

Paul the Gnostic Opponent of Peter by Gerald Massey

Paul the Gnostic Opponent of Peter Not an Apostle of Historic Christianity

by Gerald Massey

See the author's "Natural Genesis" for references to authorities

Published in the 1900's

It has been shown in previous lectures that the matter of our Canonical Gospels is, to a large extent, mythical, and that the Gnosis of Ancient Egypt was carried into other lands by the underground passage of the Mysteries, to emerge at last as the literalised legend of Historic Christianity.

The mythical Christ was as surely continued from Egypt as were the mythical types of the Christ on the Gnostic Stones and in the Catacombs of Rome! Once this ground is felt to be firm underfoot it emboldens and warrants us in cutting the Gordian knot that has been so deftly complicated for us in the Epistles of Paul. To-day we have to face a problem that is one of the most difficult; it is my object to prove that Paul was the opponent and not the apostle of Historic Christianity. It is well known to all serious students of the subject that there was an original rent or rift of difference between the preacher Paul and the other founders of Christianity, whom he first met in Jerusalem--namely, Cephas (or Peter), James, and John. He did not think much of them personally, but scoffs a little at their pretensions to being Pillars of the Church. Those men had nothing in common with him from the first, and never forgave him for his independence and opposition to the last. But the depth of that visible rift has not yet been fathomed in consequence of false assumptions; and my own researches and determination to look and think for myself have led me to the inevitable conclusion that there is but one way in which it can be bottomed for the first time.

It is likewise more or less apprehended that two voices are heard contending in Paul's Epistles, to the confounding of the writer's sense and the confusion of the reader's. They utter different doctrines, so fundamentally opposed as to be for ever irreconcilable; and this duplicity of doctrine makes Paul, who is the one distinct and single-minded personality of the "New Testament," look like the most double-faced of men; double-tongued as the serpent. The two doctrines are those of the Gnostic, or Spiritual Christ, and the historic Jesus. Both cannot be true to Paul; and my contention is that both voices did not proceed from him personally.

We know that Paul and the other Apostles did not preach the same gospel; and it is my present purpose to show that they did not set forth or celebrate the same Christ. My thesis is, that Paul was not a supporter of the system known as Historical Christianity, which was founded on a belief in the Christ carnalised; an assumption that the Christ had been made flesh; but that he was its unceasing and deadly opponent during his lifetime; and that after his death his writings were tampered with, interpolated, and re-indoctrinated by his old enemies, the forgers and falsifiers, who first began to weave the web of the Papacy in Rome. In this way there was added a fourth pillar or corner-stone to the original three in

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Jerusalem, which was turned into the chief support of the whole structure; the firmest foundation of the fallacious faith.

The supreme feat, performed in secret by the managers of the Mysteries in Rome, was this conversion of the Epistles of Paul into the main support of Historic Christianity! It was the very pivot on which the total imposture turned! In his lifetime he had fought tooth and nail, with tongue and pen, against the men who founded the faith of the Christ made flesh, and damned eternally all disbelievers; and after his death they reared the Church of the *Sarkolatræ* above his tomb, and for eighteen centuries have, with a forged warrant, claimed him as being the first and foremost among the founders. They cleverly dammed the course of the natural river that flowed forth from its own independent source in the Epistles of Paul, and turned its waters into their own artificial canal, so that Paul's living force should be made to float the bark of Peter. Nevertheless, those who care to look closely will see that the two waters, like those of the river Rhone, will not mingle in one colour! And it appears to me that, whether Paul was mad or not in this life, such nefarious treatment of his writings was bad enough to drive him frantic in the next, and make him insane there until the wrong is righted.

It is the universal assumption that Paul, the persecutor of the early Christians, was converted by a vision of the risen Jesus, who proved his historic nature and identity by appearing to Paul in person. So it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The account, however, is entirely opposed to that which is given by Paul himself in his Epistle to the Galatians. He tells how the change occurred, which has been called his conversion. It was by revelation of the Christ within, but not by an objective vision of a personal Jesus, who demonstrated in spirit world the reality and identity of an historic Jesus of Nazareth, who had lately lived on earth. Such a version as that is rigorously impossible, according to Paul's own words. His account of the matter is totally antipodal. He received his commission to preach the Christ, as he declares, "*when it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me,*" and therefore not by an apparition of Jesus of Nazareth outside of him! His Christ within was not the *Corpus* of Christian belief, but the Christ of the Gnosis. He heard no voice external to himself, which could be converted into the audible voice of an historic Jesus; and nothing can be more instructive to begin with, than a comparative study of these two versions, for showing how the matter has been manipulated, and the facts perverted, for the purpose of establishing or supporting an orthodox history. What he did hear when caught up in the spirit he tells us was unspeakable; words which it is not lawful for a man to utter! He makes no mention of a Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, Jesus of Nazareth is unknown to Paul! His name never once appears in the Epistles; and the significance of the fact in favour of the present view can hardly be exaggerated. So, Jesus of Nazareth does not appear in the Gospel of Marcion; or, as it was represented by some of the Christian Fathers, Marcion had removed the name of Jesus of Nazareth from his particular Gospel--being so virulent a heretic! Here we find Paul in agreement with Marcion, the Gnostic rejecter of Jesus of Nazareth, and of historic Christianity. Moreover, Paul was the only apostle of the true Christ who was recognised by Marcion. Now, as Marcion had rejected the human nature of the Christ, and left the sect which ultimately became the church of historic Christianity, it is impossible that he could have adopted or upheld the Gospel of Paul as it has come down to us in our version of the Epistles. Hence, Irenæus complains that Marcion dismembered the Epistles of Paul, and removed those passages from the prophetic writings which had been quoted to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord! That is, Marcion, the man who knew, recognised his fellow-Gnostic in Paul, but rejected the literalisations and the spurious doctrines which had been surreptitiously interpolated by the founders, who were the forgers, of Historic Christianity. Further, with regard to the Marcionites, Irenæus says they allege that Paul alone, of all the Christian teachers, knew the truth; and that to him the Mystery was manifested by revelation. They spoke as Gnostics of a Gnostic. At the same time, as Irenæus tells us,

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the Gnostics, of whom Marcion was one, charged the other Apostles with hypocrisy, because they

"framed their doctrine according to the capacity of their hearers, fabling blind things for the blind according to their blindness; for the dull, according to their dulness; for those in error, according to their errors."

Clement Alexander asserts that Paul, before going to Rome, stated that he would bring to the Brethren (not the true Gospel history, but) the Gnosis, or Gnostic communication, the tradition of the hidden mysteries, as the fulness of the blessings of Christ, which Clement says were revealed by the Son of God, the *"teacher who trains the Gnostic by mysteries,"* i.e., by revelations made in the state of trance. He was going there as a Gnostic, and therefore as the natural opponent of Historic Christianity.

The conversion of Paul, according to the Acts, is supposed to have occurred sometime after the year 30 A.D. at the earliest; and yet if we accept the data furnished by the book of Acts and Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, he must have been converted as early as the year 27 A.D. Paul states that after his conversion he did not go up to Jerusalem for three years. Then after 14 more years he went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas. This second visit can be dated by means of the famine, which is historic, and known to have occurred in the year 44, at which time relief was conveyed to the brethren in Judea by Barnabas and Paul. If we take 17 years from 44, the different statements go to show that Paul had been converted as early as the year 27. Thus, according to the dates and the data derived from the Acts, from Paul's epistle, and the historic fact of the famine, Paul was converted to Christianity in the year 27 of our era! This could not have been by a spiritual manifestation of the supposed personal Jesus, who was not then dead, and had not at that time been re-begotten as the Christ of the canonical history. This is usually looked upon (by Renan, for example,) as such an absurdity that no credence can be allowed to the account in the Acts. On the contrary, and notwithstanding all that has been said by those whose work it is to put a false bottom into the Unknown, I am free to maintain that nothing stands in the way of its being a possibility and a fact, except the assumption that it is an impossibility. You cannot date one event by another which never occurred, or, if it did occur, is not recorded by Paul, especially when his own account offers negative evidence of its non-occurrence. It is only using plain words justifiably to say that the concocters of the Acts falsify whenever it is convenient, and tell the truth when they cannot help it! In Paul's own account of his conversion he continues:

"Immediately, I conferred not with the flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them who were Apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia."

He did not seek to know anything about the personal Jesus of Nazareth, his life, his miracles, his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; had no anxiety to hear anything whatever from living witnesses or relatives about the human nature of this Divine Being, who is supposed to have appeared to Paul in person; completely changed the current of his life, and transformed his character; no wish even to verify the historic or possible ground-work for the reality of his alleged vision of Jesus! When he did go up to Jerusalem, three years afterwards, and again in fourteen years, he positively learned nothing whatever from those who ought to have been able to teach him and tell him all things on matters of vital importance (for *historic* Christianity), about which he should have been most desirous to know, but had no manifest desire of knowing. He saw James, Peter, and John, who were the pillars of the church and persons of repute, but whatever they were it made no matter to him; they imparted nothing to him. He

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says these respectable persons, these pillars, who seemed to be somewhat, communicated nothing to him; contrariwise, it was he who had a gospel of his own, which he had received from no man, to communicate to them! He had come to bring them the Gnosis. They privately gave him the hand of fellowship, and offered to acknowledge him if he would keep out of their way with his other gospel--go to the Gentiles (or go to the Devil), and leave them alone. There was a compromise, and therefore something to compromise, though not on Paul's account; but the only point of genuine agreement between them was that they agreed to differ! On comparing notes, he found that they were preaching quite *another* gospel, and *another* Jesus. We know what their gospel was, because it has come down to us in the doctrines and dogmas of historic Christianity. It was the gospel of the literalisers of mythology; the gospel of the Christ made flesh to save mankind from an impossible fall; the gospel of salvation by the atoning blood of Christ; the gospel that would make a hell of this life, on purpose to win heaven hereafter; the gospel of flesh and physics, including the corporeal resurrection, and the immediate ending of the world; the gospel that has no other world except at the end of this. Theirs was that *other* gospel with its doctrines of delusion, against which Paul waged continual warfare. For, *another* Jesus, *another* Spirit, and *another* gospel were being preached by these pre-eminent apostles who were the opponents of Paul. He warns the Corinthians against those "pre-eminent apostles," whom he calls false prophets, deceitful workers, and ministers of Satan, who came among them to preach "*another* Jesus" whom he did not preach, and a different gospel from that which they had received from him. To the Galatians he says:

"If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be damned;" or let him be Anathema. He chides them: *"O, foolish, Galatians, who did bewitch you? Are ye so foolish: having begun in the Spirit, are ye perfected in the flesh?"*

That is, in the gospel of the Christ made flesh, the gospel to those who were at enmity with him, who followed on his track like Satan sowing tares by night to choke the seed of the spiritual gospel which Paul had so painfully sown, and who, as he intimates to the Thessalonians, were quite capable of forging epistles in his name to deceive his followers. It has never yet been shown *how* fundamental was this feud between Paul and the forgers of the fleshly faith, because the real facts had not been grappled with or grasped concerning the totally different bases of belief, and the forever irreconcilable gospels of the Gnostic or spiritual Christ, and of the Christ made flesh, to be set forth as the Saviour of mankind, according to Historic Christianity. It was impossible that Paul and Peter should draw or pull together; the different grounds of their faith were in the beginning from pole to pole apart. He says:

"I made known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man (or from a man), nor was I taught it, save through revelation of the Christ revealed within."

He did not derive his facts from history, nor his gospel from the Apostles; he was neither taught by man nor book. He derived his gospel from direct personal revelation of the Christ within. In short, his Christ was not that Jesus of Nazareth whom he never mentions, and whom the others preached, and who may have been, and in all likelihood was, Joshua Ben Pandira, the Nazarene.

From the present standpoint there is no doctrinal difficulty, even about Paul being the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. I do not need to call in another author here anymore than elsewhere. The double-dealing

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of the interpolaters and forgers would be cause enough to account for all the difference and the difficulty. They who would have, or who had forged epistles in his own name, would not scruple to indoctrinate his writings when they got the chance; and if this epistle be not Paul's, then his name as author has been forged. Now, in this epistle, the Christ is non-historical, he is the Kronian Christ, the Æonian manifestor of the mythical, that is astronomical prophecy; he is after the order of Melchizedek, who was

"without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life."

This was the ever-coming one who could not become a human personage; and for that reason, I take it, Paul repudiates the genealogies of Christ. In advising Titus to give no heed to *"Jewish Fables,"* he tells him to *"shun foolish questionings and genealogies."* He counsels Timothy to warn his followers against giving heed to *"fables and endless genealogies,"* such, for instance, as we now find in the canonical gospels of Matthew and Luke." These could have no application to the Christ of the Gnosis, hence their absence from the gospel according to John. Human genealogy could not indicate the Gnostic mode of the Divine Descent; could not authenticate the *"Word"* of John, or Philo; nor the Christ of Marcus, or of Paul; consequently we learn that Marcus, the Gnostic, eliminated the genealogies from the gospel of Luke, and all that was written respecting the generation of the Lord. The Docetæ who rejected the humanity of Christ had, as Epiphanius phrases it, *"Cut away the genealogies in the gospel after Matthew."* Tatian, the pupil of Justin, who is called an *"Apostle from the Church,"* also struck out the genealogies that were intended to prove the human descent of the Christ; he who had once accepted the gospel of the Christ made flesh, but rejected it when he had learned to know better. This they did because their Christ was spiritual, not an historic Jesus; and the same reason holds good as an explanation for Paul. He repudiated the vain genealogies employed in vain by those who sought to establish a human line of descent for the Christ, because he rejected the flesh-and-blood Jesus who was preached by the advocates of Historic Christianity. This being so, it follows that the opening passage of the Epistle to the Romans, which now looks like Paul's first utterance to all the world, begins the tale of the interpolations, and thus appears in the right place, for it stands nearly alone in the writings of Paul, with its frank or forced acknowledgment of the humanity of Jesus, by admitting the Word made flesh to be of the seed of David. But the Christ of Paul could not, at one and the same time, have been *"without genealogy"* and yet be of the seed of Abraham or David. That would be a complete reversal of his teaching, who, in rejecting the genealogies, had already repudiated the descent from David. Moreover, Barnabas, the most intimate friend of Paul and fellow-teacher with him, who, as a Gnostic, denied the human nature of the Christ, and, like Paul, spoke disrespectfully of the other Apostles--Barnabas assures us it was according to the error of the wicked that Christ was called the Son of David. Paul also tells us that no "man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 3), and therefore not through the facts of an external history, or human pedigree.

The Christ of the Gnosis was not connected with *place* any more than personality, or line of human descent. His only birthplace was in the mind of man. Consequently, in his gospel, Marcion, who was a Gnostic Christian, does not connect his Christ with Nazareth. His Christ is not Jesus of Nazareth. And this note of the Gnosis is apparent in the writings of Paul. His Christ is nowhere called Jesus of Nazareth, nor is he born at Bethlehem, either of the Virgin Mary, or of Mary the wife of Cleopas, who was not the Virgin. Of course, either an historic Jesus could become the Christ, as Saviour of the world, or he could not; and, as the world never was lost in any such sense as the ignorant have derived from a fable misinterpreted, why he could not, and as he could not, then he did not, and Paul who was an Adept in the mysteries, a Master of the Hidden Wisdom, could never have mistaken the fable for a fact on which to build his system of Christology; nor could he accept it from others. When once we have got the Gnostic

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clue to the Hidden Wisdom, we find an universal argument amongst the Gnostics concerning their tenets. Wherever we meet with them they give us the Masonic grip; and by the same sign we know that Paul was a Gnostic. This is further corroborated by his own claim to have been an Adept, a wise master-builder, one who spoke wisdom amongst the Perfected. He was a Gnostic in the supreme degree, and all Gnostics agree that the Christ of the Gnosis could not be made flesh, and therefore all are, and must be opposed to Historic Christianity, Paul included. It was as a Gnostic, a wise master-builder, that Paul laid the foundations which others built upon; and the superstructure they reared became the Church of Historic Christianity. The Gnostics were Christians in an esoteric sense, but not because they explained a human history esoterically. There was no history to explain until the myth had been made exoteric by those who were ignorant, or who cunningly converted the Gnosis into history. It was the work of Peter to make the mysteries exoteric in a human history. It was the work of Paul to prevent this being effected by explaining the Gnosis. Hints of this appear in the Epistles when he speaks of *his gospel*, and the revelation of his mystery concerning the Christ, and warns his disciples against the preaching of that "*other gospel*" and "*other Jesus*," which are opposed to his own truer teaching. As when he tells Timothy to "*remember Jesus Christ according to my gospel*," and says to the Romans, "*establish you according to my gospel*," that was the gospel of the *Gnosis* which he had brought to them.

We are also able to watch the interpolators of his writings at their work. The tampering with the text of Paul's Epistles is still made apparent by a comparison of the various recensions, as the marginal notes in the Revised version yet suffice to show; and if this remains so palpable in the latest transcript, what must it have been in the earlier and nearest to the author's original? In some instances, instead of a perfect join, there is a gaping gulf of doctrinal difference, too deep for the interpolators themselves. There is a ludicrous mixture of the historical Jesus and spiritual Christ in the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy, where Christ Jesus is spoken of as he

"who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed the good confession;" and half a dozen lines later on Paul's Jesus is the "*lord of lords dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen, nor can see.*"

That is the Christ of the Gnosis who could not be made flesh to stand in the presence of Pontius Pilate. Again, Paul speaks as a spiritualist of our transformation in death and the continuity of consciousness, when he says:

"Behold, I tell you a mystery, we shall not entirely sleep, but shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

This was the mystery of the Gnosis and the transformation revealed by spiritual phenomena. Then follows the interpolated doctrine of the resurrection at the last day:

"For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised."

Physically, which was impossible to Paul. These are as opposite as yes and no, or day and night. Once more, we know how emphatically Paul insists on the *originality* of his gospel. It was his very own, personally received by revelation. He derived nothing from the supposed apostles of an historic Jesus;

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they imparted nothing to him, and he received nothing from any man. Yet in face of this fatal evidence the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is assigned to Paul, is made to say, that the

"salvation first spoken through the Lord was confirmed unto us by them that heard!"

And in his Epistle to the Corinthians he is made to declare that he first of all delivered to them *that which he had received* (not by subjective revelation, but according to the history externalised),

"How that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, then he appeared to above five hundred of the brethren at once [this is piling it up!] then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also, for I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle."

But James and Cephas were those whom he saw in Jerusalem, and who, as he expressly tells us, had imparted nothing to him! The passage belies what Paul has elsewhere said, and is at war with all he was! So far from lowering himself in that way, he asserts in the very same epistle:

"In nothing was I behind these pre-eminent apostles"

-therefore he was not behind in time! "Let me speak proudly!" that was his attitude when he compared himself with Cephas, James, and John. And if Paul ever did call himself an abortion (the true rendering of the sense), we may be sure that he did not apply such a figure of that which is *premature* to the *lateness* of his birth as an apostle. It cannot be made to apply. The Gnostics tell us what he did mean. They alone could understand the allusion, which carries the Christ of the Gnosis with it. The Christ appears to Paul, as to an abortion, just as did Horus the Christ to Sophia (or Achamoth), when she forlornly lay outside of the pleroma as an amorphous abortion, and the Christ came and extended himself cross-wise and gave her flowing substance form! Here the Gnostic doctrine involves the Christ of the Gnosis, and not of the human history. Paul applies the figure to himself. If these statements had been true, Paul must have been taught by men. This was to receive his information from Scriptures (whatsoever they may have been!), and was not to receive his revelation solely from the Christ, who came within, as he declares. In this way it becomes apparent how Paul's writings were made orthodox by the men who preached another gospel than his; with whom he was at war during his lifetime, and who took a bitter-sweet revenge on his writings by suppression and addition, after he was dead and gone.

The Christ proclaimed by Paul is frequently designated the *"first-born."* He is the

"first-born of all creation" (Col. i. 16), "the first-born from the dead" (Col. i. 18), the "first-born among many brethren." "Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that slept!"

But in what sense? It is impossible to apply such descriptions to any historical character. No Historical Jesus *could* be the First-born from the dead.

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If continuity be a natural fact, as was held by the Gnostics (and Paul was a Gnostic!), and is maintained by all Spiritualists (and Paul was a Spiritualist!), we shall live on by a law of nature, not by some jugglery with natural law, called a miracle, performed once upon a time! The first-born from the dead could not have waited for the resurrection until *Anno Domini*; nor could our spiritual continuity have been demonstrated at that or any previous period by a physical resurrection, such as forms the foundation of the Christian faith! The doctrine enunciated by Paul was Egyptian, Chaldean, Kabbalist, and Gnostic, and, as such, it can be explained.

In the Ritual the soul that rises again from the dead exults and exclaims,

"I am the only one that comes forth from the body!"

that is, as the supreme soul of all the seven; the one representative of the pleroma of powers, or as Paul has it, *"the first-born of many brethren;"* the first-born from the dead, because the only one that attained immortality, as the spiritual man, or the Christ, called the Second Adam by Paul; that celestial man referred to by Philo when he says:

"There is the man whose name is East. A strange appellation if it had been intended to speak of a man composed of soul and body. But if it be the Incorporeal man, who comprehends in himself the divine Idea, it must be admitted that East is the name that suits him best;"

i.e., the re-orient man of the resurrection, or re-arising. It is the same Gnostic typology employed by Paul when he speaks of

"building up the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of faith, and of the knowledge (or Gnosis) of the Son of God; unto a full-grown man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The fulness of the Christ being the Egyptian, Buddhist, and Gnostic pleroma of all the seven preceding powers that culminated in the Christhood.

One title of the Gnostic Christ is *"All things."* He is called Totum, or *"All things."* Nothing short of the Gnosis can tell us why. The Christian world is without the Gnosis, and therefore without the means of understanding Paul! Concerning the formation or creation of the Gnostic Christ in the character of *"All things,"* or Totum, we are told that

"The whole pleroma of the Æons, with one design and desire, brought together whatever each one had in himself of the greatest beauty and preciousness, and uniting all these contributions, so as to skilfully blend the whole, they produced a being of most perfect beauty, the very Saviour Christ."

This *"All things,"* who was the consummate flower of the fulness or pleroma of the previous seven powers, is the Christ of Paul, who, himself, is

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"All things," because in "him are all things," and in "all things" he has the pre-eminence. "All things are summed up in Christ" (Eph. i. 10). "Of him, through him, and unto him, are all things" (Rom. xi. 36). "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9).

That is as the Gnostic Totum!--the All--The Christ--the eternal Soul or Spirit, in *"whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* are hidden! He warns his followers against a certain false teacher, whom he knows personally, and might name, and whose teaching is after the *"tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after the Christ"* of the pleroma. The Gnostic Christ was also called *Eudocetos*, because the whole pleroma of the Godhead was well pleased with him as glorifier of the Father. This is Paul's Christ, in whom the whole fulness (pleroma) was pleased to dwell. The text in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians should be *"for the whole fulness was pleased to dwell in him."* There is neither *"God"* nor *"Father"* in the case. It is the whole Gnostic pleroma of powers which made up the immortal soul, or came to the consummate flower of soul in man, and the Godhead in the Christ, as sum total of the powers. The Ancient Gnosis comes first. Paul repeats it; and then we have an adaptation of it to the later gospel history, in which we hear the voice of the Father in heaven saying:

"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

The Gnostics did not derive their knowledge from the history, any more than Paul did, and therefore it follows that the history was derived from an adaptation of the Gnosis.

The founders of Historic Christianity taught and enforced the doctrine that their Jesus the Christ had risen from the dead, body, bones, and all, and that he demonstrated the fact to his followers when he declared that he was *not* a spirit! The resurrection, therefore, was physical from the first! In a confession found in the Apostolic Creed, in the year 600, the convert has to say,

"I believe in the resurrection of the flesh";

and only the other day Canon Gregory declared in St. Paul's Cathedral, that if you took away the physical resurrection of Jesus, the one foundation of their spiritual life was gone! If the Christ did not rise corporeally from his tomb, then that tomb would be the grave of Christianity. But Paul's doctrine of the resurrection is totally opposed to this cardinal doctrine of the Christian creed, the resurrection of the body. He does not expect to rise corporeally because of any physical resurrection of the Christ. His doctrine is that of the Gnostics, and consequently identifiable by the comparative process. It is also entirely opposed to that which was proclaimed by his contemporaries, Hymenæus and Philetus, who taught that the resurrection was past already, and who had overthrown the faith of some in the doctrine preached by Paul. He says *"they are in error,"* and *"their word will eat as doth a gangrene."* Now, the sole way in which the resurrection could be set forth as *already past* was the same then as it is to-day--namely, as the resurrection once for all of a personal and historical Saviour, who there and then arose from the dead for the first time and instituted the resurrection. Paul's own resurrection from the dead was not assured by any such miraculous, non-natural, or impossible means! On the contrary, in a passage which shows a cleavage in the context, he breathes an aspiration thus:

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"If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead"

-therefore, not the means set forth by Historical Christianity--and he continues:

"Not that I have already attained, or am already made perfect, but I press on."

Again, this is pure Gnostic doctrine. The Perfect were those who had reached the octave, or height of attainment, in a sense which can only be understood by the Gnosis. It was his endeavour to reach the Christhood of the Gnosis on which the continuity in death depended--a glimpse of which had been obtained by him in abnormal vision. This kind of working out of one's own salvation, and earning one's own eternal living in this life, is absolutely opposed to the Christian doctrine of the Atonement! The old Jewish doctrine of Atonement by blood, continued into historic Christianity, is provably impossible to a Gnostic and a spiritualist like Paul. But this was the doctrine promulgated by those who preached that *"other gospel"* which he repudiated. Therefore I infer that texts like these are a part of the matter interpolated:

"Without shedding of blood is no remission of sin" (Heb. ix. 22). "Having made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. i. 20). "In whom we have our redemption through his blood" (Eph. i. 7).

Such doctrine being impossible to the Gnostic, I hold these texts to have been falsely fathered upon Paul. The two doctrines cannot co-exist in one mind, or system of thought; and we have to ascertain which of the two is the genuine Pauline doctrine before we can determine the nature of his Christology. Again he says,

"wherefore let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christ, and press on unto perfection, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection from the dead, and of eternal judgment, and this will we do!"

Here we find a complete repudiation by Paul of certain cardinal doctrines of Historic Christianity elsewhere ascribed to him! These are called first principles, or those belonging to an exoteric or exterior interpretation of the Gnosis, which is looked upon as a pernicious and deadly heresy. They were a part of those "beggarly rudiments" which kept men in bondage to the Petrine gospel of the flesh. Paul positively repudiates, and most distinctly denies, salvation by means of these Christian Sacraments! Those who have taken up with this teaching are treated as backsliders from the true faith, which is that of Paul's own gospel, and of the esoteric interpretation.

"For as touching those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again."

Every special phrase reveals the Gnostic and the Gnosis. Those who fell away have lapsed from the

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interior teaching of Paul, and gone over to those who now preach the externalised history, the "*other gospel*" of the "*other Jesus*," with its corporeal resurrection. Having been fed on solid food they have become such as have need of milk. This repudiation of dogmas culminates in his banishing the resurrection of the dead, and the Eternal Judgment or punishment at the Last Day. Here the resurrection of the dead must include that of the historic Jesus, if there had been one, and therefore this also is denied. He rejects any foundation laid on that, and says, "let us cease to speak of it." Paul, like all Gnostics, taught the resurrection *from* the dead in *this* life; not the resurrection OF the Dead in the life hereafter. Now, it is quite certain that these Gnostic doctrines could not have been interpolated in Paul's writings by the founders of the Fleshly Faith. Therefore, it is the physical dogmas that have been foisted into the Epistles of Paul.

I have never yet seen a sign in the works of Christian writers that they knew anything whatever of the real nature of these doctrinal mysteries. All alike are ignorant of the Tradition or Gnosis on which a true explanation depended. They assume the human history as the initial point of a new beginning, and ignore, or are ignorant of, that which lies beyond. When called upon to face the facts in broad daylight they themselves will be all in the dark, and will have to fight against them blindfold. But it is impossible to enter within range of understanding Paul's teaching until we do know something of the doctrines that were unfolded in the mysteries. It is impossible to comprehend the mystery of Paul's Christ without a fundamental knowledge of the Messianic mystery that had been from the Beginning. This was his mystery, which he would not make so much of if he had started with what are held to be plain historical gospel truths. He spoke the

"Wisdom of God in a mystery that hath been hidden; which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory." The "mystery of Christ which in other generations was not made known." The "mystery which is Christ in you."

His was the *"revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal."*

The fact is that Paul was a publisher of the ancient mysteries; that was why his enemies strove to kill him! He openly promulgated the Gnosis which had always been kept secret. But to comprehend him we must have some knowledge of the Messianic mystery, which had an origin in phenomena that are both natural and explicable. When one has worked at the subject for years, it can be explained in a few hours. The root of the Messiah's name is *Mesi* in Egyptian. One meaning, like that of the Christ in Greek and *Messiach* in Hebrew, is to anoint. But the fundamental signification is *re-birth*. The month, *Mes-ore*, was so named from the re-birth of the Inundation. The *mam-mesi* was the re-birth-place of the man or mummy. The evening meal on the first day of the New Year was the *Mesiu*, or festival of its birth. Cf. Sanskrit *masa*, for a moon or month, and *masala* for a year.

This *re-birth* could be very various in phenomena, and so was the typical Messiah or re-born one. The serpent called *Mesi*, the Sacred Word, was the Messiah by name, because the reptile sloughed its skin, and renewed itself. Hence the Serpent was a symbol of the Gnostic Christ. *Re-birth* was the manifestation and the personified Manifestor was the Messiah, under whichever type or in whatever phase of the phenomena. *Re-birth* of the Nile, of the light in the moon, of the time-cycle, or of the Dead, could have its Messiah! Hence the Messiah had a monthly re-birth in the lunar orb, and a solar one every year--with re-birth from the virgin mother in the Zodiac. But there was a more mysterious manifestation

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when the girl or boy attained pubescence, or re-birth, into womanhood and manhood. Here the Messiah is both male and female -- Chris as well as Christ; Wisdom as well as the Word! According to the natural facts, at that period of re-birth was born the procreative power for further ensuring the future re-birth of the race. Men and women could reproduce themselves in this life. Hence the re-birth of the Anointed One, the Messiah of Adulthood. But beyond these natural re-births, it was demonstrated in the spiritual mysteries of abnormal mediumship, that there was a spirit in man, or, at least, in some men, that could reproduce itself, or, by alliance with the power above, could be reproduced, or re-born, for the next life. This was the Christ of the Gnosis, the Messianic Manifestor in a psychical or spiritual phase; the Revealer, according to the mystery of Paul. That which he had received from no man, was communicated to him by this revelation of the Christ. But mark; in no one of these phases, elemental, Kronian, or human, could the Messiah, the Christ of the manifestation, become any *one* historic personage. Also, in the human phase, there is but one sense in which the Christ could be born of a virgin mother, and that can only be understood by taking the Christ as the Immortal in man, and supplementing it with the knowledge that the mother was the first recognised inspirer of the soul. When typified and made doctrinal, this mother, as quickener of the soul, this mother of the Horus, or Christ, may be said to be virgin in a region beyond that of physical contact in the fleshly human phase. In a final form, the Messiah was the immortal spirit in man, or the Christ within, according to the language of Paul. Those who understood these things could not take to, or be taken in by, historic Christianity; could only think of it as did Celsus when he says of the Christians:

"Certain most impious errors are committed by them, which are due to their extreme ignorance, in which they have wandered away from the meaning of the divine enigmas"; and as did Porphyry, who denounced the Christian religion as a *"blasphemy, barbarously bold."*

The Christian doctrine of being *born again* was derived without knowledge from this Gnostic *re-birth*, which was the conversion of the total man, and his seven lower souls, into a likeness of his supreme or divine self, with the eighth one, the Christ-spirit, as the reproducer for eternal life. Paul sometimes claims that he possesses this Christ-nature, this Revealer within, because, according to the Gnostics, humanity could attain to the divine altitude, and demonstrate upon the Mount of Transfiguration the immortal element in the nature of man. The Christian world let go, and lost this basis that Paul found in natural, though supra-normal fact, when it ignorantly substituted the *modus operandi* of miracle applied to a physical resurrection.

But, as we have seen, this manifestor of the of the re-birth might be feminine as well as masculine. In fact, the female announcer was first, and there are mystical reasons for this in nature. In Hebrew, the Holy Spirit, or *ruach*, is of a feminine gender. The soul is female. Some of the Gnostic sects assigned the soul to the female nature, and made their Charis not only anterior, but superior, to the Christ. In the Book of Wisdom it is Sophia herself who is the pre-Christian *Saviour* of mankind. It was Wisdom that men are taught, and she is the Saviour through knowledge and good works. Whereas the Christ was turned into a Saviour through faith. The same Tree of Knowledge that supplied the fruit which damned the primal pair in the Genesis, is the Tree of Wisdom in the Apocrypha, where Wisdom, personified as the Tree, exclaims,

"I am the mother of fair love, and fear, and knowledge, and holy hope. Come unto me all ye that be desirous of me, and fill yourselves with my fruits. For my memorial is sweeter than honey, and mine inheritance than the honey-comb. He that obeyeth me shall never be confounded."

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This complete reversal of the Christian belief is to be found in the Hidden Wisdom! Such was the interpretation, by the men who knew, of that Fable on which the Fall of Man was based by those who have imposed on us with their ignorance, and made us blind with their belief. Wisdom is the renewer and renovator of all things, and it is she who confers immortality on man; she who is the Christ as bringer to re-birth. The Gnostic Marcus maintained that Charis was superior to "all things" or Totum; and Charis, the female Christ, was the illuminating spirit of his teaching, as when he is made to say to his mediums:--

"Behold, Charis has descended upon thee; open thy mouth and prophesy; open thy mouth and thou shalt prophecy."

Apply this to the Spirit as male, instead of female, and you have the Christ, or illuminating spirit of Paul. It was a question of priority in the type, and belonged to a mystical interpretation of natural phenomena. The blood of Charis preceded the blood of Christ, and but for the purification by the blood of Charis, there would have been no doctrine of the purification of souls by the blood of Christ. The Eucharist was a celebration of Charis before it was assigned to the Christ.

Again, Paul's Christ is identified with the angel Metatron, as the Messiah who followed the Israelites in the wilderness. Thus he makes the angel masculine. But in the Targumists' traditions the Well of Miriam takes the place of this sustaining Christ, who was the spiritual rock according to Paul. In the gospel of the Egyptians, quoted by Clement Alexander, the Lord says:

"I am come to destroy the works of the Woman." The two manifestors, male and female, are continued by the "Shepherd of Hermas,"

which some of the Fathers regarded as a divinely inspired scripture. Here the spirit, or Logos, who is an old woman--*i.e.*, the ancient Wisdom--in one vision, becomes the son of God in another! Of her it is said:

"She is an old woman, because she was the first of all creation, and the world was made by her."

Wisdom, the woman, was first; she was the mother of God. Christ, the son, was second; then he superseded the female in one representation; in another he was blended with her, and consequently portrayed in the image of both sexes, as a spiritual type. The Wisdom or Sophia of the Gnostics was first at the head of the seven pre-planetary powers, and was called "*Ogdoas*," as mother of the first and inferior Hebdomad; next the Christ was made the head as manifestor of the seven later planetary powers, called by them the superior Hebdomad, he being the outcome of a later creation, and representative of the Fatherhood in heaven, which followed the fatherhood established on earth; and that same Gnostic manifestor of the seven powers or Gods had been *Iu* in Egypt, *Iao* in Phœnicia, *Assur* in Assyria, and the *Buddha* or *Agni* in India, ages on ages earlier.

Now Paul was opposed to those Gnostics who exalted the feminine type of the soul--the female as bringer to re-birth hereafter. He repudiated it, and proclaimed his Christ. His Word, Logos or Messiah, is strictly masculine. In India this type would be *Lingaic* versus the *Yonian*. He maintains that the "*Word by*

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Wisdom knew not God." This is exactly the same as saying that at one time men only recognised the motherhood in heaven, and did not know who were their own fathers on earth. The Lord is the spirit, the Christ is the spirit, he declares; not Sophia, not the wisdom of a feminine nature. Christ, he affirms, is both the *"power and the wisdom of God."* He proclaims all the treasures of Sophia and of the Gnosis to be contained in the Christ, and says the Christ has been *"made unto us Wisdom."* The Christ has taken her place. Again, his glorifying is not in *fleshly Wisdom*, not in the female *Charis*, but in the *grace* of God (2 Cor. i. 12). For the female Wisdom *had been* according to the flesh, the woman or mother being of the flesh fleshly; and Paul, as Gnostic or Kabbalist, had been acquainted with the fleshly Wisdom, one of whose mysteries appertained to feminine periodicity, which he now repudiates when he says:

"Even though we have known Christ (or the manifestor) after the flesh, yet now we know so no more."

Here it cannot be pretended that Paul ever knew the personal Christ in the flesh, and therefore some other fact has to be encountered. However interpreted, he is speaking doctrinally, and not of *two historic characters*. Paul's is the Gnostic Christ as the Second Adam; the man from heaven, whose type superseded the man of earth. Paul knew well enough that Adam was not a man in the literal sense; he was the typical man of the flesh; the son of the woman; and as was the type, such was the antitype, when he calls his Christ the second Adam, the later spiritual type of man, and of the Father above. Neither were, or could be, historic personages. To use his own words,

"These things are an allegory."

In her most occult phase the feminine messenger was a Word that could be made flesh; for she was the flesh-maker, the mother of Matter. But this was on physiological grounds alone. Hence she was superseded by the masculine messenger; the spirit that could never be made flesh. None but the initiated in these matters could possibly know what was meant by this transfer of type, and substitution of the Lord for the Lady, the Christ for Wisdom, the second Adam for the first. But there it is truth-like at the bottom of the well; the source of so much difficulty found in the depths of Paul's writings. And *this contention of Paul on behalf of one Gnostic dogma against another has been made to look as if he were fervently fighting for an Historic Jesus.*

This transfer of type is not limited to Paul! For instance, the Vine was a feminine symbol. Wisdom says,

"As the Vine brought I forth" (Ecc. xxiv. 17); and in the Book of Proverbs Sophia cries, *"Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine I have mingled."*

The Fig-Tree in Egypt was the figure of the Lady of Heaven, who is portrayed as the Tree of Life and Knowledge, in the act of feeding souls. She literally gives her body as the Bread and her blood as the Wine of Life! In the later Ptolemeian times this Tree was assigned to Sophia or Wisdom! which shows the link between Egypt and Greece. The superseding of Sophia is also illustrated in the cursing of the fruitless Fig-tree by the Canonical Christ, where the Parable of Mythology is represented as a human history. In John's Gospel the type has been transferred, just as the sayings were, to the masculine nature, and the Christ becomes the bread and wine of life. In the Apocrypha it is Sophia who is "

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The brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness!" (Wisdom vii. 26.)

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the Christ takes the place of Sophia. He is called the

"effulgence of the glory" of God, the "very image of his substance." Nevertheless, the male Christ could no more be made flesh in a man than Sophia or Charis could have previously been incarnated in an historical woman.

You cannot understand one half without the other. Both must be taken together. The doctrine is doubly and wholly opposed to any and all historical personality.

But, we have not yet completely mastered the entire Mystery of Paul for modern use; and it is not possible for any one but the phenomenal Spiritualist, who knows that the conditions of trance and clairvoyance are facts in nature; only those who have evidence that the other world can open and lighten with revelations, and prove its palpable presence, visibly and audibly; only those who except the teaching that the human consciousness continues in death, and emerges in a personality that persists beyond the grave; only such, I say, are qualified to comprehend the mystery, or receive the message, once truly delivered to men by the Spiritualist Paul, but which was thoroughly perverted by the *Sarkolators*, the founders of the fleshly faith. In the first place he was an Initiate in the Gnostic Mysteries, called Kabbalist in Hebrew. He tells us how exceedingly jealous for the traditions he had been, which must have included the traditional interpretation of the mysteries and of the Gnosis or hidden Wisdom. He was a perfected Adept. He knew the nature of the Kronian Christ, and of the Spiritual Christ, according to the Gnosis. Beyond that, Paul, on his own testimony, was an abnormal Seer, subject to the conditions of trance. He could not remember if certain experiences occurred to him in the body or out of it! This trance condition was the origin and source of his revelations, the heart of his mystery, his infirmity in which he gloried--in short, his *"thorn in the flesh."* He shows the Corinthians that his abnormal condition, ecstasy, illness, madness (or what not), was a phase of spiritual intercourse in which he was divinely insane--insane on behalf of God--but that he was rational enough in his relationship to them. He says:

"I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not; or whether out of the body I know not; God knoweth), such an one caught up even in the third heaven"

--on behalf of that man he will glory.

"And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, wherefore that I should not be exalted over much, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted over much."

Paul's Thorn in the Flesh has been attributed to lechery, and to sore eyes; but no Christian commentator known to me has ever connected it with abnormal phenomena, except as miracle. The Marcionites said

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the Mystery was manifested to Paul by revelation. Paul says the same. By this abnormal mode the Mystery was revealed to him in person. His eyes were opened, so that he could see for himself the truth that was taught in the Mysteries. If a Spirit appeared in vision to Paul, that would positively prove the *re-birth* for a future life, and constitute the revelation of his Messianic mystery. Paul's Christ, the Lord, is *the* spirit; his gospel is that of spiritual revelation, the chief mode of manifestation being abnormal, as it was, and had been, in the Gnostic mysteries.

The Gnostic Christ was the Immortal Spirit in man, which first demonstrated its existence by means of abnormal or spiritualistic phenomena. It did not and could not depend on any single manifestation in one historic personality. And when Paul says,

"I knew a man in Christ,"

we see that to be in Christ is to be in the condition of trance, *in the spirit*, as they phrased it, in the state that is common to what is now termed mediumship.

Being in the trance condition, or in Christ, as he calls it, he was caught up to the third heaven, and could not determine whether he was in the body or out of the body. Here he identifies his Christ with a condition of being, and that condition with the abnormal phenomena known to some of us who have studied Modern Spiritualism. This is the Gnostic Christ, not the Christ of any special historic personality, who is supposed to have manifested only once upon a time, and once for all. The Christ of the Gnosis, of Philo and of Paul preceded Christianity, and is sure to supersede it, because it is based upon facts known in nature and verifiable to-day. It was those who were entirely ignorant of those subtle and obscure facts, unfolded in the Mysteries, who became Christians in the modern sense, and believed, because they were blind. Paul was both a Seer and a Knower. He became one of the public demonstrators of the facts, just like any itinerant medium of our time. He says to the Galatians:

"Ye know that because of an infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel unto you the first time, and that which was a temptation to you in my flesh, ye despised not nor rejected (or spat out); but ye received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus!"

This infirmity of the flesh was his tendency to fall into trance. When it first occurred, at a given date, he received his revelation and began to preach his own gospel. He talked and taught as do the mediums in trance to-day. He received his revelations--visions and revelations of the Lord--and gave proofs of the Christ, or spirit, speaking within him, speaking through him, when he was in trance. And on this ground they received him as an angel of God--they received him *as the Christ*. This Christ, personated by Paul as the revealer in trance, was of necessity the Gnostic Christ, the Spirit of God, as he often calls it, the Christ that spoke through him, founded on what is now termed spirit control, but not based on the spirit of any Jesus of Nazareth. His Christ is the spirit which revealed itself abnormally in, and through him, so that he "spoke the wisdom and the words which the spirit teacheth; he spoke mysteries in the spirit." His Christ was the same spirit that

"hath a diversity of workings" in various spirit manifestations. "To one it gives the word of wisdom; to

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another, the word of knowledge; to another, faith; to another, gifts of healing; to another, miraculous powers; to another, prophesy; to another, seeing of spirits; to another, the gift of tongues, and to another, their interpretation."

And as this was *the* Christ, that always had been so manifested, nothing depended upon any historical character. All that was real, that is, spiritual, would be the same afterwards as it had been before. Nothing *did* depend on it, and historical Christianity itself is but a vast interpolation, the greatest of all obstacles to mental development and the unity of the human race.

One more illustration that Paul was outside the ring of conspirators who were the founders, as forgers, of Historic Christianity in Rome, and I shall have done.

The Christ proclaimed by Peter and James was the mythical Messiah of the Time-cycles, the *ever-coming one*, converted into an historical character; hence he who was supposed to have just come still remained the Coming One. He himself is made to say that he is coming before the then present generation shall have passed away.

Apart from the mythos and its meaning, there was no other coming, or end of the Times, of the age, Æon, or world! The Kronian allegory can only apply to the Kronian Christ, as the metaphorical manifestor of the Eternal in the sphere of time, who could neither be made flesh nor assume historic personality. This was known to Paul as an Adept. Such things *were* an Allegory; but it was not known to those who preached that "*other gospel*." James asserts that "*the coming of the Lord is at hand*." John declares that it is the Last Hour. In the Second Epistle of Peter we find the writer mentions Paul by name, and replies to his Epistles. He is covertly trying to counteract the influence of Paul's teaching on a matter of such importance as the second coming of Christ, and the immediate ending of the world. In the first chapter he proclaims that the *end of all things is at hand*. Here he says that mockers are asking, "*Where is the promise of his coming?*" They forget the cataclysms and deluges by which the previous heavens and earth have perished. This time the end will come with a universal conflagration, and, according to promise,

"We look for new heavens and a new earth." . . . "Our beloved brother, Paul, has been speaking of these things. . . . According to the wisdom given to him he wrote unto you; as also in his Epistles, speaking in them in these things; wherein are some things hard to understand, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest (as also the other scriptures) unto their own destruction."

The subject-matter here is the nature of the time-cycles, and the mythical destruction by flood and fire, which Paul as an Adept knew to be typical and allegorical. Peter mistakes them for literal realities. Being an outsider, he did not understand the Wisdom or Gnosis of Paul, but says it is misleading, inasmuch as the ignorant wrest it unto their own destruction. Peter had also said the day of the Lord will come as a thief. To this we have direct replies from Paul.

"Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. For yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. But ye, brethren,

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are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief; for ye are all sons of light and sons of the day; we are not of the night nor of the darkness"

--as were those foolish Physicalists, the Petrine A-Gnostics. And again he says to the Thessalonians --

"Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us! as that day of the Lord is present at hand. Let no man beguile you in any wise;"

give no heed to that ignoramus' *gobemoucherie!* Then follows a break in the sense. But a falling away is to come first, and the *Man of Sin* must be revealed or exposed; the *son of perdition*,

"he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the Temple of God setting himself forth as God."

That, I say, is St. Paul's opposer, Peter, who was set up in the Church of Rome.

"Remember ye not that when I was with you I told you these things. And now ye know that which restraineth to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work only until he that restraineth now shall be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the Lawless one whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming, (him) whose 'coming' is according to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing, because they received not the love of truth that they might be saved; and for this cause God sendeth them a working of error that they should believe a lie."

In both quotations the subject-matter identifies Peter as palpably as if Paul had named him. He is replying to the teaching of one particular man who is proclaiming the "Coming" of the Christ and the day of the Lord, or end of the world, as being close at hand. He says in effect--Do not be troubled or beguiled by any such ignorant trash. The Lord will not come in his sense, and cannot come in mine, except that man of sin be revealed. No one has ever dared to dream that this "Man of Sin" is Peter himself! But the person aimed at is considered capable of forging epistles in the name of Paul; thus attributing this kind of teaching to him, and making him father it whilst Paul was yet living. This "man of sin" and "son of perdition" has set himself up in the temple of God, *setting himself forth as God*. This is no emperor Nero, but a portrait of Peter, the life-long enemy of Paul; he whose preaching is concerning signs and lying wonders, such as the stories about the end of the world, the passing away of the heavens with a great noise, the dissolution of the elements with fervent heat, and the burning up of the earth with all the works therein, and other teachings of this cataclysmalist, which Paul denounces as delusive, and knows to be a lie! This misleader of men is restrained for the time being by Paul himself, but when he departs Peter will reveal himself or be revealed in his true colours, and the Thessalonians will then see what Paul has known all along, and against which he had warned them once before, *i.e.*, against that *working of error and belief in a lie, which we now know by name as Historic Christianity*.

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It is here, then, that we can peer right down into the deep, dark gulf that divided Peter from Paul, of which we get such a lightning glimpse in the Clementine Homilies. These writings were inspired by the faction of Peter. By them Paul is designated the *"Hostile Man"*; his own epithet, *Anomas*, the Lawless, is there flung back at him by Peter, who denounces the puerile preaching of the man that is his enemy, and who says:

"Thou hast opposed thyself as an Adversary against me, the firm rock, the foundation of the Church."

Paul's conversion, by means of abnormal vision, is attributed to the false Christ, the Gnostic and Spiritualist opposed to an Historic Christ. In Homily 17, Peter is obviously hitting at Paul and his visions when he asks:

"Can anyone be instituted to the office of a teacher through visions?"

Paul is treated as the arch-enemy of the Christ crucified -- he is the very Anti-Christ. He will be the author of some great heresy which is expected to break out in the future. Peter is said to have declared that Christ instructed the disciples not to publish the only true and genuine gospel for the present, because the false teacher must arise, who would publicly proclaim the false gospel of the Anti-Christ that was the Christ of the Gnostics.

"As the true Prophet has told us, the false gospel must come from a certain misleader;"

and so they were to go on secretly promulgating the true gospel, until this false preacher had passed away. This true gospel was confessedly

"held in reserve, to be secretly transmitted for the rectification of future heresies."

They knew well enough what had to come out, if Paul's preaching, proclaimed in his original Epistles, got vent more and more. It was Paul whom they had reason to fear. Hence those who were the followers of Peter and James anathematized him as the great apostate, and rejected his Epistles. Justin Martyr never once mentions this founder of Christianity, never once refers to the writings of Paul. Strangest thing of all is it that the book of the Acts, which is mainly the history of Paul, should contain no account of his martyrdom or death in Rome! The gulf, however, cannot be completely fathomed, except on the grounds that there was no personal Christ, and that Paul was the natural opponent of the men who were setting up the Christ made flesh for the salvation of the world that never was lost. My conclusion is, that fabricated evidence is the sole support of Historic Christianity which can be derived from the Epistles of Paul; that the manipulation for an ulterior purpose, which is so obvious in the book of Acts, was far more subtly and fundamentally applied to his Epistles and doctrines; that they have been worked over as thieves manipulate stolen linen when they pick out the marks of ownership to escape from detection; that false doctrines have been foisted into the original text, which seems to have been withheld for a century after the writer's death, until the leaven of falsehood had done its fatal work. The problem of the plotters and forgers in Rome was how to convert the mythical Christology into historic Christianity, and when

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Paul's Epistles were permitted to emerge from obscurity in a collection, what had occurred was the *restoration* of the carnalised Christ, that "*other Jesus*" who was repudiated by Paul in his own lifetime. Paul felt or feared, and foretold that this would be the case when once he was removed out of the way. He saw the mystery of lawlessness already at work--the falsifiers sending forth letters as if from himself--and we have seen what Paul foresaw! the problem of the plotters who forged the foundations of the Church in Rome was how to successfully blend the Christ Jesus of the Gnostics, of the pre-Christian Apocrypha, of Philo, and of Paul, with that *Corporeal Christ* and impossible personality, in whom they ignorantly believed, through a blind literalisation of mythology, so as to make the historic look like the true starting-point, and the Gnostic interpretation becomes a later heresy. This was finally effected when the declaration of John--that "*the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*"--had been accepted as the genuine Gospel, and that which had been an impossibility for the Gnostics was an accomplished fact for those who knew no better than to believe. The Gospel, according to John, was concocted and calculated to serve as a harmonising amalgam of doctrines that were fundamentally opposed. In this Amalgam they tried to mix the "gall and honey," so that, if "well shaken before taken," it might be swallowed by the followers on both sides. But there was a great gulf forever fixed between the Gnostic Christology and Historic Christianity. It was a gulf that never could be soundly bridged, and never has been plumbed, or bottomed, or filled in. The bodies of two million martyrs of free-thought, put to death as heretics, in Europe alone, and all the blood that has ever been shed in Christian wars, have failed to fill that gulf, which waits as ever wide-jawed for its prey. Across that gulf the Christian Church was erected upon supports on either side. On one side stood those pillars of the Church which were seen by Paul in Jerusalem. On the other was Paul himself, the pillar that stood alone. A difference the most radical and profound divided him from the other apostles, Cephas, John, and James. From the first they were on two sides of the chasm that could not be closed; and the *Prædicatio Petri* declares that Peter and Paul remained unreconciled till death. The great work of the first centuries was how to bridge the chasm over, or at least how to conceal it from the eyes of the world in later times. This could only be done by resting on Paul as a prop and buttress on the one side and Peter on the other, which had to be done by converting or perverting the Epistles of the Gnostic Paul into a support for Historic Christianity. In that way the Church was founded. It was built as a bridge across the gulf, and the Pope of Rome appointed and aptly designated *Pontifex Maximus*. It was reared above the chasm lying darkly lurking like an open grave below, and to-day, as ever, the Christian world is horribly haunted with the fear that a breath or two of larger intellectual life, a too audible utterance of free-er thought, a dose of mental dynamite may bring the edifice of error down in wreck and ruin to fill that gulf at last, over which it was so perilously founded from the first.

NOTE TO LECTURE ON "PAUL"

In quoting evidence of the double doctrine ascribed to Paul, I omitted one of the most conclusive illustrations of the fact. We read in Galatians iii. 13--"Christ hath redeemed us from the *Curse of the Law*, being *made a Curse for us*: for it is written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a Tree*." The object of hanging the Condemned One on the tree was to make him Accursed. But what says the voice of Paul the Gnostic in another text (Cor. xii. 3)?--"No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus *Accursed*, and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord *but by the Holy Spirit*." That is, the Christ of the Gnosis could not become accursed, could not be hung upon a tree, and no Gnostic would say that Jesus was the KURIOS save in the mystical or esoteric sense. Here the Historic and Gnostic doctrines are directly antipodal. This again is the teaching of Paul--"*Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down;) or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the Dead.) The Word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart*." That is, the *Word* as preached by Paul. Then follows the

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interpolation. Also, as an illustration of the statement made by Clement Alexander--that Paul said he would bring the Gnosis or Hidden Wisdom to the Brethren in Rome--it should have been shown by me that the teaching of the Epistle (ch. i. 23-32) is taken *almost bodily* and *repeated nearly verbatim* from ch. xiv. 12-31 of the "Wisdom of Solomon."