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CRP

Educational 5

The Quest

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Educational journal of C R P

Inner grail

An audio cd of this journey exists in French.

1. You start the quest of your inner grail on the bank of a powerful, tumultuous torrent.

On the other bank, a dark, dangerous forest shows its first trees.

An interdict, a taboo lingers on this part of nature, of your nature.

Today, you must enter the forbidden area; you owe it to yourself!

Follows the bank of the torrent, look for a passage.

...

On the way, you meet a group of your family and friends.

...

They greet you and ask you where you are going.

...

You answer them frankly.

...

Express yourself clearly, do not leave any ambiguity.

...

The expression of your parents' in your friends' eyes constitutes a clearly terrible answer.

It says that you are mad, that you must stay under cover, quietly, in the warmth of your usual environment.

...

One of them seems ready to do anything to stop you!

Note his appearance, if you think you know him.

Do not be afraid!

This person takes an interest in you.

The real nature of his feelings is not important for you at the moment.

Simply remember his ardent wish to stop you where you are.
You'll analyse the situation later.

Reassure your friends and your family.

Thank them all for the interest they take in you.

...

Resume your walk.

2.

During this walk, an inner voice tells you about the mystery of the forest;

...

of potential powers which could be put at your service on what you could discover.

...

Whatever your inner desire may be, you'll come back with the knowledge of at least one mystery, you'll exercise at least one power.

...

It would be wiser to choose the mystery and the power.

The aim of this choice is simple: you'll have to check if what you are going to receive at the end of the journey corresponds to your choice.

...

Note your aspiration if you have any.

3.

Your journey will transform you.

It takes you to new spaces.

You leave the world you are aware of to enter an unknown area where you have the strong, clear feeling to be secured.

You experience a profound joy, a feeling of elation.

...

A being may manifest its presence through a sign.

...

This being is called a spiritual guide, a guardian angel, an entity.

This problem of vocabulary disappears. You understand the name is not important when the presence reveals itself so neatly and by a sign as clear as the one he gives you.

Note this sign.

4

It is midday under the Sun.

Above the torrent, a rainbow reveals the presence of a kind of bridge, natural and supernatural at one and the same time.

The person who crosses it enters another world, which is specific to his/her spirit or his mind or heart.

...

The bridge is made of a structure of thin, crystal blades. This passage seems frightening to you, but you do not know if it is its beauty or what you take with upon which frightens you.

You dare step on the crystal and you find yourself on the other bank.

Facing you, a looking glass.

...

In the looking glass, a character has started moving. He/she is coming to you.

He/she looks like the character from the ninth arcane of the tarot, the hermit, wrapped in his cloak.

Although he is completely covered by his cloak, a strange feeling of love surges in your heart.

You are very fond of this character, whatever or whoever he/she may be.

He approaches you and uncovers him/herself.

...

You look in his face with surprise.

You know this person.

You deeply love him.

Note his appearance or his name.

5

A hand reaches out inviting you to get through the looking glass.

You dare seize it and find yourself on the other side of the looking glass.

This hand is a woman's hand, a beautiful woman, dignified, mature, and older than you are. Her voice moves your heart.

The question she asks you is straightforward and precise:

“What do you hope by undertaking this journey?”

You think about it quietly.

You answer as truly as you can.

The woman has listened to your answer attentively.
She charges you with a present destined to a child, her child,
who lives beyond the forest of shadows.
In exchange for this present and for news from her mother, the
child will help you.
You accept to take charge of a very beautiful stone and put it
into a pouch of purple cloth.
The lady also gives you an object designed to help you when
you have used up all your capacities but you can not overcome
an obstacle.
Note that object.

Make one step forward, have a glance behind you, in the
distance, the lights of your house are gleaming but you can't
see the way back.
And it is only then that you realise that your undertaking is
decisive.
You will go ahead!

6

In front of you, there is the forest of shadows, the deep, dark
forest.
You approach it bravely.

The more you go ahead, the more memories from your recent
past vanish.
Even your name disappears from your memory.
You become someone without a past and you still do not have
a future.
You are someone from the present.
Here and now, that is what's important for you.
As you were approaching, the forest seemed darker and
darker.

Since you have entered it, the light has been growing; you see the trees more and more distinctly around you.

You notice plants.

The forest is powerful, of a deep dark green.

The trees are lofty.

It is humid and warm, pleasantly warm.

The calmness makes the intense life of foliage neat; a life is seething amidst the branches, between the trees.

The calmness rustles in your ears.

You feel around you the peace of the forest.

You listen to the murmur of a swarming life.

The grass is tall, moist, and agreeably warm.

Trees and plants carry fruit.

You stop to look at one of them.

You pick it and eat it!

...

Memorise this fruit and the taste you have of it!

7

Birds take off from a tree. They give you a pleasant feeling.

Memorise the tree and the name or the appearance of a bird.

8

The forest gets used to your presence. Life takes back its natural rights.

Silence is not heavy any more.

You perceive noises, sounds, and songs.

Keep going; get to the heart of the forest.

Walk!

One step in front of the other, till you get a real feeling of tiredness.

Walk!

Walk again!

Further!

Go on! Go on!

At last you reach a clearing.

You rush to a fallen tree.

You put your forehead against its trunk.

You close your eyes.

It is time to take a rest.

This rest you deserve, this rest you must take if you want to pursue your quest.

Have a rest, relax.

Plunge into yourself.

Sleep if you think it is necessary.

Everything is calm, quiet.

You restore your strength.

Tiredness has gone.

You open your eyes and discover, three steps ahead of you, an animal watching over your sleep.

It is a male, handsome and powerful although young.

He approaches, touches you with his nose, urging you to leave again.

Get up and let's carry on.

Memorise the name of the animal or his appearance.

You stretch out your arms, your feet get stuck in a root and you bump into a tree.

You rub the lump on your forehead.

An idea surges in your mind: the stone!

You take it out of its pouch and it starts gleaming.

Around you, everything gets clear!

However, a feeling of fear grabs you in the stomach.

Round your heart, a little flame of faith, courage and hope starts dancing.

Your eyes guided by the light, your heart strengthened, you go ahead with determination and prudence.

It is dawn.

The forest becomes less dense.

You start climbing a slope becoming steeper and steeper.

With sunrise, you can put the green stone away.

In front of your eyes looms a mountain, covered with snow.

The sun, rising on the horizon, highlights all its features.

The mountain is breathtakingly beautiful.

However, it is a wall you'll have to climb.

Everything seems impossible to you; you are like a lost child.

The way back is impossible.

Fear comes once again; you feel it in your guts.

An animal comes.

It is a beautiful, healthy female.

Memorise her name or appearance.

10

Without thinking, you follow her with confidence.

If the confidence is complete, you might understand what the female tells you.

The wind is blowing; coldness takes you.
Your fingers are numb.
Your lungs are pumping like bellows.
Despair is at its highest.
The animal is guiding you.
Tears may roll on your cheeks. You are in a no-return situation.
Life has entangled you in its net.
You can escape but if you accept it, you must walk, walk and walk again.
The animal is awaiting you at the entrance to a cave.
She enters this dark space.
Out of breath, you follow her.
You crawl with hope in finding a little warmth, a shelter, and a peaceful spot.
Very quickly, you raise your face.
You are in a sort of tunnel, which allows you to cut through the mountain.
You reach a sheltered place.
You see a sandy vale at the foot of the mountain.
The sun is shining there brightly.
You run down the mossy slope scrambling safely to the bottom in a few minutes.

11

Down there, you lie in the warm sand.
You feel good.
It is warm outside. You are relaxed.
You eat the leftover. You take a rest. You benefit from the sunshine. Restored, refreshed, you take a path.
The snowy peaks reflect a dazzling sunlight. The warmth is increasing; you walk.
You cover your head. You take off a few clothes.

It is getting warmer and warmer. You walk.
Everything you carry seems to weigh tons.
Gradually, you leave all you have on. You walk, you fall, you crawl, and you go ahead.
To keep going, to go ahead: this is what makes you live.
Despair is far behind you. It is remained in the cold of the mountain.
Here, there is solitude.
Memories are far.
Solitude disappears.
There is the animal left.
Crawl, draw yourself, push yourself but go ahead!
Take a look at the animal, which has just kept one cloth.
Memorise the name or the shape of this garment.

12

Gurgling reaches your ears.
You are seized by a sensation of moistness: you'll be able to quench your thirst!
You make out a fountain. You rush. You feel the presence of a dreadful danger; the fountain has a keeper!
Terrible, horrible, he is watching you.
The look in his eyes is dreadful.
You take the time to observe him. He appears to be familiar to you.
You need water! You must get water!
An idea comes to your mind; you put it into practice.
The keeper of the fountain has already guessed.
You fail. You are pitiful.
He throws a straight sword at your feet.
He takes his out, it glitters.
You feel that death nearby.
To die of thirst or to die in combat... make a choice!

An inhuman cry escapes from your dry lips.

You take the offensive; your sword pointed right in front of you.

You attack.

There is nothing left anymore.

You feel a terrible pain; you undergo the iron, which pierces your heart.

You fall, head first into the fountain. Your lips touch the water. You drink heartily. Your thirst is quenched.

You fall at the bottom of the fountain; dream or reality, you do not know what is going on.

The body of the keeper becomes stiff, his heart pierced.

He is dead.

You raise your hand to your heart. You touch a deep wound. The keeper does not bleed. He seems to be shrinking little by little.

His face reminds you of someone.

You raise your head to the edge of the fountain.

You see a face identical to the keeper's.

You bathe in the water.

Later, you cover the body of the keeper with stones and minerals that are nearby, and which seems to be ready for that use.

Memorise the name or the appearance of the stones and the minerals.

13

You resume your quest.

On the way, you make out friendly faces. Your walk makes you step on the faces of those you love.

On your way, they become alive and follow you.

Do not turn around!

Go ahead!

In front of you, a crystal sphere.

Inside, coloured lines form a geometrical figure.

Go ahead!

You are invited in the sphere and placed at the centre of stone ready to receive you. A table is lighted.

Beings invite you to approach, to take a seat.

They break the bread and place a grain of salt on your tongue, they pass you a cup and you drink.

So you take a seat, you sit down with your brethren.

You live thorough your journey again.

Within an instant, you understand its reason.

You master the knowledge then offered to you.

You are at home with your friends.

You feel that you have gone deep in your inner self. If you wish to renew yourself, you'll be able to use all the elements, of which you keep the memory.

14

Coming back

You gradually become conscious again of the world around you.

You re-awaken. You are calm.

You are accorded with the world around you.

You are in harmony with yourself.

You can resume your activities with a clear consciousness.

You are in full possession of your capacities.

You are in control of yourself, of your spirit and body.

You know that all your usual capacities can be increased.

You will take this wonderful trip again, if you felt it was necessary.

You will work on your aura or on your chakras as soon you feel it necessary.

For the time being, today's work is finished, you are in full knowledge of your being, available to people, to things, and to yourself.

From now on, you may study the different elements you have taken back from your wonderful trip.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE GRAAL LEGEND

BY ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE

I.

THE INTIMATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF SUBSURFACE MEANING.

THE study of a great literature should begin like the preparation for a royal banquet, not without some solicitude for right conduct in the King's palace- which is the consecration of motive- and not without recollection of that source from which the most excellent gifts derive in their season to us all. Surely the things of earth are profitable only in so far as they assist us towards the things which are eternal. In this respect there are many helpers, even as the sands of the sea. The old books help us, perhaps above most things, and among them the old chronicles and the great antique legends. If the hand of God is in history it is also in folklore. We can scarcely fail of our term, since lights, both close at hand and in the unlooked-for places, kindle everywhere about us. It is difficult to say any longer that we walk in the Shadow of Death when the darkness is sown with stars.

Now, there are a few legends which may be said to stand forth among the innumerable traditions of humanity, wearing upon them the external signs and characters of some secret or mystery within them which belongs, as it would seem, rather to eternity than to time. They are in no sense connected with one another- unless indeed by certain roots which are scarcely in time and place- and yet, by a suggestion which is deeper than any suggestion of the senses, it would appear as if each were appealing to each, one bearing testimony to another, and all recalling all. They might be broken fragments of some

primitive revelation which, except in these legends, has passed out of written records and far from the memory of man. The fullness of their original design may be, and sometimes is, reconstructed from age to age, but the result bears always, and that of necessity, the tincture of its particular period, reflecting the first intention sometimes in a glass darkly and sometimes in a crystal brightly, so that it is less or more, according to the mind of the age. To the class of which I am speaking belongs the Graal Legend, which in all its higher aspects may be included among the legends of the soul. Perhaps I should say rather that, when it is properly understood, **the Graal is not a legend but a personal history.**

It will be intelligible from this one statement that I am not putting forward a thesis for the instruction of scholarship, which is otherwise and fully equipped, and it may be desirable to make it plain from the beginning that my offering to the consideration of the literature is intended for those who have either found their place within the sanctuary of the mystic life or are at least in the outer circles. I take up the subject where it has been left by the students of folklore and by all that which might term itself authorized scholarship.

“Ut adeptis appareat me illis parem et fratrem,” I have made myself acquainted with the criticism of the cycle and I am familiar with the cycle itself. It is with the texts, however, that we shall be concerned, or at least more especially, and I approach them from a new standpoint. As to thls, it win be better to specify from the outset its various particulars as follows:

(I) the appropriation of certain myths and legends which are held to be pre-Christian in the root-matter, and their penetration by an advanced form of Christian Symbolism carried to a particular term;

(2) the evidence of three fairly distinct sections or schools, the diversity of which is less, however, in the fundamental part of their subject than in the extent and mode of its development;

(3) the connexion of this mode and of that form with other schools of symbolism, the evolution of which was going on at the same period as that of the Graal literature;

(4) the close analogy in respect of the root-matter between the catholic literature of the Holy Graal and that which is connoted by the term *Mysticism*;

(5) the traces through Graal romance and other coincident literatures of a hidden school in Christianity which, because it is an expression that has been used for over a century, I shall continue to call the *Secret Church*, though it predicates an instituted office that, I think, scarcely belongs to the unmanifested company with which it will be seen that I am concerned. Perhaps, within the admitted forms of expression, the idea corresponds more closely with that which is understood by the school of the prophets, though the term only describes a certain highly advanced state by one of the gifts which may be taken to belong thereto. This, I should add, is on an express assumption that the gift has little connexion with the external meaning of prophecy; it is not the power of seeing forward, but rather of sight within. In subjects of this kind, as in other subjects, the greater naturally includes the lesser, it being of minor importance to discern, for example, the coming of Christ in a glass of vision than to understand, either before or after, the vital significance of that coming. I mention this instance because it enables me to say, on the authority of my precursors, that it was out of the secret school, or company which had secured its election, that the Christ came at His season. The Graal romances are not documents of this school put forward by the external way, but are its rumours at a distance. They are not authorized; nor are they stolen; they

have arisen, or the consideration of the Hidden Church follows from their consideration as something in the intellectual order connected therewith. From this point of view it is possible to collect out of the general body of the literature what I should term its intimations of subsurface meaning into a brief schedule, as follows:

- (a) The existence of a clouded sanctuary;
- (b) a great mystery;
- (c) a desirable communication which, except under certain circumstances, cannot take place;
- (d) suffering within and sorcery without;
- (e) supernatural grace which does not possess efficacy on the external side;
- (f) healing which comes from without, carrying in most cases all the signs of insufficiency and even of inhibition;
- (g) in fine, that which is without enters within and takes over the charge of the mystery, but it is either removed altogether or goes into deeper concealment- the outer world profits only by the removal of a vague enchantment. The unversed reader may not at the moment follow the specifics of this schedule, but if the allusions awaken his interest I can promise that they shall be made plain as we proceed.

II.

THE LITERATURE WHICH EMBODIES THE LEGEND.

The mystery of the Graal is a word which came forth out of Galilee. The literature which enshrines this mystery, setting forth the several quests which were instituted on account of it, the circumstances under which it was from time to time discovered and, in fine, its imputed removal, with all involved

thereby, is one of such considerable dimensions that it may be properly described as large. This notwithstanding, there is no difficulty in presenting its broad outlines so briefly that if there be any one who is new to the subject, he can be instructed sufficiently for my purpose even from the beginning. It is to be understood, therefore, that the Holy Graal is, excepting in the German version of the legend, represented invariably as that vessel in which Christ celebrated the Last Supper and consecrated for the first time the elements of the Eucharist. According to the legend, its next use was to receive the blood from the wounds of Christ when His body was taken down from the Cross, or alternatively, from the side which was pierced by the spear of Longas. Under circumstances which are variously recounted, this vessel, its content included, was carried westward under safe guardianship, coming in fine to Britain and there remaining in the hands of successive keepers. In the days of King Arthur, the prophet and magician Merlin assumed the responsibility of carrying the legend to its term, with which object he brought about the institution of the Round Table, and the flower of Arthurian chivalry set out to find the sacred vessel. In the quests which followed, the knighthood depicted in the greater romances has become a mystery of ideality, and nothing save its feeble reflection could have been found on earth. The quests were to some extent preconceived in the mind of legend, and although a few of them were successful, that which followed was the removal of the Holy Graal. The companions of the quest asked, as one may say, for bread, and to those who were unworthy there was given the stone of their proper offence, but to others the spiritual meat which passes all understanding.

That this account instructs the uninitiated person most imperfectly will be obvious to any one who is acquainted with

the great body of the literature, but, within the limits to which I have restricted it intentionally, I do not know that if it were put differently, it would be put better or more in harmony with the general sense of the romances.

The places of the legend, its reflections and its rumours, are France, England, Germany, Holland, Italy, Spain and Wales. France and England were united in respect of their literature during the Anglo-Norman period, and when this period was over England contributed nothing to the Graal cycle except renderings of French texts and one compilation therefore. It should be further remembered that, according to the mind of scholarship, several of the Anglo-Norman texts are not extant in their original form, but have been edited and harmonised. Germany had an indigenous version of the legend, combined, by its own evidence, with a French source which is now unknown. The Dutch version is comparatively an old compilation, also from French sources; Italy is represented only by translations from the French, and these were the work of *Rusticien de Pise*; the inclusion of Spain is really a question of liberality, for there is no Spanish version of the Graal legend as such, or it exists only in the rare allusions of a certain romance of Merlin, which again was originally in French. As regards Wales, there is also no indigenous literature of the Graal legend, as it was understood by the French romancers, but there are certain primeval traditions and bardic remanents which are held to be the root-matter of the whole cycle, and two at least of the questing knights are found among the *Mabinogion* heroes. In the thirteenth century and later, the legend, as we now have it, was carried across the Marches, but it is represented by translations only. It follows that the Graal literature, as I understand the term, belongs solely to France and Germany. To these restrictions of place may be added a restriction of time, for nothing which is now

extant can be dated prior to 1175, and after "circa" 1230 we have only translations and digests. The allocation of individual texts to particular dates within this period is, in certain cases, inferential and in some entirely speculative. It will be understood, therefore, that in presenting the subjoined tabulation I am not concerned with rigid priority in time but rather with affinities of intention, by which certain texts fall into defined groups. The literature may in this manner be classified into sections as follows:--

(A) The Lesser Histories or Chronicles of the Holy Graal, otherwise, the Cycle of Robert de Borron, in which is comprised:

- (I) The Metrical Romance of Joseph of Arimathea;
- (2) the Lesser Holy Graal, which is a prose version of the metrical romance as above;
- (3) the Early Prose Merlin, which represents a lost metrical romance, or more accurately a poem of which 500 lines alone remain extant;
- (4) the Didot Perceval, so called after the designation of the only manuscript by which it is known; it presents one version of the search after the Holy Graal, as distinguished from its legendary history and the connexions thereof.

The characteristics in common of these four romances, by which they are grouped into a cycle, are:

- (I) The idea that certain secret words were transmitted from Apostolic times and were carried from East to West;
- (2) the succession of Brons as Keeper of the Holy Graal immediately after Joseph of Arimathea.

(B) The Greater Chronicles of the Holy Graal, comprising:

- (I) The Saint Graal, or Joseph of Arimathea, called also the first branch of the Romances of the Round Table and the Grand or Greater Holy Graal;

- (2) the later prose romances of Merlin, being that which, because it is more widely diffused, has been sometimes termed the Vulgate, and that which is known as the Huth Merlin, following the designation of the only extant manuscript;
- (3) the great prose Lancelot;
- (4) the great prose Perceval le Gallois, an alternative version of the quest, known also in English as the High History of the Holy Graal;
- (5) the Quest of the Holy Graal, called also the last book of the Round Table, containing the search and achievement of Galahad. From my standpoint this is the quest “par excellence”.

It should be understood that the great prose Perceval and the great quest of Galahad exclude one another, so that they stand as alternatives in the tabulation. The characteristics of this cycle are:

- (I) The succession of a second Joseph as Keeper of the Holy Graal immediately after his father, Joseph of Arimathea, and during the latter's lifetime, this dignity not being conferred upon Brons, either then or later;
- (2) the substitution of a claim in respect of apostolical succession for that of a secret verbal formula.

(C) The Conte del Graal, otherwise, the Perceval le Gallois of Chretien de Troyes, being the metrical romance which comprises the quests of Perceval and Gawain. It was successively continued by several later poets, some of whose versions are alternative and exclusive of one another. The Conte del Graal is the largest document of the Anglo-Norman cycle.

- (D) The German cycle, comprising:
 - (I) The Parsifal of Wolfram von Eschenbach;
 - (2) the Titurel of Albrecht von Schaffenberg;

- (3) *Diu Crone* ly Henrich von dem Turlin;
- (4) the *Lancelot* of Ulrich du Zazikhoven.

The dominant text of the German cycle is that of Wolfram, which is almost generically distinct from the histories and quests offered by the Anglo-Norman versions. At the moment it will be sufficient to say that it represents the Holy Graal as in the custody of a knightly company which, both expressly and by inference, recalls the order of the Knights Templar. As a final consideration in respect of all the cycles, it may be added that the romantic literature of chivalry diminishes in consequence and interest in proportion as it is removed from the Arthurian motive and period. It does not matter how remote the connexion may be, there is still the particular atmosphere. The Carlovingian cycle in comparison is mere indiscrimination and violence. There are no books in the manner of chivalry to compare with “*The Morte d'Arthur*, *The High History of Perceval*” and “*The Quest of the Haut Prince Galahad after the Holy Graal*.”

III.

THE IMPLICITS OF THE MYSTERY.

There are several literatures which exhibit with various degrees of plainness the presence of that subsurface meaning to which I have referred in respect of the Graal legends; but there as here, so far as the outward text is concerued, it is suggested rather than affirmed.

This additional sense may underlie the entire body of a literature, or it may be merely some concealed intention or a claim put forward evasively. The subsurface significance of the Graal legends belongs mainly to the second class. It is from this point of view that my departure is here made, and if

it is a warrantable assumption, some at least of the literature will, expressly or otherwise, be found to contain these elements in no uncertain manner. As a matter of fact, we shall find them, though it is rather by the way of things which are implied, or which follow as inferences, but they are not for this reason less clear or less demonstrable. The implicits of the Graal literature are indeed more numerous than we should expect to meet with at the period in books of the western world. I believe them to exceed, for example, those which are discoverable in the alchemical writings of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, though antecedently we might have been prepared to find them more numerous in the avowedly secret books of Hermetic adepts. In a single section of a paper which is short of necessity I can deal only with those which are most important, leaving to a later period any additional examples which may transpire as the inquiry proceeds.

The explicit in chief of that cycle which I have termed the Lesser Histories or Chronicles of the Holy Graal is that certain secret words were communicated to Joseph of Arimathea by Christ Himself, and that these must remain in reserve, being committed from Keeper to Keeper by the oral method only. On the other hand, the implicit of Robert de Borron's poem resides in the question as to what he understood by their office. In the Lesser Holy Graal the implicit of the metrical romance passes into actual expression, and it becomes more clear in this manner that the secret words were those used by the custodians of the Holy Graal in the consecration of the elements of the Eucharist.

When the Greater Holy Graal was produced as an imputed branch of Arthurian literature, there is no need to say that the Roman Pontiff was then as now, at least in respect of his claim, the first bishop of Christendom, and, by the evidence of

tradition at least, he derived from St. Peter, who was “*episcopus primus et pontifex primordialis*.” This notwithstanding, the romance attributes the same title to a son of Joseph of Arimathea, who is called the Second Joseph, and here is the first suggestion of a concealed motive therein. The Greater Holy Graal and the metrical romance of De Borron are the texts in chief of their particular cycles, and it does not follow, or at least in all cases, that their several continuations or derivatives are extensions of the implicits which I have mentioned. In the first case, the early prose Merlin has an implied motive of its own which need not at the moment detain us, and the Didot Perceval is manifestly unauthentic as a sequel, by which I mean that it does not represent the mind of the earlier texts, though it has an importance of its own and also its own implicits. On the other hand, in what I have termed the Greater Chronicles of the Holy Graal there is, if possible, a more complete divergence in respect of the final document, and I can best explain it by saying that if we can suppose for a moment that the Grand Saint Graal was produced in the interests of a Pan-Britannic Church, or alternatively of some secret school of religion, then the Great Prose Quest, or Chronicle of Galahad, would represent an interpretation on the part of the orthodox church to take over the literature. At the same time, the several parts of each cycle under consideration belong thereto and cannot be located otherwise.

The further divisions under which I have scheduled the body-general of the literature, and especially the German cycle, will be considered at some length in their proper place, when their explicit and implied motives will be specified; for the present it will be sufficient to say that they do not put forward the claims with which I am now dealing, namely, the secret formula in respect of the De Borron cycle and a super-

apostolical succession in respect of the Greater Holy Graal, with that which derives therefrom. As regards both claims, we must remember that although we are dealing with a department of romantic literature, their content does not belong to romance; the faculty of invention in stories is one thing, and I think that modern criticism has made insufficient allowance for its spontaneity, yet through all the tales of chivalry it worked within certain lines. It would not devise secret Eucharistic words or put forward strange claims which almost make void the Christian apostolate in favour of some unheard of succession communicated directly from Christ after Pentecost. We know absolutely that this kind of machinery belongs to another order. If it does not, then the apocryphal gospels were imbued with the romantic spirit, and the explanation of Manichean heresy may be sought in a flight of verse.

I suppose that what follows from the claims has not entered into the consciousness of official scholarship, because it is otherwise concerned, but it may have entered already into the thought of those among my readers whose preoccupations are similar to my own, and I will now state it in a summary manner. As the secret words of consecration, the true words which have to be pronounced over the sacramental elements so that they may be converted into the true Eucharist, have, by the hypothesis, never been expressed in writing, it follows that since the Graal was withdrawn from the world, together with its custodians, the Christian Church has had to be content with what it has, namely, a substituted sacrament. And as the super-apostolical succession, also by the hypothesis, must have ceased from the world when the last Keeper of the Graal followed his vessel into heaven, the Christian Church has again been reduced to the ministration of some other and apparently lesser succession.

If I were asked to adjudicate on the value of such claims, I should say that the doctrine is the body of the Lord and its right understanding is the spirit. Whosoever therefore puts forward a claim on behalf of secret formula in connexion with the Eucharistic rite has forgotten the one thing needful- that there are valid consecrations everywhere. The question of apostolical succession is in the same position, because the truly valid transmissions are those of grace itself, which communicates from the source of grace direct to the soul; and the essence of the sacerdotal office is that those who have received supernatural life should assist others so to prepare their ground that they may also in due season, but always from the same source, become spiritually alive. It remains, however, that the implicits with which I have been dealing are actually the implicits in chief of the Graal books, and that they do not make for harmony with the teaching of the orthodox churches does not need stating. From whence therefore and with what intention were they imported into the body of romance? Before this question can be answered we shall have to proceed much further in the consideration of the literature, but my next section can deal only with a preliminary clearance of the ground.

As a conclusion to the present part, let me add that any scheme of interpretation which fails to account for the claim to a super-efficacious Eucharistic consecration and a super-apostolical succession accounts for very little that is important in the last resource. It is in this sense that I take up the subject at the point where it has been left by scholarship, considering these problems in the light of all that can be gathered from the texts themselves, from certain coincident literatures, and from the theological and historical position of the Celtic Church, as a preliminary to the consideration in fine which I have already indicated by my reference to a secret school existing within

the Church, or at least to be approached intellectually more readily from this direction.

IV.

SOME ANTECEDENTS IN FOLKLORE.

The beginnings of literature are like the beginnings of life—questions of antecedents which are past finding out, and perhaps they do not signify vitally on either side, because the keys of all mysteries are to be sought in the comprehension of their term, rather than in their initial stages. Modern scholarship lays great and indeed exclusive stress on the old Celtic antecedents of the Graal literature, and on certain Welsh and other prototypes of the Perseval Quest in which the sacred vessel does not appear at all. As regards these affiliations, whether Welsh, English, or Irish, I do not think that sufficient allowance has been made for the following facts:

- (a) That every fiction and legend depends, as already suggested, from prior legend and fiction;
- (b) that the antecedents are both explicit and implicit, intentional or unconscious, just as in these days we have wilful and undesigned imitation;
- (c) that the persistence of legends is by the way of their transfiguration. We have done nothing to explain the ascension of the Graal to heaven and the assumption of Galahad when we have ascertained that some centuries before there were myths about the Cauldron of Ceridwen or that of the Dagda, any more than we have accounted for Christianity if we have ascertained, and this even indubitably, that some ecclesiastical ceremonial is an adaptation of pre-Christian rites. Here, as in so many other instances, the essence of everything resides in the intention. If I possess the true

apostolical succession, then, «ex hypothesi» at least, I do not the less consecrate the Eucharist if I use the Latin rite, which expresses the act of Christ in the past tense, or some archaic oriental rite, which expressed it in the present.

There is in any case no question as to the Graal antecedents in folklore; and I should be the last to minimize their importance after their own kind, just as I should not abandon the official Church because I had been received into the greater Church which is within. I believe personally that the importance has been unduly magnified because it has been taken by scholarship for the all in all of its research. But there is plenty of room for every one of the interests, and as that which I represent does not interfere with anything, which has become so far vested, I ask for tolerance regarding it. My position is that the old myths were taken over for the purposes of Christian symbolism, under the influence of a particular but not an expressed motive, and it was subsequently to this appropriation that they assumed importance. It is, therefore, as I may say, simply to clear the issues that I place those of my readers who may feel concerned with the subject in possession of the bare elements which were carried from pre-Christian time into the Graal mythos, as follows:--

I. We hear of an Irish legend concerning the Cauldron of the Dagda, from which no company ever went away unsatisfied. It was one of the four talismans which a certain godlike race brought with them when they first came into Ireland. As the particular talisman in question, though magical, was not spiritual, it is useless to our purpose; but it connects with the palmary hallow of the Graal mystery, because that also was food-giving, though this property was the least of its great virtues, just as the stone of transmutation by alchemy was classed among the least possessions of the Rosicrucian Fraternity.

2. There is the Cauldron of Bendigeid Vran, the son of Llyr, in one of the old Welsh Mabinogion, the property of which, says one story, is that if a man be slain to-day and cast therein, tomorrow he will be as well as he ever was at the best, except that he will not regain his speech. He remains, therefore, in the condition of Perceval when that hero of the Graal stood in the presence of the mystery with a spell of silence upon him. Except in so far as the Cup of the Graal legend concerns a mystery of speech and its suppression, it is difficult to trace its correspondence with this cauldron, which I should mention, however, came into Wales from Ireland. It so happens that institutions of analogy are made sometimes by scholarship on warrants which they would be the first to repudiate if the object, let us say, were to establish some point advanced by a mystic. I do not reject them, and I do not intend to use similar comparisons on evidence which appears so slight; but I must place on record that the derivation, if true, is unimportant, even as it is also unimportant that Adam, who received the breath of life from the Divine Spirit, had elements of red earth which entered into his material composition. The lights which shine upon the altar are not less sacramental lights because they are also earthly wax; and though the externals are bread and wine, the Eucharist is still the Eucharist.

In addition to analogies like those which I have just cited, there are two versions of the quest or mission of Perceval into which the mystery of the Graal does not enter as a part. In their extant forms they are much later than any of the Graal literature. One is the story of Peredur the son of Evrawc in the Welsh Mabinogion, and the other is the English metrical romance of *Syr Percyvelle*. The Welsh Mabinogi is like the wild world before the institution of the sacraments, and from any literary standpoint it is confused and disconcerting. Scholars have compared it to the *Lay of the Great Fool*, and I

think that the analogy obtains, not only in the Welsh fable, but also in such masterpieces of nature-born poetry as that of Chretien de Troyes. On the other hand, the English poem is a thing of no importance except in respect of its connections, and as to these it will be sufficient to say that even scholarship values it only for its doubtful traces of some early prototype which is lost.

The antecedents of the Graal legend in folklore have been a wide field for patient research, nor is that field exhausted; it has also offered an opportunity for great speculations which go to show that the worlds of enchantment are not worlds which have past like the Edomite kings; but as I know that there was a king afterwards in Israel, I have concluded at this point to abandon those quests, which for myself and those whom I represent are without term or effect, and to hold only to the matter in hand, which is the development of a sacramental and mystical cosmos in literature out of the wild elements which strove one with another, as in the time of chaos so also in pre-Christian Celtic folklore.

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**MYSTERIES OF THE HOLY GRAAL
IN MANIFESTATION AND
REMOVAL**

By ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE

I

THE INSTITUTION OF THE HALLOWS

IT is a very curious heaven which stands around the infancy of romance-literature, and more than one warrant is required to constitute a full title for the interpretation of the strange signs and portents which are seen in some of its zones. The academies of official learning are consecrated places, and those who have graduated in other schools, and know well that they hold the higher authority, must be the first to recognize and respect the unsleeping vigilance and patience of students who are their colleagues and brothers in a different sphere. In the study of archaic literature, the external history of the texts and the criticism thereto belonging are in the hands of official scholarship, and its authority is usually final; but the inward spirit of the literature is sometimes an essence which escapes the academical process. For example, the implicits of certain books belonging to the cycle of the Holy Graal, as I have endeavoured to express them, would seem to have eluded learning; but any school of criticism which decides that these books do not put forward extraordinary claims of the evasive kind, and do not so far contain the suggestion of an interior meaning, are comparable to those who should say that the effect does not presuppose a cause, and this of necessity. According to those Lesser Histories which I have connected with the name of Robert de Borron, the secret of the Graal, signifying the super-substantial nourishment of man, was

communicated by Christ to His chosen disciple Joseph of Arimathaea, who, by preserving the body of the Master after the Crucifixion, became an instrument of the Resurrection. He laid it in the sepulchre, and thus sowed the seed whence issued the archnatural body. On Ascension Day this was removed from the world, but there remained the Holy Vessel, into which the blood of the natural body had been received by Joseph; strangely endued with the virtues of the risen Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost, it sustained him, both spiritually and physically, during forty years of imprisonment; and it was a sign of saving grace, instruction and all wonder to the great company which he led subsequently westward. He committed it in fine to another keeper, by whom it was brought into Britain, and there, or elsewhere, certain lesser hallows were added to the hallow-in-chief, and were held with it in the places of concealment. Those which we meet with more frequently are four in number, but the mystery is really one, since it is all assumed into the Cup. It is understood that for us at least this Cup is a symbol, seeing that the most precious of all vessels are not made with hands.

It is in such sense that the true soul of philosophy is a cup which contains the universe. We shall understand also the ministry of material sustenance, sometimes attributed to the Holy Graal, after another manner than can be presumed within the offices of folklore. It is for this reason that the old fable concerning the Bowl of Plenty,

as incorporated by the Graal Mystery, assumes a profound meaning. Some things are taken externally; some are received within; but the food of the body has analogies with that of the soul. So much may be said at the moment of certain aspects which encompass the literature of the Graal, as the hills stand round Jerusalem. The four Hallows are the Cup, the Lance, the

Sword and the Dish, paten or patella- these four, and the greatest of these is the Cup.

As all the hallows are therefore, in a certain sense, reducible to a single hallow, so there are four epochs in the history of the Sacred Vessel, and about these there is one question into which they are resolved. The first epoch in the history is concerned with the origin of the Vessel; the second gives us the place and circumstances of its partial manifestation; the third tells us of things within and without which led to its removal or recession; and the fourth epoch deals ostensibly with its departure. The texts therefore purport to provide the complete history of the Graal, including whence it came and whither it has gone. In the present article I shall deal with these four epochs, regarded as the institution of the Hallows, the hereditary keepers of the Graal, the enchantments of Britain in connexion with a wounded keeper; and, lastly, the close of those times which the texts term adventurous, since when there has been silence on earth in respect of the Holy Vessel. If there is a secret intention pervading the entire literature, it must be held to reside in these epochs; their consideration should manifest it in part, and should enable us to deal, at the close of the whole research, with the final problem, being that which is really signified by the departure of the Graal.

Each of the Hallows has its implied mystery, besides that which appears openly in its express nature, and as we know that the mysteries of God are mysteries of patience and compassion, we shall be prepared to find in those of the Graal legend that even their offices of judgment are formularies of concealed mercy. They are therefore both declared and undeclared, that is to say, understood; and as there are certain Hallows which only appear occasionally, so there are suggestions and inferences concerning others which do not

appear at all. The Lance, as I have said, is that which was used the Roman soldier Longis to pierce the side of Christ at the Crucifixion, or it is this at least according to the general tradition. Of the Sword there are various stories: it is (a) that which was used to behead St. John the Baptist, in which case we can understand its place as a sacred object; (b) that of the King and Prophet David, committed by Solomon to a wonderful ship which went voyaging and voyaging throughout the ages, till it should be seen by Galahad, the last scion of the Royal House of Israel; or (c) it is simply an instrument preserved in connexion with a legend of vengeance, in which case it was brought over from folklore and is nothing to the purpose of the Graal.

The Dish is more difficult to specify, because its almost invariable appearance in the pageant of the high procession is accompanied by no intelligible explanation concerning it, and although it has also its antecedents in folklore, its mystic explanation, if any, must be sought very far away. Like the rest of the Hallows, it is described with many variations in the different books. It may be a salver of gold and precious stones, set on a silver cloth and carried by two maidens, a goodly plate of silver, or a little golden vessel, and this simply, except in the great prose *Perceval* which, as it multiplies the Hallows so it divides their ministry; but here, as elsewhere, the Dish does not apparently embody the feeding properties which are one aspect of the mystery. As to these, in speaking of everything shortly, which I am compelled to do, I can state only that what was filled was the heart of man and what was refected was the entire soul. At the close of our studies we shall find a better explanation concerning it than that of antecedents in folklore, though it will acknowledge these antecedents.

II

THE HEREDITARY KEEPERS OF THE HALLOWS.

The true legitimacies are for the most part in exile, or otherwise with their rights in abeyance. The real canons of literature can be uttered only behind doors, or in the secrecy of taverns. The secrets of the great orthodoxies are very seldom communicated, even to epopts on their advancement. The highest claims of all are not so much wanting in warrant as wanting those spokesmen who are willing to utter them. We shall not be surprised therefore to find that the custodians of the Holy Graal, which was a mystery of all secrecy, "there were no sinner can be," despite the kingly titles ascribed to them, abode in the utmost seclusion.

Let us seek in the first instance to realize the nature and place of that castle or temple which, according to the legend, was for a period of centuries the sanctuary of the Sacred Vessel and of the other hallowed objects connected therewith. We have seen that the Vessel itself was brought from Salem to Britain, and it follows from the historical texts that the transit had a special purpose, one explanation of which will be found ready to our hand when the time comes for its consideration. The castle is described after several manners, the later romances being naturally the more specific, and we get in fine a geographical location. In some of the earlier legends the place is so withdrawn that it is neither named nor described. Even the late Merlin texts say merely that the Holy Vessel is in the west, that is, in the land of Vortigern, or that it abides in Northumbria.

On the other hand, the temple in the German cycle is completely spiritualized; it has almost ceased to be a house made with hands, though the description on the external side is

almost severe in its simplicity. In the Chretien portion of the Conte del Graal, Perceval discovers the castle in a valley, wherein it is well and beautifully situated, having a four-square tower with a principal hall in front of it, while a bridge leads up to the chief entrance. The section which is referable to Gautier de Doulens describes it as situated on a causeway tormented by the sea. The building is of vast extent and is inhabited by a great folk. In a word, we are already in the region of imaginative development and adornment. The prose Lancelot is in better correspondence with Chretien, representing the castle as situated at the far end of a great valley, with water encircling it. The most decorative account is, however, in the great prose Perceval, where the castle is reached by means of three bridges which are horrible to cross. Three great waters run below them, the first bridge being a bow-shot in length and not more than a foot in width. This is the Bridge of the Eel; but it proved wide and a fair thoroughway in the act of crossing. The second bridge is of ice, feeble and thin, and is arched high above the water. It is transformed on passing into the richest and strangest ever seen, and its abutments are full of images.

The third and last bridge stands on columns of marble. Beyond it there is a sculptured gate, giving upon a flight of steps, which leads to a spacious hall painted with figures in gold. When Perceval visited the castle a second time he found it encompassed by a river, which came from the Earthly Paradise; it proceeded through the forest beyond as far as the hold of a hermit, where it found peace in the earth. To the castle itself there were three names attributed: The Castle of Eden, the Castle of Joy and the Castle of Souls. In conclusion as to this matter, the location, in fine, is Corbenic, which our late redaction of the Grand St. Graal mentions specifically, and which, all doubtful clouds of enchantment

notwithstanding, looms almost as a landmark in the *Lancelot* and the *Quest of Galahad*. So did the place of the mysteries, from a dim and vague allusion, become

A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth
Far sinking into splendour.

We can scarcely say whether that which had begun on earth was assumed into the spiritual place, or whether the powers and virtues from above descended to brood thereon.

I have left over from this consideration all reference to another spiritual place, in Sarras on the confines of Egypt, where the Graal, upon its outward journey, dwelt for a period and whither, after generations and centuries, it also returned for a period. As this was not the point of its origin, so it was not that of its rest; it was a stage in the passage from Salem and a stage in the transit to heaven.

What was meant by this infidel city, which was yet so strangely consecrated, is hard to determine, but its consideration belongs to a later stage. It is too early again to ask what are the implicits of the great prose *Perceval* when it identifies the Castle of the Graal with the Earthly Paradise and the Place of Souls, but we may note it as a sign of intention, and we shall meet with it in another connexion where no one has thought to look for it.

Such was the abode of the Hallows; and those who dwelt therein, the succession of Graal Keepers, belong to that order which we should expect in such precincts. Joseph of Arimathaea, the first guardian of the Vessel, passes from the scene before it has found its sanctuary.

According to the Lesser Chronicles, he was succeeded by his son-in-law Brons; but according to the Greater Chronicles, as I have termed them, he was succeeded by his own son, the

second Joseph, who is unknown to the other cycle. The Lesser Chronicles bridge the centuries between that generation which saw the Ascension of Christ and that which was to behold the flower of chivalry in Arthur, by means of a single keeper, who was to remain on earth till he had seen his grandson Perceval and had communicated to him the secret words pronounced at the sacrament of the Graal, which he had learned from Joseph. Perceval is the third who counts in the line of election to complete the human trinity of Graal guardians, reflecting, after their own mystic manner, those Three who bear witness in Heaven, namely, The Divine Trinity. To accomplish the hero's geniture, Alain, the son of Brons, although he had accepted celibacy, married, in some undeclared manner, and it was as his issue that Perceval was born in the fullness of the adventurous times.

From one point of view, the succession in respect of the Greater Chronicles involves fewer difficulties, because it exhibits a rudimentary sense of chronology and develops in consequence a long line of successive custodians. They are, however, quite shadowy and exist only to bridge the gulf of time. It serves no purpose to enumerate them, and I will speak therefore only of the alternative keepers who were in evidence during the days of quest. We have thus passed at one step all that period represented by the Lesser and Greater Holy Graal, by the Early History of Merlin and by the reign of Vortigern. Nor shall we be retarded by the later Merlin, according to either recension, after which there are only the quests, including the romance of Lancelot, but so far only as it enters into the time of the quests. On the one side, there is Brons, to whom succeeded Perceval, at the close of a life of search; on the other, there is the King Pelles, lord of the Castle Corbenic, whose daughter Helayne gave Galahad as issue to Lancelot, himself a lineal descendant of the King reigning at Sarras in

the days of Joseph of Arimathaea and the first flight of the Graal. Galahad was the last keeper recognized by this cycle, and he seems to have been appointed only for the purpose of removing the Vessel. It was: «Ite, missa est,» and «est consummatum,» when he died and rose to the stars.

III

THE ENCHANTMENTS OF BRITAIN AND THE KING'S WOUNDING.

We have seen that, according to the High History of Perceval, the great and secret sanctuary gave upon the Earthly Paradise, even as the visible world gives upon the world unseen; and there will be no question for us that its external splendour signifies the soul within, even as the outward beauties of Nature are the vestures of the high graces which communicate under indefectible warrants to those instituted sacraments which exceed Nature. This manner of doctrine, put forward evasively in story-books, while the Orthodox Church stood aloof but vigilant and dubious, is enough in the way of wonders; but we have now to consider how a horror fell upon the Secret House of God and a subtle work of sorcery on the world which encompassed it. No one knew better than the old makers of romance that the places of enchantment are places of high seeming and not of realities situated in time and space; they were not therefore dealing in common legendary lore; but were plying, if I may so express it, some secret trade, which may perhaps disclose its nature in the light of events externally, or, this failing, in that more obscure light which shines about the precincts of other coincident mysteries- a possibility which bears the greater aspect of likelihood because the fact that the Graal, throughout

the romances, is uniformly described as a mystery must render it a tolerable thesis that it can be explained by other mysteries, if any such were prevalent at the same time in the same countries of Europe.

The nature of the horror within, which I have termed already a certain cloud upon the sanctuary, is described after several manners. In one cycle, the flesh, which at no time profits anything, has smitten deeply into the life of the Keeper; in another, he is unable to die till he has seen the last scion of his house and has communicated to him certain secret words; in yet another, which on the surface is void of meaning, he is suffering more especially from his great age; he has alternatively received a dolorous stroke from a sword-thrust; and as a final explanation there is that of a mystic question which should have been asked and was not for a period of many years. These things are reflected upon the order without, sometimes, as it would seem, only in the immediate neighbourhood of the castle; more generally on the whole of Britain; while in rare instances the world itself is involved, at least by imputation. The quality of the enchantment is sometimes a suspension of Nature in her common operations; sometimes it approaches a frenzy which leads knights to destroy each other, which rifles maids and matrons, and so forth. In the legends of Perceval and Gawain the healing depends on the asking, in fine, of the question, which restores Nature to her proper course and the sense of sanity to chivalry. In the great quest of Galahad, owing to continuous editing, there is some confusion regarding the King's wounding; the enchantment without is replaced by the notion of certain times of adventure; and there is no interrogation which can be identified with that of the other traditions. There is, however, a dual healing, that of the Keeper of the Graal in those versions of the text which show clearly that he was wounded, and that

of another personage, whose sin dates back to the first times of the legend, being one of unprepared intrusion into the most secret mysteries of the Graal. We have otherwise the whole process of the Quest lifted into a high spiritual region, the implicits of which will provide us at a later stage with the master-key of the mystery.

IV

THE REMOVAL OF THE HALLOWS.

A distinction in the Graal literature between Quest versions and versions of Early History is known to scholarship in England, and though it is not quite definite in itself, it can be adapted in our interest. Speaking of the first class, the keynote of the Perceval quest is the suppression of a certain word and this, as we shall see, at first causes dire misery, postponing the advancement of the hero; but in the end it makes perhaps for his further recognition and ensures his more perfect calling, so that he is crowned in fine as he would not have been crowned at first. On the other hand, the keynote of the historical series, to make use of the expression in a sense that is not usually attached to it, is:

- A, the suppression or concealment of that potent sacramental formula, in the absence of which, as we have seen already, the office of the Christian ministry is not indeed abrogated but is foreshortened or substituted, so that there is something of an extra-valid character wanting to the external sanctuaries;
- B, the removal, cessation, or assumption of a certain school of ordination which held from heaven the highest warrants, but itself ordained no one; and the substitution thereafter of some other mode of succession, venerable enough in its way and the next surviving best after the abrogation of the old, but

not the high actuality of all, not the evidence of things unseen made physically and spiritually manifest as the term of faith.

Seeing now that the great sacraments do not pass away, it must follow that in the removal of the Holy Graal, as it is narrated in the texts, we are in the presence of another mystery of intention which appears the most obscure of all. The cloud that dwelt on the sanctuary, the inhibition which was on the world without, the hurt almost past healing which overtook the hereditary keeper, are ample evidence in themselves that evil had entered into the holy place, despite all the warrants which it held and all the graces and hallows which dwelt therein. With one curious exception, the keeper was, in fine, healed; the enchantment was also removed; and the achievement of the last Warden, at least in some instances, must have been designed, after a certain manner and within a certain measure, to substitute a greater glory for the cloud on the secret sanctuary. All this notwithstanding, the end of the great quests, the term of the whole mystery, was simply the removal thereof. It occurs in each romance under different circumstances, and it was not, as we shall learn, always of an absolute kind. In the *Conte del Graal* it is said that it was taken away, possibly to heaven, a statement which also obtains in respect of the alternative ending supplied by Gerbert; in the *Didot Perceval* it was seen no more; in the great prose *Perceval* it was distributed, so far as we can tell, with the other Hallows, to certain hermits, and it ceased simply to manifest; in *Wolfram* the whole question is left open in perpetuity, for at the close of the poem the keeper remains alive; in the *Titurel* of *Albert von Schaffenberg* the Vessel was carried eastward into the dubious realm of *Prester John*, and there apparently it remains; in the quest of *Galahad* it is assumed by Heaven itself, and the last keeper followed; but, in spite of this, the lost recension, as represented, faithfully or otherwise, by the

Welsh Quest, says that though it was not seen so openly, it was seen once by Sir Gawain, the least prepared and least warranted of all the Graal seekers, whose quest, moreover, was for the most part rather accidental than intended.

Speaking now from the mystic standpoint, the removal of the Holy Graal has in a certain sense the characteristics of an obscure vengeance. The destruction of the external order would appear to have been decreed. The Graal is carried away and its custodians are translated. The removal certifies the withdrawal of an object which we know, mystically speaking, is never taken away. In respect of its imputed removal, it is taken thither where it belongs; it is the same story as that of the Lost Word in Masonry. It is that which in departing hence draws after it all that belongs thereto. In other words, it goes before the cohort of election as the Pillars of Fire and Cloud before Israel in the Wilderness. The root and essence of the matter can be put shortly in these words: The Graal was not taken away, but it went to its own place, which is that of every man.

The Galahad Quest closes the canon of the literature. Other romances have said that the Sacred Vessel was not seen so openly, or that it was heard of no more, or that it had passed into concealment, and so forth; but this crowning legend carries it into complete transcendence, amidst appropriate ceremonial, though otherwise it leaves the Arthurian sacrament sufficiently unfinished. That is to say, it is still to be communicated for the last time to the whole world on the return of Arthur. The Graal is in hiding, like Arthur; but the Graal is, like Arthur, to return. Meanwhile, the chivalry of the world is broken, and the kingdom is destroyed. The master of all chivalry has received in his turn a dolorous stroke and is removed through a mist of enchantment, under dubious wardens, to the land of the setting sun, even into an exile of

the ages. But he also is to be in fine healed and to return, though at what time we know not, for centuries pass as days, within the certain knowledge of Ogier the Dane. So much as this may perhaps be hazarded on the point of time, namely, that the King's rendering shall be when the King's dark barge, sailing westward, like the lighter craft of Hiawatha, shall meet with the Graal, which set forth eastward, since the Graal must heal the King, and these shall meet truly when justice and mercy kiss. The Graal is not therefore lost, but gone before.

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MYSTIC ASPECTS OF THE GRAAL LEGEND

By ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE

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I

THE VICTORY OF THE LATIN RITE

In the last paper there was put forward the hypothesis of the Celtic Church as it has never been expressed previously; nothing was diminished, and any contrary influences were offered so far emperately; but the issues are not entirely those of the Graal legend, and, in view of that which comes after, a few words in conclusion of the previous part may perhaps be said more expressly. It should be on record, for those who have ears, that the Welsh church, with its phantom and figurehead bishops, its hereditary priesthood, and its profession of sanctity as others profess trades, seems a very good case for those who insist that the first Christianity of Britain was independent of St. Augustine, which it was, and very much indeed, but on the whole we may prefer Rome. When we have considered all the crazes and heresies, all the pure, primitive and unadulterated Christianities, being only human and therefore disposed to gratitude, it is difficult not to thank God for Popery. But it would also be difficult to be so thankful, that is to say, with the same measure of sincerity, if we were still in the school courses, and belonged officially thereto. I mean to say, although under all reserves, that there is invariably some disposition to hold a fluidic and decorative brief for Rome in the presence of the other assemblies. Let therefore those who will strive with those who can over the dismembered relics of apostolical Christianity; but so far as we are concerned the dead can bury their dead. We have left the Celtic Church as we have left carved gods. A pan-Britannic Church may have been the dream of one period, and

if so, seeing that it never came to fulfilment, we can understand why it is that in several respects the Graal literature has now the aspect of a legend of loss and now of a legend of to-morrow. The Anglican Church seems under the present aspect to recall for a moment that perverse generation which asked for a sign and was given the sign of Jonah. It has demanded apostolical evidences to enforce its own claim and it has been given the Celtic Church. Let us therefore surrender thereto the full fruition thereof. There may be insufficiencies and imperfect warrants in the great orthodox assemblies, but in the Celtic Church there is nothing which we can regret. The Latin rite prevailed because it was bound to prevail, because the greater absorbs the lesser. On the other hand, but now only in respect of the legends, let it be said lastly that the ascension of Galahad is, symbolically speaking, without prejudice to the second coming of Cadwaladr. It does not signify for our purpose whether Arthur ever lived, and if so whether he was merely a petty British prince. The Graal is still the Graal and the mystery of the Round Table is still the sweet and secret spirit of universal knighthood.

Seeing, therefore, that we have not found in the Celtic Church anything that suffices to account: for the great implicits of the literature and that the watchwords call us forward, it is desirable at this point to consider the position of our research at the stage which it has now reached. I have to justify my statements that

- (a) the Graal is a legend of the soul, and is, in some respects, a history which is personal, namely, to all souls at a certain epoch of their experience;
- (b) its root-matter is analogous with that of mysticism;
- (c) the chalice, to speak of that only which is the hallow-in-chief, is from the mystic standpoint, a symbol;

(d) a better explanation must be found for its feeding properties than has been so far offered by folk-lore;
(e) the four epochs of the legend-being

- (I) institution,
- (2) the Keepership,
- (3) the enchantments and wounding,
- (4) the close of the adventurous times- must be held to manifest in part the secret intention;

(f) the remanents of the Graal mystery must be sought not in a castle of the Pyrenees, not in a Spanish church, though there is one in that country which claims to have been its last custodian; nor in respect of its traces at Sarras, that is to say, at Cesarea, or elsewhere, but in certain instituted mysteries, the reflection of which remains to the present day. Before entering into the consideration of these matters, there is a word in fine to be said about official scholarship.

How admirable is the life of the scholar, how zealous the devotion which impels him, and how sorrowful it seems that it enters so seldom into his heart to have concern for the great subjects! Yet there is one respect in which he does excellent service towards things that are really important; he is in some cases devoted with great seriousness and all-ruling honesty to the elucidation of old literatures. The work is often final, or tends in the direction of finality, when these literatures have no consanguinity- «absit omen,» in the name of all folk-lore societies!- with the decried mazes of mystic thought. With such possibilities on the hill-tops, the work on the lower ground is still precious, but it is necessary at times and seasons to dissent from the official conclusions and the official attitude, because it is not to be expected that scholarship- crowned with "the simple senses" and saying: "Omega, thou art Lord," to many phantoms which for us are mere idols- should be in touch with these possibilities, or should deal with

them fully and justly. May it exercise in the present instance a certain reasoning tolerance towards an investigation which, in differing from its own, offers a grateful recognition of all that has been so far accomplished!

II

THE MYSTERY OF INITIATION

Like those who said in expectation of an imminent onslaught:

"Gentlemen of the guard, fire first!" I will now makewhat must be certainly considered a fatal admission, as follows: The great literatures and the great individual books are often at this day to the mystic as so many counters, or heaps of letters, which he interprets after this own manner and so imparts to them that light which, at least intellectually, abides in himself. We know in our hearts that eternity is the sole thing which ultimately matters and true literatures should confess to no narrower horizon. It happens sometimes that they begin by proposing a lesser term, but are afterwards exalted, and this was the case with the Graal books, which were given the Perceval legend according to the office of Nature and afterwards the legend of Galahad according to the law of Grace.

Recurring now to the brief schedule of points which call to be dealt with and may be preferably taken at this, rather than at a later stage, I will make a beginning with that which comes last in the enumeration itself, because it is obvious that I can be concerned- for what it is worth- with simple affirmation only, and not with evidence. There is behind the great quests a Mystery of Initiation and Advancement, to the nature of which I can approximate only in reviews and in printed books, but

that which it is possible to say will be expressed, under proper veils, at the close of the present paper. The warrant of it is in the secret fraternities which lie behind the surface-pageant of mystic literature. At this day and for many generations backward, the great secret rites have been like the Rich King Fisherman, either wounded or in a condition of languishment, and it is for the same symbolic reason, namely, that there are few prepared to come forward and ask the required question, on account of the external stress and disillusion. At the same time, they have been saying, after their own manner, for many centuries: Ask, and ye shall receive. If these statements can be tolerated on the faith of one who, from the writer's standpoint, has perhaps more to lose than to gain by making them, it will follow that the mystic element in the Graal literature cannot be understood at first hand by those who are unacquainted with the interior working of those secret societies of which the Masonic experiment, let us say, is a part only, and elementary at that. The important lights are not in printed books, but in the catholic motive which characterizes secret schools that have never entered into the knowledge of the outside world, and in the secret body of doctrine communicated by these. It is there only that the student can learn why that sacred and mysterious object which is termed Graal is

- (1) A stone which is not a stone, and, like that of alchemy, at once a medicine and an elixir;
- (2) a cup of knowledge and a cup of memory;
- (3) a symbolic vessel or lamp, wherein is the light of the world and from which that light is transmitted.

These memorials have been always in the world and their rumour has been heard always; in so far as the Graal literature can be called a concealed literature, there were other concurrent and more express witnesses, each of them claiming

to draw from high authority in the past, in the main always oral but in part also written.

III

THE LOST BOOK OF THE GRAAL

Now, if there is one thing which is clear from the whole literature, it is that the Graal romances claimed to follow some book which has not come down to us, and those who are concerned with such matters might, from the sole consideration of the texts, reconstruct in respect of its accidents the kind of apocryphal gospel which could have served as the proto-Graal book of the whole literature. It would have comprised many curious elements, a few of which may be hazarded in this place: A, power of words, reflected perhaps through Gnosticism from the old mysteries of Chaldea; B, Magical elements brought over by nomadic tribes deriving from Egypt; C, an eschatology with a motive akin to that of Origen; D, a special legendary interest in Pontius Pilate and Judas Iscariot; E, an expectation of the final redemption of Jewry symbolised by the deliverance of an unfaithful disciple named Moses, who appears in the metrical Joseph and in the texts which follow therefrom. This apocryphal gospel-book would, however, and above all, have included the particular great implicits which constitute the Graal literature. It may have been a manifesto of some secret sanctuary or school within the Church, of some hidden sect in Christendom, or some illustration of the Greater Mysteries of Initiation in Christian times. On this assumption, it contained materials and put forth warrants which, falling into the hands of romancers, or being heard of indirectly and by rumour, were gravely misconstrued. Indeed, this «Sanctum Graal,» this «Vas insigne

electionis, Calix inebrians,» in a word, this «Liber Gradalis» was as much a mythical object to the putative hermit who wrote the Grand St. Graal as it was to Robert de Borron, who specifies his dependence upon this book but who may even have owed his acquaintance with its story to Walter Montbeliard, in whose service he tells us that he was. At what distance therefore he drew, whether, in the speculative case mentioned, his patron was clerk enough to read it in the Latin tongue, whether he, too, knew it by report only, as a tradition communicated in some order of chivalry, are things which we shall never know. Walter Montbeliard was possibly a Knight Templar; he took the cross, as a consequence of which he died in the Holy Land, and it was subsequent to this that De Borron wrote his poem, or at least its concluding part. On his metrical romance there follows the early history of Merlin, and we can assume that its prose version is a moderately fair presentation of the lost poem. It has brought the mystery of all sanctity into a wild kingdom of the west and many centuries have elapsed, during all which period the Keeper of the Holy Graal has continued alive in the flesh, but serving absolutely no purpose, so far as any official church or the claims thereof are concerned. From his secret place he exercises no pontificate; he ordains no one; he teaches nothing. His undeclared asylum is one of uttermost refuge, and the scribe of the enchanter and prophet is promised repose therein when he has completed his records. In the meantime, the only consequence following from the presence of the Graal in Northumbria is that it enables Merlin to appropriate it in all obscure manner to his own use and to connect himself with it in every possible way. What was to have depended from this we do not know, for the «tertium quid» of De Borron's trilogy is represented by a forged conclusion, or perhaps I should rather say, by an authorized transcript in prose, which reduced the whole cycle

to complete nullity. Alternatively, if De Borron never produced his «pars tertia et ultima,» then the Didot Perceval is an attempt to fill the gap. Therein the secret words are indeed communicated to the questing hero, but the Graal is taken from his custody; no one knows what becomes of it; no one hears of his own fate; all the offices are voided. This, therefore, is the history of the Lost Book in the Lesser Chronicles- one doubtless of long and grievous misconstruction- from which one thing only arises- that there was a secret office of the Eucharist, but outside its custodians no one knew what it was. On this cycle there follows that which begins with the Grand St. Graal, a work which, whoever was its author, recalls in so many ways the treatise De Nugis Curialium, written by Henry the II's archdeacon, Walter Map. It presents to us great fictions to account for its origin, but it confesses in fine that it depends from a Latin source, or the hermit of the prologue rendered what he saw miraculously into that tongue. This is only another way of saying that the author spoke as he could of that which he had read or seen as little as Robert De Borron. Now, either a stream of continuations followed from this document or alternatively it constituted an introduction to these. In the first case the continuations do not present conclusions which conclude, and in the second the limits of the existing texts are exceeded.

Alternatively, there is a lost quest of Galahad which may have embodied so much of the Lancelot story as was necessary to its purpose, and no more. In any case, after all the stories have been told, all the adventures achieved, and "the dragon of the great Pendragonship" has been plunged in a sea of blood, we are left with the chief implicit of the cycle, allocated, as it must be irresistibly, to the Lost Book, still undeclared as to purpose. We have indeed the Galahad legend as presented in

the Great Quest, forgetting all about Secret Words, all about Apostolical Succession, reverting apparently into the hands of the orthodox church, and thereby re-expressed as a great mystery of sanctity. We must therefore set aside for the moment the question of implicit and see what we can make of this simply as a sacramental legend, having insufficiencies of its own kind, but still offering the second sense of the Eucharist amidst the decorations of allegory, the glory of spiritual chivalry and the enchantments of romance.

IV

THE MYSTERY OF FAITH

Now the mystery of faith in Christianity is above all things the Eucharist, in virtue of which the Divine Master is ever present in his church and is always communicated to the soul; but the Graal mystery is the declared pageant of the Eucharist which, in virtue of certain powers set forth under the veil of consecrating words, is in some way a higher mystery than that of the external church. We have only to remember a few passages in the *Grand St. Graal*, in the great prose *Perceval* and in the quest of *Galahad*, to understand the imputed distinction as

- (A) the Communication in the Eucharist of the whole knowledge of the universe, from Aleph to Tau;
- (B) the communication of the Living Christ in the dissolution of the veils of Bread and Wine;
- (C) the communication of the secret process by which the soul passes under divine guidance from the pageants of this world to heaven, the keynote being that the soul is taken when it asks into the great transcendence.

This is the implied question of the Galahad legend, as distinguished from the Perceval question. There are those who are called but not chosen at all, like Gawain. There are those who get near to the great mystery but have not given up all things for it, and of these is Lancelot. There is the great cohort, like the apocalyptic multitude which no man can number-called, elected and redeemed in the lesser ways by the offices of the external Church- and of these is the great chivalry of the Round Table. There are those who go up into the Mountain of the Lord and return again, like Bors; they have received the high degrees, but their office is in this world. In fine, there are those who follow at a long distance in the steep path, and of these is the transmuted Perceval of the Galahad legend. It is in this sense that, exalted above all and more than all things rarefied into a great and high quintessence, the history of the Holy Graal becomes the soul's history, moving through a profound symbolism of inward being, wherein we follow as we can, but the vistas are prolonged for ever, and it well seems that there is neither a beginning to the story, nor a described ending.

We find also the shadows and tokens of secret orders which have not been declared in the external, and by the strange things which are hinted, we seem to see that the temple of the Graal on Mont Salvatch is not otherwise than as the three tabernacles which it was proposed to build on Mount Tabor. Among indications of this kind there are two only that I can mention. As in the prologue to the Grand St. Graal, the anonymous but not unknown hermit met on a memorable occasion with one who recognized him by certain signs which he carried, giving thus the unmistakable token Of some instituted mystery in which both shared: as in the great prose Perceval we have an account of five changes in the Graal which took place at the altar, being five transfigurations, the

last of which assumed the seeming of a chalice, but at the same time, instead of a chalice, was some undeclared mystery: so the general as well as the particular elements of the legend in its highest form, offer a mystery the nature of which is recognized by the mystic through certain signs which it carries on its person; yet it is declared in part only and what remains, which is the greater part, is not more than suggested. It is that, I believe, which was seen by another maimed King when he looked into the sacred cup and beheld the secret of all things, the beginning even and the end. In this sense the five changes of the Graal are analogous to the five natures of man, as these in their turn correspond to the four aspects of the Cosmos and that which rules all things within and from without the Cosmos. I conclude therefore that the antecedents of the Cup Legend are

- (1) «Calix meus quam inebrians est;»
- (2) The Cup which does not pass away;
- (3) The «vas insigne elections.»

The antecedent of the Graal question is: Ask, and ye shall receive.

The antecedent of the enchantment of Britain is the swoon of the sensitive life, and that of the adventurous times is: I bring not peace, but a sword; I come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it should be enkindled?- The closing of these times is taken when the Epopt turns at the altar, saying «Pax Dei tecum.» But this is the peace which passes understanding, and it supervenes upon the «Mors osculi»- the mystic Thomas Vaughan's "death of the kiss "- after which it is exclaimed truly: Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. It follows therefore that the formula of the Supernatural Graal is: «Panem coelestem accipiam;» that of the Natural Graal, namely, the Feeding Dish, is: «Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie;» and

the middle term: Man doth not live by bread alone. I should add: These three are one; but this is in virtue of great and high transmutations.

V

THE DECLARED MYSTERY OF QUEST

And now as the sum total of these mystical aspects, the desire of the eyes in the seeking and finding of the Holy Graal may, I think, be re-expressed as follows:--

Temple or Palace or Castle- Mont Salvatch or Corbenic- wherever located, and whether described as a wilderness of building, crowded burg or simple hermit's hold-there is one characteristic concerning the Graal tabernacle which, amidst all its variations in the accidents, is essentially the same; the Keeper of the great hallows has fallen upon evil days; the means of restoration and of healing are, as one would say, all around him, yet the help must come from without; it is that of his predestined successor, whose office is to remove the vessel, so that it is henceforth never seen so openly.

Taking the quest of Galahad as that which has the highest significance spiritually, I think that we may speak of it thus:- We know that a that in the last analysis it is the inward man who is really the Wounded Keeper. The mysteries are his; on him the woe has fallen; it is he who expects healing and redemption. His body is the Graal Castle, which is also the castle of Souls, and behind it is the Earthly Paradise as a vague and latent memory. We may not be able to translate the matter of the romance entirely into mystical symbolism, since it is only a rumour at a distance of life in the spirit and its great

secrets. But, I think, we can see that it all works together for the one end of all.

He who enters into the consideration of this secret and immemorial house under fitting guidance shall know why it is that the Graal is served by a pure maiden, and why that maiden is ultimately dispossessed. Helayne is the soul, and the soul is in exile because all the high unions have been declared voided- the crown has been separated from the kingdom, and experience from the higher knowledge.

So long as she remained a pure virgin, she was the thyrsis-bearer in the mysteries, but the morganatic marriage of mortal life is part of her doom. This is still a high destiny, for the soul out of earthly experience brings forth spiritual desire, which is the quest of the return journey, and this is Galahad. It is therefore within the law and the order that she has to conceive and bring him forth. Galahad represents the highest spiritual aspirations and desires passing into full consciousness, and so into attainment. But he is not reared by his mother, because Eros, which is the higher knowledge, has dedicated the true desire to the proper ends thereof. It will be seen also what must be understood by Lancelot in secret communication with Helayne, though he has taken her throughout for another. The reason is that it is impossible to marry even in hell without marrying that seed which is of heaven. As she is the psychic woman, so is he the natural man, or rather the natural intelligence, which is not without its consecrations, not without its term in the great transcendence. Helayne believes that her desire is only for Lancelot, but this is because she takes him for Eros, and it is by such a misconception that the lesser Heaven stoops to the earth; herein also there is a sacred dispensation, because so is the earth assumed. I have said that Lancelot is the natural man, but he is such nearly at the highest; he is born in great sorrow, and she who has conceived

him saves her soul alive amidst the offices of external religion. He is carried into the lesser land of Faerie, as into a garden of childhood. When he draws towards manhood, he comes forth from the first places of enchantment and is clothed upon by the active duties of life, as by the vestures of chivalry. He enters also into the unsanctified life of sense, into an union against the consecrated life and order. But his redeeming quality is that he is faithful and true, because of which, and because of his genealogy, he is chosen to beget Galahad, of whom he is otherwise unworthy, even as we all, in our daily life, fall short of the higher aspirations of the soul. As regards the Keeper, it is certain that he must die and be replaced by another Keeper before the true man can be raised, with the holy things to him belonging, which hallows are indeed withdrawn, but it is with and in respect of him only, for the keepers are a great multitude, though it is certain that the Graal is one. The path of quest is the path of the upward progress, and it is only at the great height that Galahad knows himself as really the Wounded Keeper and that thus, in the last resource, the physician heals himself. Now this is the mystery from everlasting, which is called in the high doctrine «Schema misericordiae.» It is said: «Latet, aeternumque latebit,» until it is revealed in us, but as to this: «Te rogamus, audi nos.»

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THE CHRONICLES OF THE HOLY QUEST

By ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE

I

THE PROLEGOMENA THEREOF

As there is no one towards whom I should wish to exercise more frankness than the readers to whom I appeal, it will be a counsel of courtesy to inform them, at this stage of the research, that scholarship has once at least commented on the amount of mystic nonsense which has been written upon the subject of the Graal. Who are the mystic people and what is the quality of their nonsense does not appear in the pleadings; and as, entirely outside mysticism, there has been assuredly an abundance of unwise speculation, I incline to think that the one has been confused with the other by certain learned people who were unfamiliar with the limits of the term to which they have had recourse so lightly. After precisely the same manner, scholarship still speaks of the ascetic element of the Graal literature, almost as if it were a term implying reproach; and again it is not justified by reasonable exactitude in the use of words. Both impeachments, the indirect equally with the overt, stand for what they are worth, which is less than the solar mythology applied to the interpretation of the literature. My object in mentioning these grave trifles is that no one at a later stage may say that he has been deceived.

Now, seeing that all subjects bring us back to the one subject, that in spite, for example, of any scandalous histories, every official congregation returns us to the one official Church; so, at whatever point we may begin, all the great quests take us ultimately to the Galahad quest; it would seem, therefore, that this is the crown of all, and we can affirm the

position as follows: There are three that give testimony on earth concerning the Mystery of the Holy Graal-Perceval, Bors and Galahad- and the greatest of these is Galahad. This notwithstanding, as there are persons who, by a certain mental deviation, turn aside from the highways of Christendom and look for better paths out of the beaten track in the issues of obscure heresies, so it has happened that scholarship, without repudiating the great heroes of research, has discovered some vague preference for the adventurous and courtly Sir Gawain. They have even been led to regard him as the typical and popular hero of the Graal quest. If the evidence can be held as sufficient- and in some directions it is strong- I suppose that I should waste my time by saying that it does not really signify, any more than the preference of Jewry for Barabbas in the place of Christ could accredit that liberated robber with any reasonable titles. In order to strengthen their case, scholarship has proposed certain speculative versions, now more lost than regrettable, which present Gawain more completely as the Quest hero than any document which is extant. Assuming that they ever existed, these versions were like the poem of Chretien, according to the poem of Wolfram- that is to say, they told the wrong story. The intention of Chretien can scarcely be gathered from his unfinished narrative, but of those who follow him, more than one certainly regarded Gawain as a personage who was destined to have a distinct part in the mystery of the whole experiment. Even the German cycle, as represented by the romance of Heinrich, has shown him to be a hero of the achievement.

There are also, as we shall see, certain respects in which the legend of Perceval is not, symbolically or otherwise, at a demonstrably higher level than is that of Gawain. It will be, I assume, unnecessary to inform my readers that the disqualification of Gawain must be referred to his

indiscriminate life of passion and occasionally of gross indulgence. At the same time, he was exactly the kind of character who would be disposed to suggest and to begin all manner of quests, high and low. That he was a popular Graal hero may mean that some of his historians did not exactly see why his methods and mode of life should create a barrier. For the purposes, moreover, of the greater mysteries, it is sometimes possible that the merely continent man, who is of moderate life in all things, may require a more express preparation than will sometimes one who is rather of the opposite tendencies. I think also that the old romancers had in their minds a distinction between the continuity of the sin in Lancelot and the more sporadic misdemeanours of Gawain, as also between the essential gravity of the particular offences in each case. There is the fullest evidence of this in respect of Guinevere, when considered side by side with some other heroines of the cycle. We are, in fact, dealing with a period when the natural passions were condoned rather easily, but when the Church had stepped in to consecrate the rite of marriage in an especial manner. It was no stigma for a hero of chivalry to be born out of lawful wedlock, but the infidelity of a wife placed her almost outside the pale of social forgiveness. The ideal of virginity remained, all this notwithstanding; in which respect, the makers of romance knew well enough where the counsels of perfection lay, but they rendered implicitly to nature the things which belong to nature. It is comparatively late in the cycle that the ascetic purity of the hero became an indefectible title to success in the quest of the Holy Graal, about which time Gawain and Lancelot were relegated to their proper places- ridicule and confusion in the one case, and complete, though not irreverent, disqualification in the other.

Before proceeding to a brief outline of the quests in their order, as I conceive it here, it may seem pertinent to say a few words concerning the order itself which I have adopted for these studies, because at first sight it is calculated to incur those strictures on the part of scholarship which, on the whole, I rather think that I should prefer to disarm. I must in any case justify myself, and towards this, in the first place, it should be indicated that the arrangement depends entirely from the proper sequence of the texts, and secondly, by an exercise of implicit faith, from the findings of scholarship itself. There are certain texts which arise out of one another, and it is a matter of logic to group them in their proper classes. There is, however, some ground of criticism because of a certain apparent sacrifice of chronology. It might be difficult to show that the Greater Holy Graal is precedent in time to the later Merlin, which my arrangement causes to follow therefrom. Outside this, I do not know that there is any apparent offence, but there is one of the implied kind, because scholarship has concluded that there are lost early forms of certain texts, as, for example, of the Galahad Quest, which in all probability antedated the Greater Holy Graal. We seem to possess the latter approximately in the form of its first draft. But it is really out of this fact that the order properly arises. The Greater Holy Graal was intended to create a complete sequence and harmony between those parts of the cycle with which it was more especially concerned, and the Galahad Quest, as we have it, may represent the form of that document which it intended to harmonize. The alternative is that there was another version of this Quest which arose out of the later Merlin, or that such a version was intended. I believe in fine that my order is true and right, but exact chronological arrangement, in so tinkered a cycle of literature as that of the

Holy Graal, is perhaps scarcely possible, nor is it my concern exactly.

I come now more directly to the matter in hand. There are two cycles of the Quest which alone signify anything. Of one- which is that of Perceval- there are several phases; but this is the lesser Quest. Of the other there is one phase only, led up to by many romances, but represented in fine by a single transcendent text. This text is the quintessence and transmutation of everything, allocating all seekers- Perceval, Bors, Lancelot, Gawain- to their proper spheres, over whom shines Galahad as the exalted horn of a great pentagram of chivalry. Of the Perceval Quest there are two great versions; one of them, as I have already noted, is an alternative conclusion to the cycle of the greater chronicles; and one- which is the German Parsifal- all antecedents notwithstanding, is something set apart by itself in a peculiar house of mystery. It is the story of the natural man taken gradually to the heights. There is also a third quest, that of the Didot Perceval, which, amidst many insufficiencies, is important for several reasons after its own manner, that is to say, because of its genealogy. The fourth is the Conte del Graal, and this is of no importance symbolically, but it is a great and powerful talisman of archaic poetry. The truth is that for all the high things there are many substitutes, after the manner of colourable pretences, and many transcripts, as out of the languages of the angels into that of man, after the same way that the great external Churches have expressed the mysteries of doctrine in words of one syllable for children who are learning to read. But it sometimes happens also that as from any corner of the veil the prepared eyes can look through and perceive something of the immeasurable region which lies beyond the common faculties of sense, so there are mysteries of books which are in no way sufficient in themselves, but they contain the elements and

portents of all those great things of which it is given the heart to conceive. Of these are the Graal books in the forms which present the legend at its highest.

II

THE QUESTS OF PERCEVAL LE GALLOIS

At this point the reader will do well to remember that the chronicles which I have connected with the name of Robert de Borron are those which put forward a mystic formula of consecration, committed from Keeper to Keeper; and that those which, under all reserve, I have connected tentatively with the name of Walter Map, put forward a certain claim in respect of superapostolical succession.

From the first there follows the Didot Perceval, making three texts in all, corresponding, in this series, to the earthly witnesses of the Holy Graal- Joseph, Brons, Perceval- that is, the metrical romance of Joseph, the early prose Merlin, corresponding to the keepership of Brons, and the Didot Perceval, in which Brons is still the Keeper but in that state of inanition which prepares the way for his successor. From the second there follows the great Prose Perceval, called otherwise the High History of the Holy Graal, as an alternative to the Galahad Quest.

The outlines of the general story, taking the Didot MS. as an example, are sufficiently simple to state them within comparatively a small space. It is only necessary to premise that Main, sometimes represented as Perceval's father, is dead at the opening of the story. Brons is the existing guardian of the Graal, holding from Joseph of Arimathea, and he cannot depart from this life till he has communicated to his successor those secret words pronounced at the sacrament of the Graal which were learned by himself from Joseph.

Perceval, to outward seeming, has no title whatever to a participation in the mystery, except that of his geniture. He is brave, savage and imperious; he is also chivalrous, but he is without the spiritual chivalry which we find in the great Quest. Further, the exigencies of the story make him, in certain respects, little short of a fool.

Brons, who, under circumstances which I have not the space to specify, is called also the Rich Fisherman, is said to be in great infirmity, an old man and full of maladies, nor will his health be restored until the office of the Quest has been fulfilled in all perfection. It follows that he is not suffering, as in other cases, from any curse or enchantment, but simply from old age. Perceval, after certain episodes which explain why he was reared in seclusion, a widow's son, under the care of his mother, in obedience to a Divine Voice, repairs to the Court of King Arthur, where he is armed as knight. He is proclaimed the best knight of the world, after vanquishing Lancelot and other peers of the Round Table at a joust. He becomes to some extent exalted and desires to occupy the Siege Perilous, that is to say, a chair left vacant at the Round Table for the predestined third custodian of the Holy Graal. A tremendous confusion ensues, and it is thought that Perceval will share the fate of others who had made the same dangerous experiment. He survives, however, the ordeal, and the voice of an invisible speaker bears witness that the Sacred Vessel is at the castle of the Rich Fisher, whose healing can only be performed when the best knight of the world visits him and asks the secrets of the service of the Graal. By the instructions which will follow a period will be put to the enchantments of Britain. Perceval undertakes this quest. After many adventures, one of which is referable to the terrestrial paradise, he reaches the castle of his grandfather, the Rich Fisher, or Brons. He beholds the Graal and its marvels, but, in spite of

what the voice told him in the presence of the knightly company, he asks nothing concerning it, for the odd reason that his instructor in chivalry taught him to avoid unbecoming curiosity. It is round this futile episode that the Perceval quests may be said in each case to turn. He awakes on the morning which follows to find the castle deserted. As soon as he leaves it, the whole building disappears, and he wanders for seven years in search of it. Through distress at being unable to find the Fisher King, he loses all memory of God, until he meets with a band of pilgrims on Good Friday. He is asked by these why he goes armed for purposes of destruction on a day so sacred as this. His better nature then returns, and after a meeting with Merlin, who reproaches him for neglecting the Quest, he does in fine reach the Graal castle for a second time. He sees the Holy Vessel and the procession thereof, asks the required question, at which the King is cured, and all changes. He is led before the Graal and its mysteries are explained to him. A voice tells Brons to communicate the secret words. Perceval remains with his grandfather, practising wisdom, and there is an end to the enchantments of Britain. The hermit Blaise, who was the scribe of Merlin and produced under the latter's direction the long chronicle of the Graal, becomes his assistant in the custody of the Sacred Vessel, and Merlin also abides with him.

Merlin finally goes away, and neither he nor the Graal are heard of subsequently.

This is the story in its outline, but the variations of the several texts are almost innumerable. Some contain no reference to the episode of the Siege Perilous; some narrate the death of the hero and some leave him alive. For the one instance in which he is made the companion of Blaise and Merlin, all others are silent concerning these personages, and it is obvious from the general literature that the authorized

version is that which, like Malory's book, puts Merlin into permanent seclusion, through high offices of enchantment, long before the quests begin. The *Conte del Graal* intercalates great episodes connecting Gawain with the Graal between the visits of Perceval to the castle. Its alternative ending by Gerbert preserves the hero's virginity even on his marriage night; Wolfram insures his chastity by introducing his marriage at an early stage; the *High History* is like Heaven, knowing neither marriage nor giving in marriage, while it never supposes that the Quest could be achieved in full by one who was not a virgin. The rest of the romances show little conscience on the subject, the deportment of the hero being simply a question of opportunity.

One feature of the prose *Percevals* and of the poetical romance also is the termination of the enchantments of Britain; its correspondence in the *Galahad Quest* is the sealing up of the adventurous times. One of the questions is in both cycles: Who is the Keeper of the Graal? It is one also which is always answered with variations. In the Didot *Perceval* it is Brons, as we know already; and in the *Conte del Graal* he is only termed the Rich Fisher, from which it does not really follow that here also he is Brons. This is, however, specified in the pseudo-Gautier intercalation, which is found in a single MS. at Berne. In the alternative version of Gerbert he appears to be the King Mordrains, who was never an instituted Keeper. In Wolfram the name given is Amfortas, of the dynasty of Titurel, and in the *Quest of Galahad* he is, subject to certain confusions on the part of editors, the maimed King Pelles, whose genealogy is provided in the *Greater Holy Graal*.

There is, however, a much more important distinction between the two cycles, but to this I have already made some reference, both here and in a previous paper. The essential and predominant characteristic of the *Perceval* literature is the

asking and answering of a question which bears on its surface every aspect of triviality, but is yet the pivot on which the whole circle of these romances may be said to revolve. On the other hand, the question is absent from the Galahad story, and in place of it we have a stately pageant of chivalry moving through the world of Logres, to find the high mystery of secrecy which is destined only to dismember the Arthurian empire and to pass in fine, leaving no trace behind it, except the sporadic vision of a rejected knight which is mentioned but not described and occurs under circumstances that justify grave doubts as to its existence in the original texts.

Now, the entire literature of the Graal may be searched in vain for any serious explanation as to the actuating motive, in or out of folklore, concerning the Graal question. On the part of the folklore authorities there have been naturally attempts to refer it to something antecedent within the scope of their subject, but the analogies have been no analogies, and as much nonsense has been talked as we have yet heard of in the connexion which scholars have vaguely termed mysticism. The symbolical and sacramental value of the Graal Quest, outside all issues in folklore, is from my standpoint paramount, as it is this indeed without any reference to the opinions which are founded in folklore or to the speculations thereout arising; and the fact reminds that the palmary importance of the mystic question lapses with the pre-eminence of the Perceval Quest. Initiation, like folklore, knows many offices of silence but few of asking; and after many researches I conclude- or at least tentatively- that in this respect the Graal romances stand practically alone. It is therefore useful to know that it is not the highest term of the literature.

III

THE QUEST OF THE HIGH PRINCE

Having past through many initiations, I can say with the sincerity which comes of full knowledge that the Graal legend, ritually and ceremonially presented, is the greatest of all which lies beyond the known borders of the instituted mysteries. But it is exalted in a place of understanding of which no one can speak in public, not only because of certain seals placed upon the sanctuary, but more especially, in the last resource, because there are no listeners. I know, however, and can say that the Cup appears; I know that it is the Graal cup; and the wonders of its manifestation in romance are not so far removed from the high things which it symbolizes, whence it follows that the same story is told everywhere. It is in this way that on these subjects we may make up our minds to say new things, but we say only those which are old, because it would seem that there are no others. If Guiot de Provence ever said that the Graal legend was firstwritten in the starry heavens, he said that which is the shadow of the truth, or more properly its bright reflection.

Let us now set before our minds the image of the Graal castle, having a local habitation and a name on the mountain-side of Corbenic. The inhabitant in chief of this sanctuary is the Keeper of the Hallows, holding by lineal descent from the first times of the mystery. This is the maimed King Pelles, whose hurt has to be healed by Galahad. The maiden who carries the Sacred Vessel in the pageant of the ceremonial rite is his daughter, the pure maiden Helayne. To the castle on a certain occasion there comes the Knight Lancelot, who is the son of King Ban of Benoic, while his mother Helen is issued from the race of Joseph of Arimathaea, and through him is of the line of King David. It is known by the Keeper Pelles that

to bring to its final term the mystery of the Holy Graal, his daughter must bear a child to Lancelot, and this is accomplished under circumstances of enchantment which seem to have eliminated from the maiden all sense of earthly passion. It cannot be said that this was the state of Lancelot, who believed that his partner in the mystery of union was the consort of Arthur the King, and to this extent the sacramental imagery offers the signs of failure. In the case of Helayne the symbolism only fails of perfection at a single point, which is that of a second meeting with Lancelot under almost similar circumstances.

I must not specify them here, except in so far as to say that there was a certain incursion of common motive into that which belongs otherwise to the sacramental side of things, so far as she was concerned. I can imagine nothing in the whole course of literature to compare with the renunciation of this maiden, on whom the whole light of the Graal had fallen for seasons and years; and who was called upon by the exigencies of the quest to make that sacrifice which is indicated by the great romance. It is at this point that the book of the knight Lancelot sets finally aside all sense of triviality and is assumed into the Kingdom of the Mysteries.

So, therefore, Galahad is begotten in the fullness of time, and over all connected therewith falls suddenly the veil of concealment. We do not know certainly where he was born or by whom nurtured, but if we are guided by the sequel, as it follows in the great Quest, if was probably away from the Graal castle and with mystic nurses. When we first meet him, he is among the pageants and holy places of the mysteries of official religion. Subsequently he is led towards his term by one who seems a steward of other mysteries, and when the Quest begins he passes at once into the world of metaphrase and symbol, having firstly been consecrated as a knight by his

own father, who does not apparently know him, who acts under the direction of the stewards, while Galahad dissembles any knowledge that he might be assumed to possess. He has come, so far as we can say, out of the hidden places of the King. In the quests which he undertakes, although there is nominally one castle in which the Graal has its normal abode, it is yet a moving wonder, and a studied comparison might show that it is more closely connected with the Eucharistic mystery than it is according to the other romances, the great prose *Perceval* excepted. Still, an efficacious mass is being said everywhere in the world. The Graal is more especially the secret of high sanctity. Galahad himself is the mystery of spiritual chivalry exemplified in human form; his history is one of initiation, and his term is to see God. As contrasted with the rest of the literature, we enter in his legend upon new ground, and are on the eminence of *Mont Salvatch* rather than among the normal offices of chivalry. It is more especially this legend which is regarded by scholarship as the last outcome of the ascetic element introduced into the the Graal cycle; but it is not understood that throughout the period of the middle ages the mystic life manifested only wider an ascetic aspect, or with an environment of that kind. The Galahad romance is not ascetic after the ordinary way, as the term is commonly accepted; it has an interior quality which places it above that degree, and this quality is the sense of the mystic life. Now, the gate of the mystic life is assuredly the ascetic gate, in the same manner that the normal life of religion has morality as the door thereof. Those who have talked of asceticism meant in reality to speak of the supernatural life, of which the Galahad romance is a kind of archetypal picture. Though Wolfram, on the authority of Guiot, may have told what he called the true story, that story was never recited till the creation of the Galahad legend.

The atmosphere of the romance gives up Galahad as the natural air gives up the vision from beyond. It is the story of the arch-natural man who comes to those who will receive him. He issues from the place of the mystery, as Lancelot came from fairyland, or at least a world of enchantment. The atmosphere is that of great mysteries, the odour that of the sanctuary withdrawn behind the Hallows of the outward Holy Places. Galahad's entire life is bound up so completely with the quest to which he is dedicated that apart therefrom he can scarcely be said to live. The desire of a certain house not made with hands has so eaten him up that he has never entered the precincts of the halls of passion. He is indeed faithful and true, but earthly attraction is foreign to him, even in its exaltation. Even his meetings with his father are shadowy and not of this world- a characteristic which seems the more prominent when he is the better fulfilling what would be understood by his filial duty. It is not that he is explicitly outside the sphere of sense and its temptations, but that his actuating motives are of the transmuted kind. In proportion, his quest is of the unrealized order; it is the working of a mystery within the place of a mystery; and it is in comparison therewith that we may understand the deep foreboding which fell upon the heart of Arthur when the flower of his wonderful court went forth to seek the Graal. In this respect the old legend illustrates the fact that many are called but few are chosen; and even in the latter class it is only the rarest flower of the mystic chivalry which can be thought of as chosen among thousands.

So are the peers of the Round Table a great company, but Galahad is one. So also, of the high kings and princes, there are some who come again, and of such is the royal Arthur; but there are some who return no more, and of these is Galahad.

We have, however, to account as we can for the great disaster of the whole experiment. The earthly knighthood

undertakes, in despite of the high earthly king, a quest to which it is in a sense perhaps called but for which it is in no sense chosen. The result is that the chivalry of the world is broken and the kingdom is destroyed, while the object of all research is taken away. In a certain sense it is the mystery of the Graal itself which gives forth Galahad as its own manifestation, in the order of the visible body; and sends him on designed offices of healing, with a warrant to close a specific cycle of times. When the Graal romances say that the Sacred Vessel was seen no more, or was carried up to heaven, they do not mean that it was taken away, in the sense that it had become unattainable, but that it was- some of them say also- in concealment. It is certain that the great things are always in concealment, and are perhaps the more hidden in proportion to their more apparently open manifestation. In this respect, the distinction between the natural and supernatural Graal, which is made by the prose Lancelot, has a side of highest value. Let us reserve for the moment the consideration of the hallows as mere relics, and in so far as the Cup is concerned, let us remember the two forms of sustenance which it offered- in correspondence closely enough with the ideas of Nature and Grace. It should be understood, however, that between the mysteries themselves there is a certain superincession, and so also there is in the romances what the light heart of criticism regards as «un peu confus,» namely, some disposition to talk of the one office in the terms of the other. At the same time, some romances give prominence to the greater and others to the lesser office.

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Words of Power Mantra

Systems of correspondences are largely arbitrary and controversial. There is no evidence that the earliest practitioners of Kabala ever assigned musical correspondences to the Hebrew Letters. I do not think that there is even a commonly used system of intoning or singing the names of God or those of the Angels in Hebrew. However - If it works for you and others that's fine, and Kabala to be dynamic must adopt to the needs of the current community.

A story about the novice mispronouncing his Mantra:

In one version, a teaching Master is in a boat and overhears this poor uneducated man pronouncing it incorrectly. He steps assured and corrects him. He, then, gets back in the boat and is sails away. Suddenly he sees the poor people walking across the water rushing towards him, and calls out "Excuse me Master but I forgot the correct pronunciation - can you please tell me again?"

We must of course try to do our best when we are repeating sacred words - and need to give them our full attention with body, heart, and mind.

However we must also realize what is essential and what is perhaps not so important.

In John Blofeld's "Tantric Mysticism of Tibet," was told about a peasant farmer who was repeating "Om Mani Padme Cow" because he thought that was correct. His Lama encouraged him to continue because he could see that he had progressed much by repeating it that way.

On a related topic, some of Rabbi Phillip Berg's student Rabbis told me that contemplating the Hebrew letters helps to open the channels of power within oneself and encouraged my practice in that matter.

If you believe, you must choose a system and work with it; some systems are deep down more valuable than others.

For example the Buddhist mantra that mentioned, “Om mani padme hum”, has a series of correspondences for each of its 6 syllables that are used in meditation for various types of inner healing. These include colours, sounds, realms of being, and psychological factors... and they are considered to be exact, not arbitrary in context of this mantra.

Paul Case gives other systems of correspondences (in his published books) : Hebrew letters and Tarot keys can be used to influence the subtle body, I would speculate that this particular system of correspondences could be used in a very exact and incisive way for esoteric healing and as a form of spiritual alchemy.

in the Tibetan Kalachakra tantra are 3 levels (outer, inner and secret) are used, and in the western mysteries these different levels can also be found. As above so below. When an alchemist such as Paracelsus is writing about stars and planets, it is possible that he may at the same time be implying "Inner Holy Planets".

For some reason or other, whether it may be wisdom or folly, many students shy away from this type of exact system. But is it really any different from the degree of precision that one would expect from a surgeon or dentist? It may be that Paul Case's really meant is to be a tool for a specific type of healer, one who is trained in a very formal and exact method. Not everyone is meant to be a doctor or dentist!

Lewis Keizer has developed a fascinating system of chanting harmonic overtones that is very useful and effective. It's different from Case's system but similar in its complexity.

If we accept another point: the sound/notes might do not matter, then do we also assume the same about the shape of Hebrew letters and/or their meanings? Perhaps the main point here is that I do not want to give the impression that details do not make any difference!

We must of course try to do our best when we are repeating sacred texts - and need to give them our full attention with body, heart and

mind. However we must also realize what is essential and what is perhaps not so important.

On a related topic, some of Rabbi Phillip Berg's student Rabbis told me that contemplating the Hebrew letters open the channels of power within oneself. The hints was taken out by Paul Case (in his published books) that each Hebrew letter and Tarot key can be used to influence the subtle body, one would speculate that this particular system of correspondences could be used in a very exact and incisive way for esoteric healing and as a form of spiritual alchemy. Sometimes, they are effective. Many people think, however, that they are the "secret keys" and perhaps think they have an exclusive key into Heaven. This is speculation.

In the Tibetan Kalachakra tantra 3 levels (outer, inner, and secret) are used.

For some reason or other, whether it is wisdom or folly, many students shy away from this type of system.

May be that all esoteric development springs from one's ability to concentrate, and that actually all exercises are a means of developing it. For me, that explains why students of different systems or even traditions have similar experiences as they unfold.

For those who feel inclined, you are allowed to join morning and evening visualizations of angelic assistance with those who are in need.

Include visualizations of many thousands of angelic beings, the best way that you can, arriving in a constant stream to assist women and men wounded in their life. It is not necessary to coordinate this part of the meditation, since pure aspiration rises beyond time and space. You can also include the mantra "Pour Upon us Thy Light and Thy Love." A word takes his power depending of the sound you create and of what you are!

On the Tudor family coat of arms is found a cross with a rose. Henry VIII founded the Protestant Church, the first major break with Roman Catholicism. This new theological freedom, devoid of the Office of the Inquisition, brought us back to the Alchemical Movement, which, remarkably, began with many Catholic monks and priests, but was suppressed by the Catholic hierarchy. The suppression began with the emperor Constantine's attempt to unite the empire under himself, as the original World Pontiff. To accomplish this, he had to suppress many ancient religions and many churches, dating back to the life of Jesus. This upstart Roman church marked the end of religious freedom throughout the empire, which was now consolidated not for Gnosis or Salvation, but for the imperial control the army was no longer strong enough to provide. The First Council of Nicaea, in the fourth century A.D., marked the end of the many faiths and the beginning of Roman Catholicism. Most notably at this council, Arius, the Bishop of Alexandria, stated that Jesus was not to be worshipped as a god. His church was shut down and his priests banished. Many, for the next 1,500 years, would suffer torture and death for their Truths.

We trace the Secret Science of Alchemy back to the Knights Templar and the Crusades in the Holy Land, beginning approximately half a thousand years before the Protestant "Reformation". While in the "Holy Land", Christians came into contact with the very advanced Arabic writings, which included unknown translations from Classical Greece, Ancient Egypt, and India. Among these were the writings about Al Chimia. The ancient name for Egypt was Khem, so many scholars think it means "the art of Khem". Interestingly, stone, as in the

Philosopher's Stone, in Arabic is called Al Ixir, from whence we derive Elixir. In Arthurian legend, this Elixir was placed in the Holy Grail. By drinking it, we would be reborn. As Jesus said: "Ye must be born again of water and spirit". Excalibur, the "sword of power", intended "not to hack but to heal", was forged by the Lady of the Lake.

He who was to be king would "draw the sword from the stone".

Similarly, in ancient Rome, preceding the Catholic Hegemony, the most popular religion was Mithraism. Mithra (Mishra in Sanskrit, literally meaning "mixed"), was an Androgynous being, born from a stone, with a sword in his hand. Similarly, in the Hermetic Science of Alchemy, if one "conjoins Sulphur and Mercury, and distills it" for forty days, one can make "Alchemical Gold". Alchemy is a symbolic language, of the same meaning as Ramayana in India - an allegorical description of what St. John calls "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb of God". All sacred texts are symbolic, to confound the ignorant, so that the writers can escape persecution by the fundamentalist majority.