an *Initiate*.

But between this noble rite, as old as symbolism, and its later anthropomorphic interpretation, now known as transubstantiation, there is an abyss of ecclesiastical sophistry. With what force the exclamation — “Woe unto you lawyers. For *ye have taken away the key of knowledge*”, (and will not permit even now *gnosis* to be given to others); with what tenfold force, I say, it applies more now than then. Aye; that *gnosis*, “ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were (and are) entering ye prevented”, and still prevent. Nor has the modern priesthood alone laid itself open to this blame. Masons, the descendants, or at any rate the successors, of the [Page 15] “Builders of the upper Temple” during the Mysteries, they who ought to know better, will pooh-pooh and scorn any one among their own brethren who will remind them of their true origin. Several great modern Scholars and Kabalists, who are Masons, and could be named, received worse than the cold shoulder from their Brethren. It is ever the same old, old story. Even Ragon, the most learned in his day among all the Masons of our century, complains of it, in these words:

All the ancient narratives attest that the initiations in the days of old had an imposing ceremonial, and became memorable for ever through the grand truths divulged and the knowledge that resulted therefrom. And yet there are *some modern Masons, of half-learning*, who hasten to treat as charlatans all those who successfully remind of, and explain to them, these ancient ceremonies! (*Cours. Philos.* p. 87 note [2].)

XII

Vanitas vanitatum! Nothing is new under the sun. The “*Litanies of the Virgin Mary*” prove it in the sincerest way. Pope Gregory I, introduces the worship of the Virgin Mary and the Chalcedonian Council proclaim her the mother of God. But the author of the *Litanies* had not even the decency (or is it the brains?) to furnish her with any other than pagan adjectives and titles, as I shall presently show. Not a symbol, not a metaphor of this famous Litany, but belonged to a crowd of goddesses; all Queens, [Page 16] Virgins, or Mothers; these three titles applying to Isis, Rhea, Cybele, Diana, Lucifera, Lucina, Luna, Tellus, Latona triformis, Proserpina, Hecate, Juno, Vesta, Ceres, Leucothea, Astarte, celestial Venus and Urania, Alma Venus, etc., etc., etc.

Besides the primitive signification of trinity (the esoteric, or that Father, Mother, Son) does not this Western Trimurti (three faces) mean in the Masonic pantheon: "Sun, Moon, and the Venerable"? a slight alteration, forsooth, from the Germanic and Northern Fire, Sun and Moon.

It is the intimate knowledge of this, perchance, that made the Mason, J. M. Ragon describe his profession of faith thus:

For me the Son is the same as Horus, son of Osiris and Isis; he is the SUN who, every year redeems the world from sterility and the universal death of the races.

And he goes on to speak of the Virgin Mary's particular litanies, temples, festivals, masses and Church services, pilgrimages, oratories, Jacobins, Franciscans, vestals, prodigies, ex voto, niches, statues, etc., etc., etc.

De Maleville, a great Hebrew scholar and translator of Rabbinical literature, observes that the Jews give to the moon all those names which, in the Litanies, are used to glorify the Virgin. He finds in the *Litanies of Jesus*, all the attributes of Osiris — the Eternal Sun, and of Horus, the Annual Sun.

And he proves it. [Page 17]

Mater Christi is the mother of the Redeemer of the old Masons, who is the *Sun*. The *hoi polloi* among the Egyptians, claimed that the child, symbol of the great central star, Horus, was the Son of Osireth and Oseth, whose souls had *ensouled*, after their death, the *Sun* and the *Moon*. Isis became, with the Phoenicians, Astarte, the name under which they adored the Moon, personified as a woman adorned with horns, which symbolised the crescent. Astarte was represented at the autumnal equinox after her husband's (the Sun's) defeat by the Prince of Darkness, and descent into Hades, as weeping over the loss of her consort, who is also her son, as Isis does that of her consort, brother and son (Osiris-Horus). Astarte holds in her hand a cruciform stick, a regular cross, and stands weeping on the crescent moon. The Christian Virgin Mary is often represented in the same way, standing on the new moon, surrounded by stars and weeping for her son *juxta crucem lacrymosa dum pendebat filius* (See, *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*). Is not she the heiress of Isis and Astarte? asks the author.

Truly, and you have but to repeat the *Litany to the Virgin* of the Roman Catholic Church, to find yourself repeating ancient incantations to Adonaia (Venus), the mother of Adonis, the Solar god of so many nations; to Mylitta (the Assyrian Venus), goddess of Nature; to Alilat, whom the Arabs symbolized by the two lunar horns; to Selene, wife and sister of Helios, the Sun [Page18] god of the Greeks; or, to the *Magna Mater*, . . . *honestissima, purissima, castissima*, the Universal Mother of all Beings — because SHE IS MOTHER NATURE.

Verily is *Maria* (Mary) the Isis *Myrionymos*, the Goddess Mother of the ten thousand names! As the Sun was Phoebus, in the heaven, so he became Apollo, on earth, and Pluto in the still lower regions (after sunset); so the moon was Phoebe in heaven, and Diana on earth (Gaia, Latona, Ceres); becoming Hecate and Proserpine in Hades. Where is the wonder then, if Mary is called *regina virginum*, "Queen of Virgins", and *castissima* (most chaste), when even the prayers offered to her at the sixth hour of the morning and the evening are copied from those sung by the "heathen" Gentiles *at the same hours* in honour of Phoebe and Hecate? The verse of the "Litany to the Virgin", *stella matutina*, [The "Morning Star", or *Lucifer*, the name which Jesus calls himself in Rev. 22:16, and which becomes, nevertheless, the *name of the Devil*, as soon as a theosophical journal assumes it!] we are informed, is a faithful

copy of a verse from the litany of the *triformis* of the pagans. It is at the Council which condemned Nestorius that Mary was first titled as the “Mother of God”, *mater dei*.

In our next, we shall have something to say about this famous Litany of the Virgin, and show its origin in full. We shall cull our proofs, as we go along, from the classics and the moderns, and supplement the whole from the annals of religions as found in the Esoteric Doctrine. Meanwhile, we may add a few more [Page 19] statements and give the etymology of the most sacred terms in ecclesiastical ritualism.

XIII

Let us give a few moments of attention to the assemblies of the “Builders of the upper Temple” in early Christianity. Ragon has shown plainly to us the origin of the following terms:

(a) “The word 'mass', comes from the Latin *Messis* — 'harvest,' whence the noun *Messias*, 'he who ripens the harvest,' Christ, the Sun”.

(b) The word “Lodge” used by the Masons, the feeble successors of the Initiates, has its root in *loga*, (*loka*, in Sanskrit) a locality and a *world*; and in the Greek *logos*, the Word, a discourse; signifying in its full meaning “a place where certain things are discussed”.

(c) These assemblies of the *logos* of the primitive *initiated* masons came to be called *synaxis*, “gatherings” of the Brethren for the purpose of praying and celebrating the coena (supper) wherein only bloodless offerings, fruit and cereals, were used. Soon after these offerings began to be called *hostiae* — or sacred and pure *hosties* — in contrast to the impure sacrifices (as of prisoners of war, *hostes*, whence the word *hostage*), as the offerings consisted of the harvest fruits, the first fruits of *messis*, thence the word “mass”. Since no father of the Church mentions, as some scholars would have it, [Page 20] that the word mass comes from the Hebrew *missah* (*oblatum*, offering) one explanation is as good as the other. For an exhaustive enquiry on the word *missa* and *mizda*, see King's *Gnostics*, pp. 124, *et seq.*

Now the word *synaxis* was also called by the Greeks *agyrmos*, (a collection of men, assembly). It referred to initiation into the Mysteries. Both words — *synaxis* and *agyrmos* [Hesychius gives the name (*agyrmos*) to the first day of the initiation into the mystery of Ceres, goddess of harvest, and refers to it also under that of *Synaxis*. The early Christians called their mass, before this term was adapted, and the celebration of their mysteries — *Synaxis*, a word compounded from *sun* “with”, and *ago* “I lead”, whence, the Greek *synaxis* or an assembly] — became obsolete with the Christians, and the word *missa*, or mass, prevailed and remained. Theologians will have it, desirous as they are to veil its etymology, that the term messiah (*Messiah*) is derived from the Latin word *missus* (messenger, *the sent*). But if so, then again it may be applied as well to the Sun, the *annual* messenger, sent to bring light and new life to the earth and its products. The Hebrew word for Messiah, *mashiah* (anointed, from *mashah*, to anoint) will hardly apply to, or bear out the identity in the ecclesiastical sense; nor will the Latin *missa* (mass) derive well from that other Latin word *mittere*, *missum*, “to send”, or “dismiss”. Because the communion service — its heart and soul — is based on the consecration and oblation of the host or *hostia* (sacrifice), a wafer (a thin, leaf-like bread) representing the body of Christ in the Eucharist, [Page 21] and such wafer of flour is a direct development of the harvest or cereal offerings. Again, the primitive *masses* were *coenas* (late dinners or suppers), which, from the simple meals of Romans, who “washed, were anointed, and wore a *cenatory* garment” at dinner became consecrated meals in memory of the last Supper of Christ.

The converted Jews in the days of the Apostles met at their *synaxes*, to read the Evangels and their correspondence (Epistles). St. Justin (150 A.D.) tells us that these solemn assemblies were held on the day called *Sun* (Sunday, *dies magnus*), on which days there were psalms chanted — “collation of baptism with pure water and the *agape* of the holy *Coena* with bread and wine”. What has this hybrid combination of pagan Roman dinners, raised by the inventors of church dogmas to a sacred mystery, to do with the Hebrew *Messiah* “he who causes to go down into the pit” (or Hades), or its Greek transliteration *Messias*. As shown by Nork, Jesus “*was never anointed either as high priest or king*”, therefore his name of *Messias* cannot be derived from its present Hebrew equivalent. The less so, since the word anointed, or “rubbed with oil” a *Homeric term*, is *chris*, and *chrío*, both to *anoint the body with oil*. (See LUCIFER for Nov. 1887, “*The Esoteric Character of the Gospels.*”)

Another high Mason, the author of “*The Source of Measures*”, summarizes this *imbroglio* of the ages in a few lines by saying: [Page 22]

The fact is, there were two Messiahs: *One*, as causing himself to go down into the pit, for the salvation of the world; [From times immemorial every initiate before entering on his supreme trial of initiation, in antiquity as at the present time, pronounced these sacramental words . . . “And I swear to give up my life for the salvation of my brothers, which constitute the whole of mankind, if called upon, and to die in the defence of truth. . . .”] this was the Sun shorn of his *golden rays* and *crowned with blackened ones* (symbolizing this loss) as the thorns. *The other*, was the triumphant *Messiah*, mounted up to this *summit of the arch of Heaven*, personated as the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*. In both instances he had the cross. . . .”

At the *Ambarvales*, the festivals in honour of Ceres, the *Arval* (the assistant of the High Priest) clad in pure white, placing on the *hostia* (sacrificial heap) a cake of corn, water and wine, tasted the wine of *libation* and gave to all others to *taste*. The *oblation* (or offering) was then taken up by the High Priest. It symbolized the three kingdoms of Nature — the cake of corn (vegetable kingdom), the sacrificial vase or *chalice* (mineral), and the *pall* (the scarf-like garment) of the Hierophant, an end of which he threw over the oblation wine cup. This pall was made of pure white lamb skins.

The modern priest repeats, gesture for gesture, the acts of the pagan priest. He lifts up and offers the bread to be consecrated; blesses the water that is to be put in the chalice, and then pours the wine into it, [Page 23] incenses the altar, etc., etc., and going to the altar washes his fingers saying, “I will wash my hands *among the INNOCENT* and encompass thy altar, O Lord.” He does so, because the ancient and *pagan* priest did the same, saying, “I wash (with lustral water) my hands among the INNOCENT (the fully initiated Brethren) and encompass thy altar, O great Goddess” (Ceres). Thrice went the high priest round the altar loaded with offerings, carrying high above his head the chalice covered with the end of his snow-white lamb-skin. . . .

The consecrated vestment worn by the Pope, the pall, “*has the form of a scarf made of white wool, embroidered with purple crosses*”. In the Greek Church, the priest covers, with the end of the pall thrown over his shoulder, the chalice.

The High Priest of antiquity repeated thrice during the divine services his “*O redemptor mundi*” to Apollo ‘the Sun, his “*Mater Salvatoris*”, to Ceres, —the earth, his “*Virgo paritura*” to the Virgin Goddess etc., and pronounced *seven ternary commemorations*. (Hearken, O Masons!). The ternary number, so revered in antiquity, is as revered now, and is pronounced five times during the mass. We have three *introibo*, three *Kyrie eleison*, three

mea culpa, three *agnus dei*, three *Dominus Vobiscum*. A true masonic series! Let us add to this the three *et cum spiritu tuo*, and the Christian mass yields to us the same *seven triple commemorations*. [Page 24]

PAGANISM, MASONRY, and THEOLOGY — such is the historical trinity now ruling the world *sub rosa*. Shall we close with a Masonic greeting and say:

Illustrious officers of Hiram Abif, Initiates, and “Widow's sons”. The Kingdom of Darkness and ignorance is fast dispelling, but there are regions still untouched by the hand of the scholar, and as black as the night of Egypt. *Fratres, sobrii estote et vigilate!*