

Constantine and the Esoteric Bible

AS WE KNOW from our experience with occultism, the Holy Bible has been given to the humanity of the Occident by the Recording Angels, who give to each exactly what they need for their particular spiritual unfolding. Although a certain amount of spiritual comfort and instruction has been gained by an exoteric reading of its text, a fuller appreciation of its hidden gems and occult wisdom can be gleaned only from a higher perspective than that allowed by orthodoxy.

All too often, the conventional historical approach to interpreting the literature of the Bible leaves the modern aspirant feeding on husks, starving and full of consternation. After reading it he often ends up with more questions than he has answers. The time has come in our modern age for a more catholic (universal) participation in the ancient esoteric approach to interpretation of the Bible, a time which began with the inauguration of the Rosicrucian Fellowship and the dissemination of its Western Wisdom Teachings.

As we approach the Aquarian Age during the next five centuries, we shall find that we have metaphysically come full circle, that we are increasingly returning to the original meaning of Scripture which the earliest Christian writers clothed in oriental imagery.

No amount of didactic reading can replace the fruitage of personal discovery through meditation and prayer. It is incumbent upon each and every one of us to be self-reliant, and to begin or expedite our own search for deeper meaning in Scripture, for the arcane and symbolic references



Oil on wood, 1518. Hans Burgkmair the Elder. Alte Pinakothek, Munich
St. John the Evangelist in Patmos

and figurative language. However, it also behooves us to independently study what we can about human history, human physiology and astrology in order to increase our understanding and thereby free our minds from the shackles of traditional belief that may cloud our mind and direct our focus on the outer to the exclusion of the inner meaning and beauty portrayed by poetic and cryptic codices. May we thereby hasten the day of our liberation and Christ's, realizing the goal of having the roses bloom upon our cross. And what is this if not to be "born anew,"¹ by "saving the seed within" and regenerating.

To followers of conventional biblical interpretation, it may initially sound preposterous to assert

that the central theme of the New Testament is the exhortation that natural or sinful man must regenerate and cease to “sin” (literally meaning “to fall short”) in the harnessing of his sexual impulses. But a study of human anatomy and astrology quickly sheds light on obscure meanings.² While it is beyond the scope of this study to elucidate the meaning of each of the synoptic Gospels, the writer would perhaps be remiss if he did not cite at least a few key examples of this symbolic interpretation.³

The 66 books of the (whole) Holy Bible are in essence 66 statements by 66 different writers about the same identical subject—the generic human body, its chemical and biological processes, and the planetary influences operating to create and bring into physical manifestation the visible universe. Man is law in action. To no longer be bound by the law means being “led by the spirit,” i.e., being an operator and an attribute of the law itself. The 21st letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *schin* or *shin*, lack one letter to complete the alphabet—*tav*, the 22nd letter, meaning “cross.” Following are some of the Greek and Hebrew terms used to translate “sin,” or “falling short.” In Hebrew: *asham*, *heet*, *chet*, *hata*, *avon* (translated *iniquity* or *sin* more than 200 times), *pasha* or *pasha*. In Greek: *harmarita*, *proanartano*, *anamartetos*, *anomia*, *parabaimo*.

Any act coming under the meaning of sin retards the automatic action of the life seed, which—if not interfered with—lifts up a portion (give one-tenth) of the life essence (oil or secretion) that continually flows down the spinal cord (a “strait and narrow way”) and transmutes it, thereby increasing its power many times and perpetuating the body indefinitely, or until the indwelling Ego decides to dissolve it by vibratory rates set in action by its inherent will. If Matthew, Mark, Luke and John teach one certain theme, it is the need to transmute and attain mastery of the human body. In Hebrew, for instance, *Bethlehem* means “house of bread.” “I am the bread of life,” said Jesus, speaking occultly.

The Joseph and Mary of the body are the pineal and pituitary glands, male and female, and parents of the spiritual son born in the solar plexus around age twelve. When the holy fluid (Christ, oil) from

the claustrum becomes purified, it turns yellow and white—what is referred to in the Old Testament as the milk and honey which flows in the Promised Land—and gains integrity when it reaches the solar plexus via semi-lunar ganglia, the Bethlehem of the body.⁴

Max Heindel wrote that while the gospels narrate the historical biography of an individual, they are more importantly formulae for initiation into the higher life. He also stated that the man Jesus actually lived on earth and gave up his lower vehicles for the use of the Christ Spirit. Some today insist that the historical details of the gospel narratives are literally infallible and *in toto* inerrant, despite the obvious fact that the four accounts (five if one includes the “rejected” Gospel of St. Thomas) differ, often widely, in the description and chronology of events, with some events unique to each gospel.

Add to this the fact that the original manuscripts are forever lost, that the oldest and best manuscripts we have today have been copied hundreds of times over the centuries, and one begins to appreciate the difficulty in accepting this claim of inerrancy for the gospels. Some among us, often novice occult students of the various schools, make the mistake of *over-idealizing* the biblical passages, seeing no historical veracity in them at all.

As we begin to perceive the many, often seemingly conflicting, allegorical references, we do not know, or we forget that truth can exist on many different levels. We begin to appreciate the ingenuity of the gospel writers when we realize that they both recorded historical events *and* yet managed to infuse them with deep spiritual significance. The authors of the Bible were ever ready to defend what they had seen and heard against the accusation of skeptics by quoting the testimony of those who had seen and heard Christ, for, as St. Peter averred, “we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet 1:16). But Paul also clearly shows that parts of the Old Testament are to be understood allegorically.

There are others who go to the other extreme, passionately making the claim that our under-

standing of Scripture must be strictly limited, and that our attempts to garner wisdom from these ancient texts outside a literal reading is *eo ipso* in vain. While it is true that all enduring literature is best comprehended and appreciated in its language of composition and best viewed in the context of the time and place of its writing, it is also true that what makes the work enduring, especially Scripture, are its timeless verities and formulae of initiation, with which their mystic composers, such as the Essenes, were familiar.⁶

The Individuality known to the world as Jesus continues to work beneficently from the higher worlds with the various churches today. He surely hears those who call upon His name. But the Christ is a cosmic Being, an Initiate of immeasurably higher stature.⁷

Just how did this misunderstanding of our Bible as a closed book come about? Students of history know the unparalleled impact that Constantine the Great (280?-337), the first Roman Emperor alleged to have become a Christian, had upon early Christian theology. It is worth while to briefly outline some of the more significant acts and beliefs of this self-professed believer in the Christian God.

Constantine the Great (Flavius Valerius Constantinus), after numerous civil wars, became the Western emperor in 312 AD and then sole emperor in 324. Members of his own family may well have been Christians, but we know he was personally committed to the faith by 313 when he issued the Edict of Milan, which extended toleration to Christians, then a persecuted minority sect. He considered himself the 13th apostle. Believing he was responsible to the Christian God for the execution of his duties, he attributed his successes (military and otherwise) to this Deity. Proof of this can be seen in a triumphal arch he had erected in Rome in his honor after defeating Maxentius in the battle at Milvian Bridge, which victory he ascribed



Fresco, Caesare Nebbia (c. 1536-c. 1614), Sistine Room, Apostolic Library, Vatican

The Second Council of Constantinople

Emperor Theodosius presided over the successor (381) to the first eucumenical council convened in 325 at Nicaea, where the dogmatic formulas of the Nicene Creed, introduced under Constantine, were ratified and Arianism and Donatism were declared heretical.

to the “inspiration of the Divinity”—and to his own genius. Beyond this, a statue erected at the same time shows him holding up a cross with the inscribed legend “By this saving sign I have delivered your city from the tyrant and restored liberty to the Senate and people of Rome.”

If we read the history carefully, we can clearly see the emergence of a man who would force his view of the Scriptures on an entire empire. Constantine’s conversion influenced the relations between church and state for centuries to come. Under him Christianity became the official religion of the empire and was stimulated by his imperial patronage and that of his sons. So firmly rooted was this new religion that it could not be shaken later by the apostate emperor Julian. Seeing himself as servant of God, Constantine took it upon himself to write the North African Fathers (320s) concerning the Donatist schism, and then later, he addressed the Council of Nicaea (325) to settle disputes he feared might aid Satan and result in schism.

Perhaps with some degree of sanctimony, Constantine referred to himself as the Bishop of those outside the Church. Lacking a strong classical education, his knowledge of Greek and philosophy were poor and he was unable to fully participate in discussions or to appreciate the subtle theological demarcations then being drawn by church doctors. Instead, he accused partisans of acting in defiance of the clemency of Christ.

Then a mysterious event took place that is



Detail, attributed to Simon Marmion, third quarter of the fifteenth century, Lorvre, Paris

St. Helen and the Miracle of the True Cross

The mother of Constantine, Helen encouraged the growth of Christianity throughout the Empire. Legend credits her with finding the True Cross (as well as the two thieves' crosses and nails) in Jerusalem around 327, the wood of which effected many miracles—as the healing of a sick woman (above).

obscurely referenced and continues to baffle historians. During the Council, at the time of the 20th anniversary of the reign of Constantine, he returned to the West and promptly had his eldest son Crispus executed and his own wife Fausta, Crispus' stepmother, boiled in oil. It is the opinion of the writer that the sole prompting for such a hideous act was that Constantine considered the esoteric ecclesiastical views of the two as heretical. It would have been the belief among his priests that the karmic penalty for such deeds would have been many difficult incarnations. It seems reasonable to assume that Constantine's only motive for obfuscating the doctrine of reincarnation at the Council of Nicaea was his need to see the blood of Christ, shed by proxy, as eternally sufficient for the capital offenses of others.⁸

Constantine was known to be ruthless and cruel to his enemies and doubtless he wanted a very personal vicarious "way out" of his future punishment.⁹ It was perhaps in the spirit of desired familial atonement that Helena, Constantine's mother, embarked on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (326) accompanied by much almsgiving, with the apparent attempt to locate the historical places associated with Jesus in the Gospels, which tradition has now set up for us today as a quasi-geographical and historical reality.

All this being said, let us remember that individ-

uals must progress in their own good time. We are not to unduly confuse those in the churches who are not ready and willing to ponder the esoteric meanings of Scripture. After all, nothing is more important and more sorely needed in the world right now than simple human sympathy and loving service. It would benefit us to reflect on what may well be the most public and emphatic message of the New Testament—the unconditional quality of God's love. True or esoteric Christianity will be restored and universal in the New Age, and the message will be that the Christ, just as the Kingdom of Heaven, is to be found "within you." Even so, the Messiah did appear among the Jewish people, as He was for this reason "sent unto the people of Israel," in fulfillment of Jehovah's promise, yet declared the good news of healing and reconciliation even unto the entire planet. □

—Rick Manoff

1. Or "from above"; Jesus goes on to say that the second birth is of water *and* the spirit, or "wind." The underground name for Christ Jesus was the acronym ICHTHYS, which is also the Greek word for fish, a cosmic cell in the ocean of bodily life, which—when regenerated through conservation of the life force—reaches the head, where, being born of spirit, death loses its power to harm or destroy (he shall never die), for then *consummatum est*, "it is finished," and an Immortal Spirit is (re-)born.
2. Jesus spoke in parables to the public, teaching his disciples the inner meaning later, and often exhorting them to keep it secret. "I will open my mouth in parables. I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world." (Matt. 13:35)
3. As the poet R. Realf wrote:
"Great are the symbols of being,
That which is symbolized is greater;
Vast the create and beheld
But vaster the Inward Creator."
4. The Sea of Galilee, or Lake Genesareth, is the semi-lunar gannion thru which the seed or Jesus passes to reach the spinal cord.
5. We also know that Paul quotes at least one line that is *not* in our current Bible.
6. Paul admitted that he gave "milk" to those who could not handle instructional "meat."
7. Jesus once retorted to his accusers that Scripture teaches: "Don't you realize that you, too, are gods?"
8. The fact that the Council members could have been so easily persuaded should not be surprising to the reader. Consider, for instance, what occupied their time: the lengthy dispute over whether or not angels had wings, it being decided by a majority of three in favor of wings, the minority contending that since Jacob let down a ladder for angels to descend and ascend, there was *prima facie* evidence that angels had no wings.
9. It was not unusual for a ruler to seek divine justification for conducting war, but Constantine went far beyond this. What is remarkable is the subsequent development of his new religious allegiance to a strong personal commitment; this is what, in large part, makes the writer feel that the issue was the application of the concept of vicarious atonement to his personal situation.