

under notice, Perceval is given a test of merit to accompany and aid his return, as we have seen long since. In other texts he fails to ask the Question of the Rite and is covered with seeming ceremonial reproaches; yet the way back is open and late or soon he receives his call. It is implied early in the CONTE DEL GRAAL and the Didot-Modena Quest when the denunciations of the laidly Grail-Messenger spur the hero to undertake the Quest. In the German PARZIVAL the Grail itself calls him who is foreordained to the Kingdom. A new face of things is presented in the PERLESVAUS, which stultifies the office of the Question and gives the Grail Crown to Perceval by right of conquest, enforced by that of heirship. Finally, in the Quest of Galahad, which revolutionises the whole story, all and sundry are invited to attempt the Quest by the Grail manifesting for that purpose in the Royal Court of Arthur.

The Chivalry of the Round Table goes forth thereon, but only to disastrous failure; and Monseigneur Gawain confesses in the MORT ARTUS that he who, alone of all, suffered contumely at Corbenic was responsible in his own person for the slaughter—in tourneys and what not—of eighteen Questing Knights. On the other hand, those nine Anonymi who entered, as we have seen, at the beginning of the Sacro-Saintly Festival, when the Mystery was in fine unveiled, took their places unchallenged, as if they were Epopts already, familiar with the Service of the Grail and divinely anxious to share again therein. As if such, they were received by Galahad; as such they knelt with him and saw the Blessed Vision. But it happens that at this time we are called upon to regard the whole Quest-subject from another standpoint, which is neither that of Eleusis nor Mithra, of Mount Heredom or the Rosy Cross. We pass suddenly from these and their pageants, as if into a Church unknown, which appoints Messengers to carry its glad tidings through the world without. The story of the Secret Words dissolves, the Super-Apostolical Succession passes out of view; but the same high warrant, the same Man-Christ clothed now in all the symbols of His Passion tells Galahad that even as He appointed Apostles to carry His Gospel through the four quarters, so now He has chosen those nine Anonymi, whose sole Priesthood is that of the Order of Knighthood, to carry the tidings of the Quest achieved—as one might say, over all the world. It is essential to remember this when looking, as I proceed to do, at the Grail as a possible Rite of Initiation.

Palace or Keep or Temple, "wilderness of building" or grey Northumbrian Hold, the House of the Holy Grail is the place of its Hidden Mystery and all that takes place therein belongs—let us say and think—to the Form of Reception for those who are called to partake. In all those Tales of Quest which signify from this point of view, as from others that are more important, the Candidate is a scion of the House, a Royal Heir-at-law, apparent or presumptive. On the surface this is according to the flesh; but from the Mystery point of view there is that latent within him by which he is or may become duly qualified to receive

Initiation, and for its sacred charge to devolve ultimately upon him. Here, I conceive, is the broad hypothesis of the subject ; and it may not be held impermissible for one who, like myself, is directly and indirectly acquainted with many forms of Initiation, old and new, to affirm that it would be possible on my own part to reconstruct at their value all the Quests in decorative pageants, even the CONTE DEL GRAAL and the Gawain part of the PERLESVAUS, which is its only Quest element. I have been at this kind of work for many years of initiated life, have filled all the offices in all the chief departments and am an old hand with all the stage machinery.<sup>1</sup> It has been worth while to mention this (1) because the great dissimilarity between Rites of which the fact is known publicly and of those which are hidden from the world, between those which exist on a small scale and those which are established on a large, have brought me a diversified experience ; (2) because by virtue of such experience I am qualified to know whether this or that material, if put into my hands, would prove workable ; and (3) because in this manner I have acquired an instinct<sup>2</sup> by which I am enabled to decide whether the Grail literature does represent at a near or far distance something which "once in time and somewhere in the world", existed as a Ceremonial Mystery.

The first point that is obvious in respect of the Grail literature is that it would be like telling the wrong story if we selected a particular Quest version and decided, on the basis of one or another consideration, that it approached most nearly the original Ritual form. We should inevitably make our choice of this or that text because it seems to us that it is the most capable of successful dramatic rendering. It happens, however, on the hypothesis with which we are dealing, that Grail Ritual preceded the Grail Romances, while having regard to the variety of Quests and to the fact that they exclude one another, we are without any canon of criticism to guide a choice, the modern notion of dramatic values being most probably the worst of all. If we care so to regard it, we have already before us the Book of the Words of Wagner's PARSIFAL, as a German Quest version and a counsel of caution as to what may befall anyone who attempts to reconstruct a particular Quest in the guise of a Mystery Ritual. Wagner, as it goes without saying, had no such scheme in view : as a "great tone-poet", his task was to translate the spirit of the Grail and its Quest in the tongue of music ; and he gave that to the ages before him which itself could never be put into words, as his own attempt at verbal rendering makes more than clear.

It seems to follow that, from all the Quests and from the histories which lie behind them, our task is to extract a marrow or essence if we are bent, not indeed upon reconstructing a hypothetical Grail Ritual antecedent to all but upon presenting to our own minds, and to those

<sup>1</sup> I am not referring to Freemasonry *per se* or especially, in all its Orders or Degrees, though it is to be understood of course that they are included.

<sup>2</sup> Even to one who is acquainted chiefly or only with the ill-explored wealth of Masonic Ritual, or with the Archives of the Rosy Cross, such instinct comes.

who may share our zeal, a presumptive picture of that which took place at the Temple of Grail Initiation when a Candidate came to the Gate. It may be said that the word Grail would not be heard therein, which is likely enough and signifies little enough;<sup>1</sup> for there was a Vessel of singular election, which may as well be called by that term as by any other. There were also companion Hallows, a Shrine of all, a Guardian of the Shrine, and so forth. In the absence of these it is obvious that there would be nothing to reconstruct: there would be only a wide field for the play of free imagination. The next point which is clear and prevails throughout is that we are concerned with a sacred trust and a law of succession thereto: and this means that the purpose of Grail Initiation differs from all others in the Mysteries of past and present. We have seen that Candidates came in crowds to Eleusis and obtained that which Eleusis had warrants to give; but no one remained at Eleusis, the hierophants and Priests and Officers of its Rites being drawn from two families. Adonis, Attis and Mithraic Rites received their tens of thousands, multiplied many times over in the course of their long histories; but no one dispossessed another and became the Ruler of the Rite. We do not dispossess the Grand Master on taking the Master Grade of Emblematic Freemasonry; and so of the rest. The Supreme High Buffalo, if there happens to be such an exalted personage, abides supreme and high, though recruits innumerable may reinforce the Antediluvian Order, much as Mr. Dick Swiveller would have remained "Perpetual Grand", whatever new companions might have flocked to the festal board of his own most worthy Rite. A further feature of the problematical subject is that in one or another sense the Grail is always removed or goes into deeper hiding in the Grail Romances, as we have seen over and over again in the course of our research. It is the antithesis therefore of any other Ritual Mystery, supposing that it is such indeed. The Mysteries, on the other hand, always remain, though only Eleusis had specific headquarters with a notable place in history.<sup>2</sup> The Secret remained always, but was available always for communication under its solemn seals. The Grail has no story after, according to its own records; there is an utter end of all things, unless and until our own gifts of vision intervene to stultify its rubrics and to make its closings void. I do not pause to think how much further we might prolong these changes and counter-changes of the subject put into our hands; but there is at least one more point which I must not fail to cite, because it is the pivot of all the events round which the Perceval Cycles move. This is the Question, and its utterly unsolved Mystery.<sup>3</sup> We have seen that it stands alone, or I at least have fared as a pilgrim through worlds of great adventure, through age-long times of adventure, through a

<sup>1</sup> It became a purely conventional designation as time went on, for obviously the *Grasal* or Dish had no application to a Mass Chalice and still less, if possible, to the Stone of Wolfram.

<sup>2</sup> While the Rites of the *Mater Deorum* and the Mithraic Rite not only travelled but colonised, Eleusis remained where it was: those who desired its Mysteries came thereto; it went in search of no one.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix I, Note 25.

thousand ways of faërie and ways of the lore of folk : but neither in highways nor by-ways have I met elsewhere with the Question which must be asked : it is found nowhere in the world before it occurred to Chrétien de Troyes that it should be imposed on his rather painted and jewelled example of the Great Fool Fable, and it is nowhere in the world after, except in the Grail poems and romances which followed his lead. As one speaking out of due time, I have registered already that he who comes to the Mysteries comes with open ears and eager eyes, but not with an open mouth : he listens and does not ask. What kind of Rite went back upon this procedure and held up its main workings till the Candidate for Admission took that course which no Candidate was ever allowed to take ? What Kind of Rite sent him forth in disgrace and exile because he had failed to do what never was done before ?<sup>1</sup> I know only of one direction in which we can turn for a solution of this problem, and it is that in which the Instituted Mysteries, past and present, have never turned themselves. They have never drawn into Ritual the Great Mystery which lies behind the unconditional allegation of a Master more illustrious than any Hierophant of old, of Him who said in His plenary mediatorial capacity : Ask and ye shall receive. But that is another kind of questioning, beyond the measures of the PERLESVAUS, beyond the highest intimations of the Galahad Quest. I have said that it has not been drawn so far into any Ritual, and it has not been drawn into Romance. It is the consecrated essence of all the verbal talismans ; and the simplicity of its utter guarantee has the ring of the Word made flesh. It has the music of all the plain song of all the Masses and high *Epiclesis* clauses ; and behind it is the music, as it seems to me, of yet another Mass, which we would give our souls to hear ; but it has not been drawn as yet into the Liturgy of any known Church. Faintly and far away, it may have been heard by Lopuhin, somewhere in Russia, and over against, I think, some great Pasch Candle burning ; less faintly and not so far, Eckartshausen heard it surely, when a rift shewed light through the clouds of his Holy Sanctuary. And I in my humility, the last and least of witnesses, testifying faithfully amidst the world of emblems, have heard a voice, ás one of another ordination ; and it chants over and over *Mysterium Fidei*, till a Sanctus Bell rings, and the World of Faith is justified in the World of Reality.

But if this is like a Preface from the leaf of another Missal, though beginning in the old manner with *Vere dignum et justum est*, it leads us on to the next clause of this our critical research. The Perceval of the CONTE DEL GRAAL having in fine fulfilled the Quest, becomes the King of the Grail and overwatches it in peace for the space of seven years. He then serves God in a Hermitage, followed by the Sacred Vessel and the other Hallows. He passes in succession through the Offices of Holy Church and becomes a Priest : he says Mass apparently for five years and then is called to his reward in Heaven, the Hallows ascending also

<sup>1</sup> It may be asked also : In what other Rite of all the world of Rites does a Candidate come to heal and save otherwise the desperate situation of a Holy House ?

—or so it is proposed at a venture.<sup>1</sup> The Perceval of the PERLESVAUS, having achieved in his turn, and having guarded the Reliquary in like manner, is carried in a ship by a goodly company, robed as if to sing Mass: they sail away to a place where the Grail has gone before, and this also is a place of Masses.<sup>2</sup> The Lancelot of the Great Prose LANCELOT and the sacro-saintly QUESTE, having drawn so near to the Mystery, as a man of sin may dare, makes at long last an end to a life of sin; and having been ordained also, it is testified concerning him that "a twelvemonth he sang Mass."<sup>3</sup> Galahad ascends to Heaven, as if with the Sacred Host, hallowed in an Arch-Natural Mass, dissolved between his lips. It may be said that the Host is everywhere. In the PARZIVAL of Wolfram a Host hallowed in Heaven renews from year to year the virtues of the Holy Grail. The maimed King of the CONTE DEL GRAAL is sustained in like manner through the years. There is even a curious Office of Bread in the phantom Quest of DIU CRÔNE; and I wonder that Miss Weston did not observe more closely the receptacle in which it is carried: it seems dangerously like the Holy Box of Eleusis.<sup>4</sup> What are we to say of these ever-recurring facts on the hypothesis that there was a Grail Ritual, a time immemorial Rite, and its Liturgy, before the Holy Grail was drawn into Romance? We cannot ritualise the Grail Mythos by an arbitrary process of eliminating its vital elements for the purpose of producing a supposititious non-Christian form. It leaves nothing but a couple of references to dried-up springs and perhaps three to harvest failures. Miss Weston has wearied Heaven with dreams on these subjects—not to speak of her readers; but there is no material here. And "the Fisher King in the Grail Romances" is not material *per se*, more especially if we remove his healing by Question on the ground that it does not belong to folk-lore or to Vegetation Cults. Throughout the Grail literature, the Grail is a Reliquary containing the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, except in Chrétien de Troyes, who had not reached the point of explanation concerning it, and except in Wolfram, who derived from the French poet and did not know what the latter was talking about. He had therefore a fine field for invention, in course of which he brought Kyot de Provence to birth, the Jew Flegitanis, as a contribution to Semitic nomenclature, and drew the starry heavens into his creative scheme. Wolfram is one of those witnesses who shine more radiantly in proportion as they lie the more; but the breach between him and me will never be filled, because he has failed to deceive me. It is to be remembered lastly that the Grail without the Secret Words stultifies the Lesser Chronicles, while the PERLESVAUS and the QUESTE are rooted in the claim that Joseph II was the first Bishop of Christendom and the first Priest who consecrated the Body of the Lord.

But taking all these contributory materials and grouping them

<sup>1</sup> Potvin, *Op. cit.*, VI, pp. 152-155.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, I, p. 347; HIGH HISTORY, Branch xxxv, Title 27.

<sup>3</sup> LE MÔRTE D'ARTHUR of Malory, Bk. XXI, *cap.* 10.

<sup>4</sup> That is to say, the *κίστη*, which is supposed to have contained Bread, Cakes, etc.

together, let us bear in mind that, by the hypothesis of the subject, we are not dealing with this or that Son of the Quest in Romance.<sup>1</sup> Gawain and Perceval and Bors and Galahad pass from the scene of activity, like Arthur and all his Court. The Candidate for admission within the circle of Mystery has those qualifications which brought them to the term of Quest in the old Knightly Romances and have put aside those hindrances which caused some to fail. Let us ask ourselves in the next place: What is the kind of Temple approached *ex hypothesi* in the period prior to Romance by the Grail Aspirant, and what reception awaited him? It was the place of a Christian Mystery; the place of a maimed King; the place of a King in his passing; the place of a Secret Hierarchy; the place of Masses said nowhere else on earth; the place of Secret Consecrations; the place of Strange Hallows; the place of reception and the communication of miraculous Eucharists administered by Christ Himself; the place where unknown Candidates or Epopts, coming from far countries, might enter unchallenged and behold the Mystery unveiled. What again was this kind of Temple? Eleusis and Samothrace; Thebes and Memnon; Dionysiacs and Adonis Rites; Attis and *Mater Deorum*; Mysteries of Mithra: it was not of these things and places. It was a Mystery of Christian Religion prolonged into the unknown and the place of a Secret Church. I am not certifying at the moment—or perhaps subsequently—that here is discovered the Mystery behind the Holy Grail; but it becomes intelligible in this way and no other, if the great diversified literature is more than successive creations of High Romance.

There are many difficulties of detail, and high above all emerges the problem of succession which is not of detail but belongs to the heart of the Mystery. Were it a question of one and no other, perpetuated from age to age, there might be easy travelling, so to speak; but he who is to come is not in the likeness of him who has reigned previously. It does not happen that folk-lore scholars have taken this subject in hand, and it seems to have escaped also the exponents of Ritual theories. It is the rock on which their explanations would be ships that founder, did they find plain sailing otherwise. I have contemplated long and have surveyed the subject long from different points of view—to no purpose so far. It is not as if a Church in sickness were dispossessed by another Church or a new sect, for the Candidate, be he Perceval or Galahad, comes not to hurt but heal.<sup>2</sup> It is not as if a dispensation which had lived its day were to be succeeded by another, even if fulfilled therein—e.g., for it belongs to the Grail period and was a great debate beginning therein—the *dispensatio sub nomine Christi* in a *Dispensatio Spiritus Sancti*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, XI, sect. 1, on the inevitable impersonality of the Ritual Candidate.

<sup>2</sup> It may be advanced that the Candidate takes possession and that in several cases the previous Keeper dies. But that of which he takes possession is the old Sacred Object: no change occurs therein. He brings no other Grail to supersede the old.

<sup>3</sup> The influence of the EVERLASTING GOSPEL spread far and wide at a post-Grail period, the work under that title appearing in 1254. It is no concern of our subject, as it looked towards a new age when no Sacraments would be needed. See A. S. Tuberville; *MEDIAEVAL HERESY AND THE INQUISITION*, 1920, p. 38.

Second in enumeration here but not less vital among the major problems is the Recession of the Grail, when it happens to be removed actually at the close of a given Quest; when it is said to be heard of no more; when it is carried to the country of Prester John, as into a no-man's land; when certain *Templeisen*, to all intents and purposes, appear to have shut their gates and raised their drawbridge. Substantially speaking, these are variants of the same theme. It is as if some higher authority than a given regnant Church had made a bid for recognition, exhibiting all its warrants, but the scheme had failed and its embassy had been recalled suddenly. It is as if a sect in warfare against such an orthodox regimen had been extinguished in fire and blood, some last and least remanent of its mission putting forth in veiled language an account of what the world had lost. It is none of these things, for the simple reason that there is no trace of any among the manifold activities of the outside world in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. We have looked in the most likely directions, among the sects of Southern France, and they have failed us utterly. It might prove the same if we had all the Sacramentaries of all the sects in Europe at the Grail epoch. But in their absence we cannot tell for certain.

The question must be left at this point, for the time being. The Initiations have failed us, and the Heresies have also failed. There is only one thing certain in the whole dubious research, that the Holy Grail was removed because the world was not worthy and that the loss is irreparable to the world. If it was a Stone beyond price on which Divine instructions were written in times of need, the unerring *doctor dubitantium* had withdrawn his teaching. But if it was a Chalice of Salvation, the age was left with Rome's dismembered Eucharist, with such a Papacy as would reign later at Avignon, and with the wasted cities of Southern France. But yes, and if it be worth while to say so, there remained the guiding Spirit of the Holy Inquisition. It was loss on every side, and a Matthew Arnold of the period might have said more truly then than later, amidst the desperate complexion of things: Behold, the end is everywhere.

Now, so far as Grail literature is concerned, it was without hope of restoration anywhere. And worm-eaten Hosts wrote their silent commentary on the Doctrine of Transubstantiation,<sup>1</sup> once and for all defined in 1215. "With great pardons to sell for those who paid well, and with small ones for those who paid less," the traffic in Indulgences throve, and the sale of Masses for the Dead. There did not fail, moreover, the hope of worse to come; since the birth of Alexander VI was still in the womb of time; and not until a little later than the last Grail poet died did they begin to spoliage and burn the Knights Templar. Who was it that cried long since: *Roma, Roma! Non è più com era prima?* But yet it is the same for ever, with due regard to

<sup>1</sup> G. G. Coulton: FIVE CENTURIES OF RELIGION, I, p. 111; also Appendix II, pp. 481-484.

variations and reductions of opportunity. Some of us have loved it from the beginning and will love it even to the end, because of that which it has thought itself to be, and thinks even yet. But we cannot forgive it, some of us, because it is like Wolfram, that old intimate of my own : it could not deceive us to the end. Yet in fine, and this is to be noted : we may yet desire to die fortified by its last Rites, because, after all the searchings, it may happen that we have not found the Grail, though after all removals and all ascensions, it is said that Gwalchmai saw it.<sup>1</sup>

The Grail literature is in any case a testimony of loss and dereliction ; but it is said of the REX INCLYTUS ARTHUR : *Rex quondam, Rexque futurus*. And there are reasons why in the three following sections it is desirable to look briefly at two later literatures, one of loss only, the other only of attainment, and at a modern Mystery, which is of both loss and recovery. They will shew us that the same things tend to persist in the world of cryptic literature, and that the story of loss is not continued for ever. In this manner we may see the sorrowful message of the Holy Grail to those whom it has left in another and less discouraging light.

It is desirable to recall in conclusion that he who enters a Church may be baptised on the threshold of its Temple, and confirmed at a later stage ; he may receive Eucharistic communication ; he may be even ordained and professed ; but, unlike the Secret Orders, he is not pledged, usually under heavy penalties, to keep its procedure secret. In some papers put into my hands by Mr. Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, who has made a study of the Conversion Legends in Southern France and of the Sects in that region, there are allusions to a Secret of the Church of the Holy Spirit, namely, the Catharist Church ; but the Church itself was not secret, and the Albigenses generally were among the clamant sects of their epoch, with a propagandist spirit at white heat.

## IV

## ISRAEL AND ITS HOLY ASSEMBLY

**T**HOUGHT in the Middle Ages moved, like external science, through a world of mystery, and the Christ-Light moved through the mist-light filling the bounds of sense with the shapes and symbols of vision. It follows that strange things seemed possible at a period when all was dubious in respect of knowledge ; and apart from the power of Religion, which tinged life itself with the lesser elements of ecstasy, there was the kind of enchantment

<sup>1</sup> The words are : " And after his "—that is Galahad's—" death they saw a hand coming from Heaven . . . and the hand took the very precious Vessel which was called the Greal, and departed with it. And from then until to-day, there was no one that could see it on the earth, except Gwalchmai once." Welsh QUEST OF GALAHAD, *Op. cit.*, p. 545.



which dwells always about the precincts of unknown vistas. Apart also from the shapes of imagination, there were the picture-evoking enthusiasms of minds seeking emancipation from regnant law and authority, more especially in matters of faith. Whether or not the Books of the Holy Grail belonged to the last category, they are like echoes from far away, after their own manner, because even as the Secrets of the Greater Mysteries have not passed into writing, while the Holy Assemblies do not issue proceedings, so the inward life of devotion and the experiments towards its term, whether manifested in works of Mystical Theology or in Books of Romance, reach only a partial expression. The value of the Grail Legends at their highest is resident in the suggestions and the lights which they can afford us for the maintenance of that concordat which constitutes the Divine Alliance. Having found that we are dealing with a body of writing which puts forth strange claims and implies concealed meanings, having found also that it exhibits an intention to bring these meanings forward, and being desirous of knowing the peculiar motives at work, we are disposed naturally to look towards other concealed literatures and to ascertain what light—if any—they cast upon the general problem. The great school of Christian mystical thought within the Official Church was concerned with a Mystery of Sanctity, the bourne of which was identical with that object which I am seeking to put forward as the end of the Grail Quest. It was, however, in a very early stage of its public development during the Grail period: the great lights were to come, though those who carried their lamps stood almost on the threshold. So also there were other schools of literature beginning to open their leaves of record, and they offer us certain lights on their own part, because there is a sense in which they had the freedom of the same Sanctuary. It is reasonable therefore to suppose that so far as there are difficulties in one path we may receive help from another and thus attain a better understanding of the whole. It is desirable to consider these extrinsic schools, it being understood that so far as they deal in the one subject it is presented invariably in a different way.

The Voice of the Grail in all its Tales of Quest proclaimed that the Sacred Palladium was lost to the world of Logres or the world at large, with the sole exception of the German PARZIVAL. The story is never told in the same manner. The Grail remains with Perceval in the Didot-Modena text and Perceval abides in seclusion. It ascends to Heaven with him—according to an almost casual proposition—in Manessier's conclusion of the CONTE; but this is a reflection from the Quest of Galahad. It disappears with the Ghosts of Heinrich and passes over a radiant sea with the Son of the Widow Lady in the ever memorable PERLESVAUS. But if it abode at Montsalvatch, with its self-chosen *Templeisen*, and was so intended to do in the mind of Wolfram—from time immemorial unto immemorial time—there came a day, very late in the life of the Mythos, when Albrecht concluded that the Lord of Eschenbach had told the wrong story in respect of the

term thereof : so he carried the Holy Grail and all its Chivalry to the Land of Prester John. Heaven of the Galahad Quest ; Heaven of the CONTE DEL GRAAL ; undiscoverable fastness of Northumbria ; Summer Isle of the PERLESVAUS ; Bourne beyond the lonely road and its House of Ghosts ; Abyssinia, India or far Cathay—the places and names exist only, as I have suggested, to certify the catholic fact that the Grail has gone. The times of Hard Adventure, the times of Great Enchantment, strange and fell, may have terminated when Galahad and Perceval found the Priceless Talisman and healed the King according to their several modes ; but that which neither ended was the want of worth in the world : the Sacred Presence was removed and its Grace was lost, with no promise of return.

It remains, however, that those who achieved the Grail—found and so achieved—received their guerdon : it could not be taken from them who were with it and of it, its epopts and its saints—initiated, passed and raised thereby and therein. If these things are to be understood as shewing forth under veils a process of receiving Postulants among the people of a Mystery, we have seen that it did not work like receptions celebrated at Eleusis and elsewhere in the classical and sub-classical world : the reception rather was into the adyta of a Secret Church or Holy Assembly. Now, it happens significantly that when the canon of the Grail was closed and had passed practically out of memory as centuries slipped away, the Voices of other literatures and of one other Mystery rose up in succession ; and it seems desirable to examine them shortly and so ascertain whether—amidst all their differences—they tell something of the same story.

The Voice of the Grail is a Voice of Christian THEOSOPHIA in the form of Romance theologised ; and when it ceased from speaking another sounded in the world and told its tale of loss ; but this was a Voice of Israel, declaring its Holy Kabbalah, an alleged Tradition of the past, claiming to have been revealed for the first time at the beginning of those terrors and proscriptions which followed the Fall of Jerusalem, being that epoch of waste and desolation when, according to Robert de Borron and ACTA PILATI, the Jews were sold in the market-place by Vespasian at thirty for one penny. In reality its immortal memorial is a MIDRASH of old but uncertain date which grew with the years and generations, becoming a matter of public knowledge to Jewry at large and to a few who had ears in Christendom late in the thirteenth century.

The Schools of Kabbalism can be scarcely said to have done more than emerge partly into public existence when the canon of the Grail literature had already closed : in these Schools there were masters of mystical thought, though more especially perhaps on the intellectual side. Now, in its own way the Theosophical Scheme of Jewry in exile is a story of loss like the Grail, though it is one which ends in expectation—or, as I should say, in mental certitude. The loss in external history and in national life was counterpoised by a figurative loss in the

Sanctuary, much as if the Arch-Natural Eucharist, the Grail which is of all things holy, had been taken away. It was that which was written of old, not only in one galaxy of stars but by the cosmic power of which the worlds themselves were made. The substitution which, according to the Grail Legends, was left with the Christian Church in place of more living sanctities is paralleled by that other Legend which tells how the stress and inhibition of Israel is because the Divine Word has been withdrawn from the Holy Place, and instead of the true TETRAGRAM, the voice of the Rabbi pronounces now only the Name ADONAI. But even as the Eucharist is still a grace of thanksgiving—EUCCHARISMA—and the House from which the Grail has departed is still a Holy House, so all sanctity attaches in like manner to the substituted Sacred Name and to the cortex of those letters which represent the Tetragram : יהוה. There was a time when this Name was pronounced in its true form by the High Priest once annually in the Sanctuary : it restored the people of God and maintained the Inmost Shrine, keeping open the channels of Grace, even as the Heavenly Dove, descending on Good Friday, renewed the virtue of the Grail. Afterwards, as I have indicated, there came another time when disaster fell upon Israel, with the result that the essential elements of the Name—the authentic vowel-points—in which its true vocalisation was involved, became lost even to the Sanctuary.

It should not be necessary to say that I am by no means putting forward the hypothesis of a channel of communication, by which something was derived into Romance Literature from implicits which about the same time or subsequently were unfolded in Zoharic Books—and much less *vice versa*. We know that behind the Grail Castle, according to the PERLESVAUS, there was the Earthly Paradise, and that the House of the Holy Vessel was also a Castle of Souls. We know that, according to the ZOHAR, the Garden of Eden is placed in a position which corresponds with that of the Grail itself. We know that both were removed, the Grail into the heavenly regions and the Garden of Eden into that which is no longer manifest. The latter place was connected nearly in Kabbalism with the Great Sanctuary—truly a Castle of Souls—wherein all those who are to come await their incarnation in turn ; for according to Jewish Theosophy the creation of souls is not successive, or dependent on earthly generation, but eternal in the heavens. I know on my own part that there is nothing in literature so like the departure of Galahad as that of R. Simeon ben Yo'hai ;<sup>1</sup> and in spite of uttermost divergencies in the root-matter, the Mystery of the Holy Grail has its sub-surface analogy with the Mystery of the LESSER HOLY

<sup>1</sup> A point comes in the story when the voice of R. Simeon ceases. " But afterward a voice cried : ' Length of days and Years of Life ' ; and yet another : ' He seeketh Life from Thee ' . . . Rabbi Abba saw that the holy light, the holy of holy ones, had been wrapped away from the world : he lay upon his right side and a smile shone upon his face . . . It is added that during his obsequies the bier of the deceased saint was raised in the air, and fire shone about it, while a voice cried : ' Enter into the nuptial joys of Rabbi Simeon.' " THE HOLY KABBALAH, by A. E. Waite, p. 147. See also Baron von Rosenroth : KABBALA DENUDATA, *tomus* II, s.v. IDRA SUTRA.

ASSEMBLY. I know that the GREATER and LESSER SANHEDRIM<sup>1</sup> sound like oracular voices speaking in an unknown tongue concerning the Holy House, and we feel that behind the outward offices of religion there was a little Company of the Elect which was like an unincorporated Inner Church of Israel. I know that, according to the involved scheme of the SEPHIROTH—those mystical numerations which are set upon the Tree of Life in Kabbalism—the Waters of Life are in Knowledge,<sup>2</sup> which is also the place of the Cup, and this is reserved always for those who are athirst. But these things, with others and many others, do not constitute the lightest shadow of transmission. No French poet could be expected to know thereof; no exponent of Christian Legend, even when interpreted mystically, ever looked to Israel for light and leading in those internecine days—however much the name of Provence may suggest a certain difference in mind from the prevalent orthodoxy of the age. That there may be no mistake on this subject among those whom I address more especially, I note further that the peculiar presentation of Grail Symbolism which is connected with the name of the reputed Provençal Kyot—who alone of all might confess to some curious derivations from a course of study at Toledo—is precisely that presentation in which the Sanctuary is not voided and the Grail is not taken away.

It is a matter of common knowledge that, at the period in question, Spain was one place in the world where the Jews were not merely free from raging persecution but where various positions of importance were open to their competition. We know, moreover, that a great light of Moslem learning shone forth in some Spanish Academies. We know finally or may learn that this other and exotic light of which I am speaking had kindled therein among the Chosen People themselves. Palestine and the East generally thereabouts may have contributed its portion, and did indeed do so; but the heart and marrow of Kabbalistic Theosophy was in Spain. The Jew of Toledo, the Jew of Cordova and of other places in the Peninsula look great figures in the literature, as they do also in certain Academies of Southern France, though there the Jews did not find the same peace in their abodes. For them the asylum was Spain, and that indeed must have been little less than a Terrestrial Paradise realised.<sup>3</sup> And as between the South of France and Spain the channels of communication stood wide open; as Provence is the supposititious place at its value of the first Grail poem; as the Ideal Castle, the Holy Place, Mont Salvatch, had its abode unapproachable in the Pyrenees, so the imaginative mind may incline to think that behind the strange Legend of the Jew of Toledo there may be something undemonstrable of a lost Grail connection; though so far as evidence goes it must be admitted that this is like the stuff of which dreams are made. The analogy between all the Schools in succession is that of the testimony which they bear in

<sup>1</sup> Waite, *Op. cit.*, pp. 139-145 and 146, 147. See also Plates I and II.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, pp. 191-195.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 75, 76.

common, while if after other manners they reflected one into another the witness might be weaker in proportion. There is no concert, there is no debt in literature, there is no result in time, as by a course of development from cycle to cycle of books. The scheme of Theosophical Kabbalism is distinct absolutely from that of Grail literature, as of anything else that at any period was drawn into Romance : it is the evidence of two Schools which did not know one another ; and although at the root their evidence is of the same kind the relation between them is that, so to speak, of the pairs of opposites. As I must look to be challenged in the gate over the theses of this book, I assume at this point so much harness as will suffice to dissuade the gentlemen of the counter-guard from supposing that I am open to attack as one who would maintain that generic literature A is the concealed father of generic literature B. Speaking now more seriously as a counsel to some of the Confraternities with which I am affiliated in thought and the pursuit of a term in common : when it is said that " God so loved the world," the counterpart in Kabbalism is that MALKUTH, meaning the Kingdom, is in no sense apart from KETHER, meaning the Crown, and that the progression from ALEPH to TAU is complete, without break or intermission ; yet St. Paul, whom I have quoted, is not for such reason a precursor of the ZOHAR. So also when the Arabian Academies of Spain<sup>1</sup> became the resort of Christian Scholars—" men of curious inquiry ", as one has said concerning them—it does not suggest that from such Schools they brought back Sufic Mysticism and translated it into Romance. It does not mean that there also they met with the *corpus materiale* of the Kabbalah, a final receptacle of the *débris* and drift of all the old Theogonies, Theosophies and occult knowledge of many places and periods, or that learning there how She who is called the Daughter of the Voice was withdrawn from the Sanctuary of Israel, they told in another tongue how, after the departure of the Grail, the dwelling of King Fisherman " began to fall ", though the Chapel thereto belonging never " wasted nor decayed ". The voices say one thing only ; but they do not speak in concert. We know only and realise that Israel is waiting by the waters of Babylon, and it has come to pass that, though we draw from other places, we are also beside her, remembering perhaps more dimly and yet with deeper yearning the glory that was once in Zion.

Of such was the mind of Kabbalism, its appanage, its baggage and its Quest.

Those who revere it at this day continue to invoke ADONAI instead of YAHWE, and till knowledge is restored to the Sanctuary on the Day of Messiah the King, they deplore the loss of Israel, as those who read these pages and I who write them deplore the loss of the Grail. Perhaps also Theosophical Jewry—like a Holy Assembly, but few and far apart—explores as it can, according to its own individual gifts of insight, the deeps of meaning behind the loss of the Word, as we too—a not

<sup>1</sup> See James Finn : HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL, 1841.

less scattered Company—are in travail continual over the meaning of the Grail and that which was taken away when it left the world. Perhaps in fine neither they nor we are any too sure on the values of this and that in our findings. Voice of the Holy Grail, Voice of the HOLY ZOHAR, is there anything that voices better “the devotion to something afar from the sphere of our sorrow”?

There is one more word to add : those who read the ZOHAR, which at this long last is assuming some fashion of an English vesture,<sup>1</sup> will find that from beginning to end it is a great book of debates in which the Masters of Tradition unfold their Secret Tradition one to another when and wherever they meet. They are high initiates of Holy Doctrine, holding their various grades of knowledge ; but these have not been communicated in any scholastic curriculum : they are products of individual illumination, and for this reason the wisdom develops among them and grows from more to more, abiding always under the canons of a hidden law. It comes about also that they may meet with a stranger in their travels and may cherish doubts concerning him : in the end, however, it may happen that they fall on their knees before him, and he is hailed as more than a Master. Ancient Kabbalism was most assuredly a School of Adeptship, a Mystery as such ; but no one was received therein according to ceremonial forms : they grew up into their High Grades and—as suggested already—were as if a Secret Church in Israel. Those who entered therein were joined thereto by virtue of their own titles, earned and attained within. After such manner did Galahad achieve the Quest ; and if the Holy Grail could be regarded in its literature as a strange case—after some undetermined manner—of Ritual drawn into Romance, so also Perceval was received, while Lancelot and Gawain were rejected for carrying false titles.

## V

## OF SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY

**I**T is to be noted that Mediæval and later scholarship had scarcely troubled itself with the great Books of Jewish Theosophy till it was found or conceived that they could be made to enforce the Official Doctrines of Christianity. Many errors of enthusiasm followed ; but the Books of the Mystery of Israel became in this manner the public heritage of philosophy ; and we are now able to shew after what manner it enters into the general storehouse of mystical knowledge. The literature of Alchemy, in like manner, so long as it was in the hands of certain amateurs of infant science and its counterfeits,

<sup>1</sup> THE ZOHAR, translated by Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon ; Vol. I, 1931 ; Vol. II, 1932. There are others to follow, probably five in all.

remained particular to themselves, and outside a questionable research in physics it had no office or horizon until it was affirmed or inferred that some curious texts of the subject had been written in a language of subterfuge ; that in place of a metallurgical interest it was concerned in its way with the keeping of Spiritual Mysteries. There were again errors of enthusiasm, but a corner of the veil was lifted. Now, it is indubitably the message of the Grail that there is more in the Eucharist than is indicated by any Sufficing Grace imparted to the ordinary communicant, and if it is possible to shew that behind this undeclared excess there lies that which has been at all times sought by the Wise, that *est in sacramento quicquid quæerunt sapientes*, then the Grail literature will enter after a new manner into our heritage from the past, and another corner of the veil will be lifted on the path of experience. It will be seen that the literature—contrary to what it appears on the surface—is not without points of comparison in other Christian Cycles—that it does not stand exactly alone, even if its consanguinities, though declared by Official Religion, are not entirely before the face of the world but within the Sanctuaries of Secret Fraternities. To suggest this is not to say that these stories of old are a defined part or abstract of any Mysteries of Initiation : they are like a byway winding through a secret woodland to a postern giving upon the Chancel of some great and primeval Abbey. They are, on the surface, of Secret Churches rather than Secret Tribunals and Crypts haunted by Adepts.

Those who have concerned themselves with the subject of alleged hidden knowledge will know that occult claims have been put forth under all manners of guises. This has arisen to some extent naturally enough in the course of the ages and under the special atmosphere of motives peculiar to different nations. It has come about also through the institution of multiples of convention on the part of those who have become in later times the Custodians of Mysteries—whether actual or putative—such Wardens having been inspired by a twofold purpose, firstly, to preserve their witness in the world and, secondly, to see that the knowledge was, so far as possible, kept away from the world<sup>1</sup>. This is equivalent to saying that the paramount Law of Silence has of necessity a permanent competitor in the Law of the Sign. We may take the readiest illustration in the Rituals of Craft Masonry. They contain the whole marrow of *bourgeoisie*, but they contain also a shadow of Great Mysteries. The unknown persons or assembly which conceived the Closing of the Lodge according to the Third Degree had a set of moral feelings in common with those of all retired masters in the craft of joinery and a language like a journeyman carpenter ; but this notwithstanding the breath of the Adepts had passed over them, and they spoke of the Word and its Quest as none had spoken previously. That Closing gives expression to a loss of the ages in terms of symbolism which can be voiced by the least literate occupant of the Master's Chair. And yet so far from making it commonised and a thing of no moment,

its deep significance has shone through all the clouds on the minds of those who were prepared.<sup>1</sup>

The Grail literature is open—*mutatis mutandis*—to a parallel criticism, and the result is also the same. Whatever disappointment may await in fine the pursuit of the present inquiry, partly on account of the uncouth presentation of living symbolism to the mind of the early romancist, partly by reason of the inherent defect of Romance as a vehicle of symbolism, there is enough evidence to shew that a very strange leaven was working in the mass of the texts. Let me add in respect of it that the quality of this leaven can be appreciated scarcely by those who are unacquainted (1) with the inward phases of the life of Christian Sanctity during the Middle Ages, after which period the voices sound uncertain and the consciousness of experience more remote, and (2) with the interior working of those Concealed Orders of which the Masonic experiment is a part only, and elementary at that. The most important lights are therefore either in very old books or in the catholic motive which characterises Secret Rituals that, whether old or not, have never entered into the knowledge of the outside world.

The testimony is of two kinds invariably—first of all, to the existence of a Great Experiment and the success with which, under given circumstances, it can be carried to its term ; and, secondly, to a great failure in respect of the external world. The one is reflected by the achieved Quest of the Holy Grail, and the other by the removal of the Grail. In respect of the one it is as if a Great Mystery had been communicated at a given time in the external places, but as if also such communication had afterwards been suspended, the secret had as if died. In respect of the other, it is as if a House of Doctrine had been voided. Did these statements exhaust the content of the alternatives, the testimony might be that of a sect ; but we shall see at the proper time after what manner they conform to external doctrine, even if the keepers of that doctrine should themselves be unable to penetrate the law of the union.

Now, the great literatures and the great individual books come into the hands of the mystic—as into other hands innumerable—and he interprets them after his own manner, imparting to them that light which, at least intellectually, abides in himself. I make this formal statement because I realise that it is perilous for my position and because it enables me to add that though literatures may be clay in our hands, it must not be imagined that those who in the first place put a shape of their own kind on the material which they had ingarnered were invariably conscious that it might bear that other seal and impression which is set upon it by our own minds. So also it is too much to suppose that within the external sense of texts there was

<sup>1</sup> It is the memorial of another Mythos put on record by those who had heard some rumours concerning it and nothing more. There came a time when the Mythos was brought forth with its veils removed *ex hypothesi* in Royal Arches and High Grades ; but this again was on the part of those who had vague suspicions only of that which was hidden in the symbols put into their hands.



underwritten, beyond debate, the one inward significance which in some of them we seem to trace indubitably. The Baron de la Motte Fouqué once wrote a beautiful and stately story in which a correspondent discovered a complete and subtle allegory; and the author, who planned when he wrote it no sub-surface meaning, did not less sincerely confess to the additional sense, explaining in reply that true art in literature is true upon all the planes.<sup>1</sup> There are certain Romances which need not be enumerated here but would be found to connect after this manner with mystical science—that is to say, in a non-intentional way—and it is beautiful to discern thus that there is a deep below their deep, though we may never press the interpretation into a formal scheme. The books of the Holy Grail are not exactly of this kind. A text which says that certain Secret Words were once imparted under very wonderful and exceptional circumstances is assuredly obtruding a meaning behind meaning; while another which affirms that a certain imagined personage was ordained secretly by a similar intervention, and was made thereby the first Bishop of Christendom, either manifests an ulterior motive or there is no such motive in the world. And further, when the two Great Quests of the whole literature are written partly in the form of confessed similitude, it is not unreasonable to infer that there is a hidden meaning throughout; while, in fine, as their undisguised intention is to exhibit an Arch-Natural Mass, the Graces and the Mysteries of which can be experienced and seen by some who are of perfect life, then the interpretation which illustrates this intention by the mystical side of Eucharistic Doctrine, in or beyond the Church, offers a true construction, and its valid criticism is *vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare*. I will pour three cups to the health and coronation of him who shall discover the hypothetical proto-Perceval of primeval folk-lore; yet on the present subject let him and all other Brethren in the holy places of research keep silence, unless God graces them with agreement. The unknown writers of the PERLESVAUS and the QUEST OF GALAHAD hinted at the Great Experiment as those who knew something of their theme and bore true witness on its term.

We know also in our own hearts that eternity is the one thing which signifies ultimately and that great literature should confess to no narrower horizon. It may happen that a beginning is made by proposing a lesser object, but it is exalted afterwards; and this was the case with the Grail books, which were given the Early Legends of Perceval according to the Office of Nature, but afterwards the Legend of Galahad according to the Law of Grace.

There is no question in the mind of Theosophical Israel that Israel will recover its inheritance on a day of the Lord to come, and it is said that then and thereafter will Mercy be on all sides. We pass now to the witness of another literature, the earliest available records of

<sup>1</sup> My reference is to THE MAGIC RING: A KNIGHTLY ROMANCE. As regards the supposed Allegory, its discovery is narrated, I think, in a preface to one of the editions.

which are in Greek of the Byzantine epoch, in Arabic and Syriac of a later period, while it assumed the vesture of Latin in or about the tenth century and passed into the vernaculars of England, France and Germany in its latest and final developments. It may be said almost that a time came when the wonder and rumour of Alchemy was in all men's ears; but its Secret School was dedicated to experimental operations performed on material things, and is nothing as such to our purpose. The Mysteries, authentic or otherwise, of metallic transmutation and the Elixir of Physical Life are, speaking fantastically and yet with a purpose in view, analogous to those folk-lore elements—Magic Cups and Cauldrons, Dishes, Spears and Swords—which may have filled a world of Myth before the Great Christian Hallow reigned in the Kingdom of Romance. As certain folk-lore Myths were acquired *ex hypothesi* and brought into the purpose of the Grail, so there came a day when the cloud of records and experiments in the work of Hermetic Adepts was taken over, so to speak, and adapted to another object: it is this Mystery which became the next witness in the world after that of the Grail and Kabbalism. The first voice on the subject is that of Heinrich Khunrath, as I have shewn forth at some length elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> and the second is Jacob Böhme, both at the end of the sixteenth century, according to whom, writing on the Stone of the Philosophers, it is to be understood that the Stone is Christ. It follows that "the Great Work" of so-called Hermeticism was not in metals but in the soul of man.

While the physical alchemists were trying to make gold they brought to birth the beginnings of Chemistry, finding out this and that, to their great astonishment, though the discoveries were far enough in all cases from their proposed term. Under the pretence of a new translation of certain Scripture Psalms, Khunrath produced a mystical understanding of the whole Hermetic subject, veiling his deeper meanings in a marvellous series of copperplates shewing Christ immanent and transcendent at the heart of the whole cosmos. On his side, Jacob Böhme produced before German Alchemists, standing agaze about him, the revelation that not only the Stone is Christ but that the Way of Attainment in Alchemy is the Way of the Second Birth. He said otherwise that of the physical praxis he knew—and probably cared—nothing, but that hereof is truth in the art and that whosoever sets forth on the Great Work except by and through Life in Christ had and would have always the pains and costs for his one reward. Khunrath said also derisively that the cost of the Great Work is less than thirty thalers, as if the Way of the Christhood could be purchased for this price, as well as sold by Judas to his own destruction. The real significance of these amazing statements must have distracted many laboratory workers in those maniacal days of the *Magnum Opus* fever. As regards meanings, it must have been held inevitably that, given the Second Birth, it would be easy to transmute metals, and they

<sup>1</sup> THE SECRET TRADITION IN ALCHEMY: ITS DEVELOPMENTS AND RECORDS, 1926.

may have gone to work accordingly, producing fictitious regenerations and so finding fresh avenues through realms of failure.

However this may be, after these there arose other witnesses, though few and far between, who made use of the old alchemical terminology—which abounds in Böhme as well as in Khunrath—not only to explain the universe but high things of mystical experience in the soul of man. I do not claim to know how far they went at their best; but two things are certain: (1) that like those who were, in a sense, their progenitors, the material alchemists, they were an unincorporated sodality who recognised one another, because they spoke the same language, and could distinguish at the same time those who were born to the Mystery from those who aped election, the *souffleurs*, the bellows-blowers, the impostors; (2) that their peculiar THEOSOPHIA had no doctrine of loss but one of attainment only, being the possession and enjoyment of the Mystical Stone—that is to say, the Inward Christ. The Grail might be taken from the world and the Word might be lost to Israel; but there remained always the state of the *haut prince*, the state of Galahad, consequent on the Mass at Sarras, praying to be dissolved in Christ. There is of course an implied loss, being the Absence of the Stone, the unespoused state of soul; but there is no commentary hereon in the alchemical texts. Now, I have said that those who can be recognised as belonging to the spiritual work, a few Rosicrucian writers included,<sup>1</sup> used the same terminology as their ancestors; and it remains for this reason that we have to interpret them for ourselves, according to our own lights, a task which must be attempted in the few pages that follow. It has to be understood further that here is an excursion into the most cryptic of all literature, about which no one can speak dogmatically, though some have attempted it in the past.

That which the text-books have agreed from time immemorial to term a Stone is that also which is described in Gospel Books as a Stone not made with hands and the conversion performed thereby is that which one of the Adepts recommends to one of his disciples when he exclaims: *Transmutemini, transmutemini de lapidibus mortuis in lapides vivos philosophicos.*<sup>2</sup> The possession of the Stone is, in other words, the possession of the Tingeing Christ. It is most obvious and outside contradiction that either this communication and possession is set forth in the Churches under the sacramentalism of the Holy Eucharist or the Mass and the Lord's Supper are a sacrifice and memorial apart from all meaning. Behind them are shadowed forth the Liturgies and the Ritual of the Grail, as a high and secret rendering of the same subject

<sup>1</sup> Among those who may be quoted in this connection is he who was termed Sapiens by the Brothers of R. ∴ C. ∴, according to Eugenius Philalethes in his ANIMA MAGICA ABSCONDATA. For him the Stone and Treasure of Philosophers was not only the True Medicine but the Way of Truth, the Life that was Light of men, wherein we may behold the Light. This Medicine is found indeed, but never except in Heaven, while the place in which it is found is "within thyself." WORKS OF THOMAS VAUGHAN, pp. 99-104.

<sup>2</sup> THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE ROSY CROSS, p. 297.

in other pictorial terms,<sup>1</sup> as if the sense of certain insufficiencies and of the way in which they might be rectified were in the hands of hidden Masters. That which in this case lies behind the symbols and physical pictures of Bread and Wine, behind that Priesthood which is according to the Order of Melchisedech, was expressed by the Spiritual Alchemists under the guise of transmutation.

I suppose indeed that there is no labyrinth which it is quite so difficult to thread as that of the *Theatrum Chemicum*. Expositors of the subject have gone astray over the generic purpose of the art, because some have believed it to have been (1) the transmutation of metals and that only, while others have interpreted it as (2) a veiled method of delineating the states and stages of the soul's attainment on its way through the world within, and besides this nothing.<sup>2</sup> We have on our part to realise that a second school arose, as stated, at a comparatively late period, and placed a new construction on the old claims and language of the alchemical adepts and their literature.

I propose to tabulate certain points of terminology which are common to both schools. By the significance of these terms we shall see to what extent the symbolism of Higher Alchemy is in conformity with mystical symbolism and in correspondence also with that Mass of the Holy Spirit which was said once at Sarras. It should be realised, however, that there is nothing so hard and thankless as to elucidate one symbolism according to the forms of another, and this notwithstanding the identity which may emerge as the term of each.

Both schools indifferently tell us that the whole Art is contained, manifested and set forth by means of a single Vessel which, amidst all manner of minor variations, is described with colourable uniformity throughout the multitude of texts. This statement constitutes a certain key of understanding; but as on the one hand the alchemists veil their *vas insigne* by reference, in spite of their assurance, to many pretended vessels, so has the key itself a certain aspect of subterfuge, since the alleged unity, on the mystical side, is in respect only of the term final of the process in the union-state of the Recipient. This unity is the last reduction of a triad because—according to these aspects of Hermetic Theosophy—man in the course of his progress is at first three—body, soul and spirit—that is, when he sets out on the Great Quest; he is two at a certain stage, or when the soul has conceived Christ, for the Spirit has then descended and the body is for the time being as something which has been left behind; but he is in fine one, that is to say, when the man has died and risen in Christ.

The black state of the alchemical matter, on which the process of the Art is engaged, is our unconverted natural manhood. The white state

<sup>1</sup> I am referring of course to that which obviously was said and done in the Mass of the Grail at Corbenic and in the Mass of the Five Changes, celebrated at the Grail Castle in the presence of King Arthur on the testimony of the HIGH HISTORY.

<sup>2</sup> This is Mrs. Atwood's thesis, though not so expressed. We may compare, at its value, the ethical interpretation of General E. H. Hitchcock in REMARKS ON ALCHEMY AND THE ALCHEMISTS, 1857.

of the Stone is the work of the Second Birth ; and the red state, desired as the term of the Art, is that of the soul's transmutation and the attainment of that unity in which there is no distinction between the soul and the Christ Spirit.

The Mercury of the Sages is that which must be fixed and volatilised : naturally it is fluidic and wandering ; but except under this name, or by some analogous substitute, it has never been described literally. Because it is within and is we ourselves in our inward being, it has been said frequently to be nearer than hands and feet. The Sulphur of the Philosophers is an inward substance through which some souls are saved, as by an inward burning fire. The Salt of the Philosophers is a transmuting principle which is with us through all our days in a state of misdirection, and its true application is the Great Work accomplished. In the last resource therefore the physician heals himself ; but I am speaking here of that which the Spiritual Hermetists have termed the Medicine.

The ostensible object—which was material in the alternative School—was the attainment of a certain Stone or Powder, being that of Projection, and the affirmation is that this Powder, when added to a base metal, performs the wonder of transmutation into pure silver or gold, better than those of the mines. The Stone transmutes what is base, but in its own elements it has undergone transmutation itself, from what is base to what is perfect. In another form it prolongs life and renews youth in the “ adept philosopher and lover of learning.” In this case it is termed an Elixir ; but this and the Transmuting Powder are identified by the Spiritual Alchemists. If there is one thing which appears more clearly than another in some Books of the Philosophers, it is that the Stone of Alchemy is not a stone at all and that the Elixir of Alchemy is not a brew or an essence which can be poured out from ewers or basins.<sup>1</sup>

It must be affirmed further that—in the spiritual sense—there is an unity in the trinity of the Stone or Powder, the so-called Metal and the Vase. The Vessel is also the Alchemist, for none of the instruments, the materials, the fires, the producer and the thing produced are external to the one subject. At the same time the inward man is distinguished from the outward man ; we may say that one is the Alchemist and the other the Vessel ; and that in this sense the Art is termed both physical and spiritual. But the symbolism is many times enfolded ; and from another point of view the gross matter which is placed within the Vessel is the untransmuted life of reason, motive, concupiscence, self-interest and all that which constitutes the intelligent creature on the normal plane of manifestation. Hereof is the natural man enclosed in an animal body, as the metal is placed in the vessel, and from this point of view the Alchemist is he who is sometimes termed arrogantly the super-man. But because there is only one Vessel it must be understood that herein the Stone is confectioned and the

<sup>1</sup> Appendix I, Note 26.

base metal is converted. The Alchemist is himself finally the Stone, and because many zealous aspirants to the Art have not understood this they have failed in the Great Work on the spiritual side.

The schedule which now follows may elucidate this hard subject somewhat more fully, if not indeed more plainly: There are (1) the natural, external man, whose equivalent is the one Vessel; (2) the body of desire which answers to the gross matter; (3) the aspiration, the consciousness, the will of the supernatural life; (4) the process of the will working on the body of desire within the external Vessel; (5) the psychic and transcendental conversion thus effected; (6) the reaction of the purified body of desire on the essential will, so that the one supports the other, the will is again exalted, and therefrom follows this further change—that the spirit of a man puts on a new quality of life, becoming an instrument which is at once feeding and itself fed; (7) herein is the symbol of the Stone and the Great Elixir; (8) the spirit is nourished from above by the analogies of Eucharistic ministry—that is to say, the Dove descends from Heaven carrying the Arch-Natural Host to renew the virtues of the Stone; (9) the spirit nourishes the soul, as by Bread and Wine—that is, the Bread is taken from the Grail; (10) the soul effects the higher conversion in the body of desire; (11) it comes about thus that the essence which dissolves everything is still contained in a Vessel, or alternatively that God abides in man.

From another point of view the gross matter is said to be clay by those who speak more openly in order that they may be understood the less, as if they also were singing in their strange chorus:

“Let us be open as the day,  
That we may deeper hide ourselves.”

It is more often described as metallic, because on the surface of all the literature there is the declared Mystery of Metals, and the concealed purpose is to shew that in the roots and essence there is a certain similarity or analogy on both sides of the alchemical work. The process of the Art is without haste or violence by the mediation of a graduated fire, and the seat of this fire is in the soul. It is a mystery of the soul's love, and for this reason she is called “undaunted daughter of desire.” The sense of the gradation is that love is in liberation from the impetuosity and violence of passion, and has become a constant and incorruptible flame. That which the fire consumes is certain materials or elements which are called *recrementa*, the grosser parts, the superfluities; and it should be observed that there are two purgations, of which the first is the gross and the second the subtle. The first answers to the normal process of conversion, by which there is such a separation of components seemingly external that what remains is as a new creature, and may be said to be re-born. The second is an exalted conversion, by which that which has been purified is so raised

that it enters into a new region, or a certain heaven comes down and abides therein.<sup>1</sup>

It follows from these elucidations that the higher and indrawn understanding of the Eucharist and of Alchemy on its mystical side is concerned with the same subject, that is to say, with man and his conversion: the implicits are therefore the same, and of these things Alchemy was a witness in the world after the epoch of the Holy Grail.

But though it might seem therefore within reason and truth to testify that the *panis vivus et vitalis* is even as the Transmuting Stone and that the Chalice of the New and Eternal Testament is like the Renewing Elixir, such testimony is subject to the reserve of my previous indication. The closer the analogies between distinct systems of symbolism, the more urgent is that prudence which counsels us not to confound them by an interchangeable use. The Priest as Priest neither dealt in the symbolism of Alchemy nor assumed its external offices, while the Alchemist as Alchemist did not celebrate Mass. It is true notwithstanding that all Christian Mysticism came out of the Mass-Book, and it is true that it returns therein. But the Mass-Book in the first instance came out of the heart mystical which had unfolded in Christendom. The nucleus of truth in the Missal is: *Dominus prope est*. The Mass shews that the Great Work is in the first sense a work of the hands of man, because it is he, officiating as a Priest in his own Temple, who offers the Sacrifice which he has dedicated; but the Elements of that Sacrifice are taken over *ex hypothesi* by an intervention of another order of things, and that which follows is transfusion.

Re-expressing all this in a closer summary, the apparatus of Mystical Alchemy is, comparatively speaking, simple. The First Matter is myrionymous and is yet one, corresponding to the unity of the natural mind and the unlimited complexity of motives, desires, passions and distractions—on all of which the work of wisdom must operate. The Vessel is also one, for this is the normal man, complete in his own degree. The process has the seal of Nature's directness: it is like the gradual but increasing maintenance of a slow fire. The initial work is a change in the substance of mind, aspiration and desire, which is the first conversion, or transmutation in the elementary sense. But it is identical, even to the end, with the term proposed by the Eucharist, which is the modification of the noumenal man by the communication of Divine Substance. Here is the *lapis qui non lapis, lapis tingens, lapis angularis, lapis qui multiplicatur, lapis per quem justus ædificabit domum Domini, et jam valde ædificatur et terram possidebit per omnia, &c.* When it is said that the Stone is multiplied, even to a thousandfold, we know that this is true of all seed which is sown upon good soil.

So therefore the Stone transmutes and the Higher Eucharist trans-

<sup>1</sup> There is nothing in the records to intimate that the Spiritual Alchemists were acquainted with that most rare of all mystical experience in which the whole inward being is transformed at once in God.

mutes also ; the philosophical elements on the physical side go to the making of the Stone, which is also physical, and the sacramental elements to the generation of a new life in the soul. He who says *Lapis Philosophorum* says also : My beloved to me and I to him. Christ is therefore the Stone, and the Stone in adept humanity is the Union realised, while the Great Secret is that Christ must be found within, and manifested from within outwardly.<sup>1</sup>

Now, it seems to me that it has not served less than an useful purpose to establish after a new manner the intimate resemblance between the deeper understanding of one part of the Secret Tradition and the fuller interpretation of one Sacrament of the Church. We are not dealing in either case with the question of attainment. The analogy would remain if Spiritual Alchemy and Christian Sacramentalism abode in the intellectual order as theorems only which have been never carried into experience. And further it is not affirmed that the Hermetic Symbolism has attained a grade of perfection. When Christian Symbolism took over the old Legends and created out of them the literature of the Holy Grail, the work was not done perfectly, and it is the same with alchemical books. It remains that the Doctrine and Practice of Mysticism offered a Divine Experience, to those who entered the pathway of the Mystics, as a foretaste in this life of the union which is consummated in eternity, or of that end, beyond which there is nothing whatever that is conceivable. We know from the old book that "it hath not entered into the heart of man," but the heart which has put away the things of sense may at least conceive it by representations and types. This is the great tradition of that which the early alchemists term Truth in the Art ; the experience is representation after its own kind rather than felicity, but the representation is of that grade which begins in ecstasy and ends in absorption. Let no man say therefore that he loses himself in experiences of this order, for perchance it is then only that he finds himself, even in that way which suggests that after many paths of activity he is at length coming into his own.

The alchemical maxim which might be inscribed on the gate of the *palais espirituel* or any Castle of the Grail would be :

*"Est in Mercurio quicquid quæerunt sapientes."*

The Eucharistic maxim which might be written over the laboratory of the alchemist, in addition to *Laborare est orare*, is :

*"Et antiquum documentum  
Novo cedat ritui :  
Præstet fides supplementum  
Sensuum defectui."*

The maxim which might be written over the Temples of the Official Churches is *Corporis Mysterium*—that the mystery of the body might lead them more fully into the higher mystery of the soul. And in fine

<sup>1</sup> The manifestation, speaking essentially, is from subliminal to normal consciousness.



the maxim which might and would be inscribed over the one Temple of the truly Catholic Religion when the faiths of this Western world have been united in the higher consciousness—that is assuredly *Mysterium Fidei*—the Mystery which endures for ever and for ever passes into experience.

Within the domain of the Secret Tradition the Initiations are many and so are the schools of thought, but those which are True Schools and those which are High Orders issue from one root. *Est una sola res*; and they whose heart of contemplation is fixed upon this one thing may differ but can be never far apart. Personally I do not believe—and this has the ring of a commonplace—that they will be found to differ widely. I know not what systems of the æons may intervene between that which is imperishable within us and the union wherein the universe will repose in fine at the centre. But I know that the great systems—aye even the great processes—of the times that are gone, as of those which now encompass us, do not pass away, because that which was from the beginning is now and ever shall be—is one motive, one aspiration, one term of thought remaining, as if in the stillness of an everlasting present. In reality we understand one another, and our terms are terms over which our collective dedications are united world without end.

## VI

## ANALOGIES OF QUEST IN MASONRY

IT should be understood that I am speaking at the present moment only of the Craft Degrees. I have every reason to know that the High Grades do not deserve the unqualified condemnation with which they have been set aside by writers like Ragon and by certain expositors of the German school of Masonic thought. Several of them are Great Rites which shadow forth important mystic teaching—at however far a distance—and without some of them I regard the Craft Degrees as offering, at once without and within, an unfinished experience. Those, however, who are familiar with the Craft Rituals will be in a position to realise to what extent they can be said to embody an ethical doctrine, except as side-issues of their Mystery. There is, of course, a very plain inculcation of certain obvious virtues; but it is all so slight, and it is all so obvious, that to speak of it as an ethical system seems to magnify the subject out of all due proportion. On the other hand, we do find certain provinces of knowledge recommended to the study of the Candidate at one stage of his advancement. We find also certain illustrations of a great Mystery of Building, certain references to a Secret which has been lost, with a Legend concerning the immolation of a Master of Knowledge who took away with him that Secret, and except under very deep veils, outside all Craft Masonry,

it has not been recovered since. As I have quoted Ragon in a connection which was necessarily unfavourable, let me cite him now a little tentatively, but in a different sense. He has said—at its value—that when we find in Masonry, and in some other secret ways of the past, a reference to Building—whether of Temples, Palaces, or Towns—what is intended is that there was a manifestation of Doctrine: in other words, there was an ordered communication of Mysteries. As to the great majority of instances, I believe in this as little as I believe that Troy Town was a Solar Mythos; but in respect of Craft Masonry it is the one suggestive note in Ragon's great wild of speculation and discursion on the Degrees, high and otherwise, of the Fraternity.<sup>1</sup> It is postulated in the speculation that those who transformed the Building Guild did not intend to put forward an historical thesis. The change which took place presupposes such a spiritualisation of the Traditional Temple that it passes into the world of symbolism, becoming itself a House of Doctrine. If, apart from the *Theosophia* of Mystical Death and Rebirth, we are to seek anywhere for another clue, it is in the amazing inference which follows from the Craft Legend concerning the stultification of the imagined House of Doctrine before its erection was finished. Those who are familiar with the Rituals will understand exactly what I mean, and I give this as a key by which anyone who is properly qualified, and who chooses, may possibly open one of the Emblematic Secret Sanctuaries.<sup>2</sup> We know that the Master was asked One Little Question, and that for One Little Answer which he declined to make the Traditional Founder of Doctrine came to an end of violence; the Mysteries which he reserved perished in his person; and although it has never been noticed so far by any Masonic writer in the living world, it follows therefrom that the Great Symbolical Temple was not finished according to the original plans. It is for this reason that symbolically, if not actually, the True Temple still remains to be erected. Meanwhile, in Masonry, as in other institutions, we rest content as we can with certain conventional proxies in which we suppose, by a precarious hypothesis, which may have, however, a profound meaning imbedded, that some analogy inheres. It is understood that two Kings who represented at one time the Royal Houses of Official Grace and Nature knew the canonical answer to the Question, supposing that this had been put under the due warrants; but it is to be inferred that it was the verbal formula and not the ground-plan of the Mystic Building. In any case it remained *Sacramentum Regis*, the Secret of the King, and it follows, still speaking symbolically, that all Masonry derives not from a Lodge of Masters but from that of an inferior grade—the so-called Fellow Craft, namely. The missing formula was a Word of Life, and the *locum tenens*, by a contradistinctive analogy, is a Word of Death. It is for this reason that the whole corporate Fraternity undertakes a Quest<sup>3</sup> which is in undesigned

<sup>1</sup> We can hold the concept loosely and look for light therein.

<sup>2</sup> It is to be remembered that all representation is by way of substitution.

<sup>3</sup> We must understand in this connection a Quest for the Life of Spiritual Things.

correspondence with that of the Round Table ; but they move in the opposite direction to that in which the Mysteries repose.<sup>1</sup> It is the most mystical of all inquests, for it is the history of our human life.<sup>2</sup> But there is an Orient from on high which in fine rises on the soul ; the soul turns in that light and moves thenceforward in the true and one direction.

It is possible to express what follows from these facts in terms of comparative simplicity ; for even as Moses came down from the Mountain of God with a veil upon the face of him, so have I been speaking thus far to the mixed assembly of my readers under the veil of a self-imposed reservation, because these things are not to be discussed in public without changing the voice. Let me say now more openly, if not more clearly, that the ideal of the True Temple is in our hearts, and it is there that we build it. We do this daily by all the aspirations of our nature ; but for want of the lost designs we have not been able to externalise it. No doubt we have failed to lead the Life which entitles us to know of the Doctrine ; but we feel that it is implied and latent in all the roots of our being ; and we seem to die with it on our lips. It speaks in our dreams, but it uses an unknown language ; and if heart utters it to heart, it is only in oracles. Yet we have conceived enough regarding it to be aware—as intimated above—that the Spiritual Temple is a House not made with hands. And so neither Masonry nor any other of the greater Instituted Mysteries has designed a rebuilding of material Holy Places. The Rites of Initiation may deal—as they do certainly—in Parables and in Allegories ; they may present—and they do also—their particular forms of thought in the guise of a Legend of yesterday ; but they are really the Legends of to-morrow, the expressed heart of expectation and not a retrospective review. But if this be the case—as it seems indeed beyond challenge—what part have we otherwise in Masonry, seeing that we have come out of Jewry as others came out of Egypt ?<sup>3</sup> If this, I say, be the case, what manner of House was that which was planned of old in wisdom and was afterwards finished as it best could be, because treason fell upon the Keeper, because, in the absence of preparation and title, there had been an attempt to take the Kingdom of the Rites by violence ? Let us seek our first illustrative answer from an episode of the Law which was once promulgated in Israel. Moses the prophet came down in his glory from Mount Sinai bringing with him the Tables of the Law ; but he found his rebellious people unqualified for the high knowledge, and before the face of them he broke those Tables. Afterwards he gave them indeed certain commandments, but we are told on high traditional authority that they were the shadows of the others only—the code of unruly children,

<sup>1</sup> The journey is undertaken westward, instead of to the due east, and hence they return with Substitutes.

<sup>2</sup> We die with Substitutes in our hands in place of Realities in our hearts.

<sup>3</sup> There is one Masonic Grade which speaks of a plan to rebuild the House of God in Zion, but it means obviously after another manner.

not of the elected truly.<sup>1</sup> The world was not worthy. And the next example is that which we know already—that the Grail was taken away and that something was missing thereafter from the House of Quest; that again the world was not worthy. The three stories are therefore one story, and the same thing is everywhere. It is so much everywhere that the knowledge which remained with Moses was not withdrawn utterly by him—according to another Legend of Israel—when he went up the mountain in fine, when no man living followed him, when he did not return evermore. It has been held always in Jewry that there were certain Elders who received a Secret Deposit<sup>2</sup> and transmitted it in their turn in secret, so that it was perpetuated from generation to generation till it became known to the world at large, but only in an imperfect form, about the middle period of the Christian centuries. The original ZOHAR is reported by a paradox to have been a sufficient load for twelve camels, and the extant ZOHAR is on its own shewing a fragment or a substitute. The correspondence in Grail literature is the disparting of the Hallows among certain Holy Hermits and the removal of the Sacred Vessel to that place of which Perceval should know surely and with all speed.<sup>3</sup>

That which was made void, according to the Craft Legend, was a non-Christian House of Doctrine. The step beyond this is to shew that there is a Parallel in Masonry concerning Christian Doctrine; but it is found in High Degrees and in those which are militantly Christian. We must set aside those which were concerned in the past with an imagined Legend of Templar Vengeance. It is an old story in the High Grades that the murder of Jacques de Molai was destined to be avenged heavily, and one section of criticism has concluded that this was effected ultimately by the decapitation of Louis XVI; but this is Romance of Faërie. There are traces, however, of another secret plan, and one more deeply laid, though it was actuated by far different motives than inhere in the idea of vengeance. It is not illustrated by any Legend of murder or by anything that, remotely or approximately, can suggest a *vendetta*. But in one Masonic Grade which by the hypothesis, is the last transformation of the Templars, the fact is shewn forth by the silent eloquence of symbolism. As in the Craft Degrees we learn how the vital secret was taken away, so here the Rite sets before us a picture of all Christendom, personified by the flower of its Chivalry, standing guard, amidst the adjuncts of pomp and ceremony, over a Vacant Sepulchre—the Shrine from which a God has departed. Could anything signify more profoundly the bereavement and widowhood of the Christian House of Doctrine? Could anything indicate more pregnantly the presence of a sub-surface design among the old Knights Templar, supposing that this Grade were really, at some far distance, descended therefrom? Would it not seem like a challenge by way of evasion, saying to the modern

<sup>1</sup> See THE HOLY KABBALAH, pp. 306–311.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Potvin, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 346; HIGH HISTORY, Branch XXXV, Title 26.

world: "Do you suppose, in your fondness, that about those Hallows of the past our intention was ever centralised except to conceal it?"

There is obviously no answer hereto in the realm of figurative pageants; but our next step takes us to a Grade which is, comparatively speaking, obscure, though it is still worked in England. It is one the position and claim of which is a little difficult to determine, whether as to origin or history. On the surface its similarity to the Eighteenth Degree of Rose Croix has caused many persons to repudiate it as a mere copy. The better view may be, however, to infer that both Rites originated from a common prototype—with apologies to past Grail scholarships for trespassing in their most cherished preserves. I may mention here that there are not only several variants of the Eighteenth Degree incorporated by other systems, but there have been also Rosicrucian Grades current from time to time in Masonry which have very slight correspondence—beyond the Rose Croix name—with the Masonically most important memorial of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. This question apart, the particular Chivalrous and Masonic Order is rendered of consequence to our present purpose because it gives the counterpart by alternative of that intimation which is conveyed in the analogous Templar Grade. The latter represents a particular state of an assumed case at the period of the Crusades, the former at an epoch which—on account of several historical confusions, having an appearance of design—is scarcely possible to determine. In any event it dissolves at a certain stage into yet another Degree, and between the successive points of the two Rituals the Candidate is brought to a period when all earthly Houses of Doctrine have given place to the Spiritual House of Eternal Wisdom. As a preliminary to this, the externalised House of Doctrine, represented by the Holy Sepulchre, is made subject to a simple visitation, with the result that it is found empty; and those who look therein are told in a veiled manner that in such a place it is useless to go in quest of Lost Secrets, because the Divine Warden thereof has risen and gone away. As the Candidate and this of necessity—is left always in the position of Satan after his lectures at Salamanca, that is to say, with the shadow instead of the substance, so here the Chivalry of the Sepulchre has to be content with what it has—with a rumour of the Resurrection constructed into glad tidings, though it remains that the Place of the Hallows is now an empty Place.

Our last step takes us again to the literature of the Holy Grail, which depicts a House of Doctrine, like the Temples, Towns and Palaces of which we have been speaking previously. It shews how that House was in the first place visited by sin or sorrow; how secondly it was made void, the secret things thereto belonging being transferred therefrom. Symbolism has sometimes a way of sparing nothing; and probably the makers of the Legend intended only—as some expressly say—to illustrate how the Realm of Logres had become unworthy of the

most holy things ; but in two cases the House of the Doctrine is involved in the common ruin.

The question which supervenes now is one which may occur spontaneously to those who have followed this account. Is it intended to suggest—shall I say?—that the Secret of Masonry is anti-Jewish and anti-Christian, or, to put it better, that the interests which took over the Building Guild and made up Emblematic Freemasonry had either never entered into those Holy Places of the past or had come forth therefrom? The answer is a decisive negative. It follows from all the Traditional Histories, all the Symbolism, or that part at least which is other than accidental, and in fine from all the Rituals of Masonry, that those who set forth the widowhood of the House of Doctrine spoke not from without it but from within ; that they looked for the return of that which, for the time, had been taken away ; that when they speak to us of what was lost to Jewry, they were never more assured of the wisdom which once dwelt in Israel ; that when they mourn over the Holy Sepulchre, they were never more certain that what has been removed is alive ; and as all the Degrees end in a substituted restoration<sup>1</sup> it is also certain that thither where the truth and beauty had been taken they looked also to go. In other words, it is the intimation of the Secret Schools that somewhere in time and the world there is that which can confer upon the Candidate a real as well as a symbolical experience. And this is the identical message of the Grail literature. It speaks too as if from within the official House of Christian Doctrine concerning that which once inhered therein and is now in the state of withdrawal or profound latency ; it offers all honour and devotion to the Substituted Sanctuary which remains, as Masonry offers it in the higher understanding both to Jew and Christian. Here therefore is no enemy setting to at the work of destruction, but here rather are the rumours and voices as if of Unknown Superiors, like a power—which makes for righteousness—between the seat of Peter and the seat of the chief Patriarch, as if something were guiding and consoling all the Keepers of the Keys, but dissuading them at the same time from opening certain doors till that which has been lost is at length restored to the Sanctuaries.<sup>2</sup> It is in this sense only that we shall ever get to understand the Inner Mystery of the Holy Grail, the Mystery of the Craft Degrees, and of the great, disordered cohort of things from near and far—reflections, rumours, replica and supposititious descents from older Mysteries—which make up the cloud of witnesses in the High Degrees. The work, not indeed of the same hands but of many at the same work, is therefore everywhere, the traces of the same high intention, the evidence—not less strong because it is not declared

<sup>1</sup> The Word is always restored : that which was lost according to the record of the Master Grade is recovered in the Royal Arch ; a Christian alternative finding is symbolised in the Eighteenth Degree of Rose Croix ; and its rigid analogy is in Templar Masonry.

<sup>2</sup> It is to be expected but not affirmed that the Rites may then take the Closing in all their Grades and Degrees, because they will have served their purpose and done their work. It would not be useful to add that Church Rites are included.

openly—of Seekers, who are also our Brothers, sharing in the Quests of our humanity and shaping them, at proper seasons, to the true ends.

I conclude therefore (1) that Masonry is referred herein to its true place and is saved otherwise from the category of vain observances which are consecrated only by good intention, because it leads us back, after many travellings, to the one subject; (2) that it is an index-finger pointing to other Rites, to greater and exalted Ceremonies, which—somewhat shadowy, somewhat dubious, yet distinguishable as to their purpose—remain among the records of the past, not without suggestions that, even at this day, the Mysteries have not died utterly.<sup>1</sup>

I have made it plain already that in so far as there is mystic purpose or Hidden Doctrine in the Grail literature it is often like an echo from afar—a rumour, a legend which had fallen into the hands of romancers. It is as if Sir Walter Montbéliard, the patron of Robert de Borron, being by the hypothesis a Templar, had told a strange story to the poet of things which he also had heard from afar concerning the Sons of the Valley; it is as if the mythical Kyot de Provence, having seen a transcript from Toledo, had compared it with some Templar Records belonging to the House of Anjou. These are not the directions of research, but they stand for more likely ways; and I put forward as so many materials of assistance, so many traces of the same implicits perpetuated through several centuries—(1) the Sacramental Mystery of Alchemy as corresponding to the Eucharistic Mystery of the Holy Grail; (2) the mystical pageant of Kabbalism as analogical to the Grail pageant; (3) certain quests in Masonry as synonymous—outside all derivation—with the Grail Quest. The conclusion is that from the middle of the twelfth century, and so forward, there has been always a witness in the world that the greatest and the highest among the holy things have been represented by a certain substitution within the Official Churches and in other Sanctuaries of Holy Rites. Meanwhile, the Churches have not been made void utterly; they are still “those holy fields”; but they bear the same relation to the Sacred Mystery behind them that the visible Sinai and Horeb, Tabor and Carmel, Gethesame and Calvary, bear to the Church within. Remember that the highest office in so sense makes void the second best among any offices that are inferior—at least till SHILOH comes. The Supernatural Grail is without prejudice to the Instituted Sacrament, even as the transliterations and complexities of Kabbalistic interpretation reduce nothing in the literal word; while Masonry itself does not less represent an active power at work, within its own measures, because it has only substitutes to offer in respect of great things unrealised, and pictures in place of reality. It is the common disability of Rites. I speak in my humility as one who has tarried also at Eleusis, contemplating its

<sup>1</sup> It should be understood, in such case, that they are not of Vegetation Gods, that they do not deal in astral workings and that Miss Weston's Occult Schools, as she found or heard of them between 1909 and 1920, have no part therein.

Elysian Fields, and I have not found more therein. So also the PERLESVAUS and the QUESTE have put into our mouths the so-called living flesh of God Incarnate in place of the Living Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

## VII

## THE SECRET CHURCH OF ECKARTSHAUSEN

A TIME came when the bare possibility of speaking more openly led to more open speaking, and so at the end of the eighteenth century and in the first flush of the age which followed thereafter we have two or three text-books wherein are put forward some express intimations on our subject which, if they can be taken literally, are the most pregnant that have transpired in the world. I will give account of two only, which were at once independent and concurrent, namely, Eckartshausen's CLOUD UPON THE SANCTUARY and CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERIOR CHURCH attributed to the Russian Lopuhin but first published in French. The dates of these works are respectively 1800 and 1801.

Those who are acquainted with the literature of the Mystical Life will not be unfamiliar with the conception of a Holy Assembly in the hands of which the guidance of the Christian Church is held occasionally to have rested during the ages of Christendom. It is not, by the claim put forward, more especially a corporate union than the life of humanity at large on this earth is a corporate union also. It may not have occurred of necessity to my colleagues in thought; but they will understand what is meant when I say that the hypothetical Holy Assembly should be described perhaps as the sodality of a consciousness in common, and as I have spoken already of a consciousness behind the Church as of a region now untrodden, it will be realised that on the present supposition this region is not vacant. As we have inferred further from the researches of the present Eleventh Book that there are records of a Secret Tradition in Christian Times, so in the Doctrine of the Holy Assembly we find a late, sporadic but unusually definite witness which is saying the same thing after a new manner. I believe that the mode in which this claim has been advanced, though in one sense it is the most moderate of all, may possibly tend towards a certain confusion because two streams of influence are identified therein—one being the holy, exalted and saving mind of the official Church, at its own highest in the manifest, and the other that of the Hidden School itself as this is presented in the claim. The inference, moreover, seems to be that the Holy Assembly is a kind of head in concealment, and this I reject because of the misconception which it tends to induce of necessity. If we could suppose for a moment that

<sup>1</sup> Compare the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, on Joseph the II enthroned by Christ at Sarras.



man is the last development and issue from the anthropoid ape—much as one might agree to regard the story of the princess who came out of the water as a little chronicle of fact—that point—and whatever that point might be—at which the animal consciousness passed into the human consciousness would represent the analogical kind of transition by which the members of the mystical body enter—if they do enter—into the consciousness of the Holy Assembly. But the human being is not leading the anthropoid ape, nor are Werner's Sons of the Valley, who devised symbolical Masonry in his radiant dream, ruling the Craft from a specific, unseen centre. The worst of all illustrations would be, in like manner, to say that the Visible Church is the body and the Secret Church is the head. The Visible Church has been described figuratively as the mystical body of Christ, and the Real Presence in the Eucharist is *ex hypothesi* the mystical communication in perpetuity of Christ's life to that body; but this is on the understanding that the body is the incorporation of souls in sanctity. In respect of the Holy Assembly a similar description may obtain, but also on the understanding that it is a generic union of illuminated spirits in Christ—making use of the term spirit in that sense which attributes to man the possession of a higher soul—meaning the soul in dedication. The head is Christ in both cases indifferently, but in the case of the Secret Church that Divine Union, which here is of faith or imputation, has been established there under the sun of consciousness.

Perhaps, within the more familiar forms of expression, the idea of the Secret Church corresponds most closely with that which is understood by a School of the Prophets, though the term describes an advanced spiritual state by one only of the gifts which belong thereto. The gift itself has little connection with the external meaning of prophecy: it is not especially the power of seeing forward, but rather of sight within. In subjects of this kind, as in other subjects, the greater includes the lesser, it being of minor importance, for example, to discern the Coming of Christ in a glass of vision than to realise, either before or after, the deep significance of that Advent. So also the interpretation of Doctrine is not manifested so much by the exhibition of meaning behind meaning as of truth understanding truth.

The root fact at the back of what may appear a dream is the actuality of an experiment which has existed always in the world, which has never changed, which has been pursued unceasingly by a few, the rumours of which are everywhere, which has many literatures, and all these literatures are veils. When the German poet Werner produced his wonderful Legend concerning the Sons of the Valley as the guiding hand behind the old Order of the Temple; when he told how it was withdrawn at last, so that the Knightly Brethren were left to their fate in the power of the French King and the miserable Pontiff; he—Werner—was dreaming of this Experiment and those who pursued it. In after days he struck out this hypothesis and all element of life from his two strange plays; but apart from any Templar hypothesis, he

knew that he was on the right track, in the light of which knowledge he took the path of Lancelot and died as a Priest of the Latin Church, having sung Mass for I know not how many moons. When Eckartshausen, who had been born in the Sanctuary and was filled with the Spirit of the Sanctuary, made an end of composing little books of popular devotion which took Germany and France by storm, he saw that the Great Experiment and its Great Tradition were in truth the Secret of the Sanctuary and the heritage thereof. People who did not understand him said: "This is Deism"<sup>1</sup>—but it was the Higher Mystery of the Eucharist in the Adyta of a conceived Holy Assembly, and he it was—as I have hinted—who, on the intellectual side, drew nearest of all to the heart of truth within.

The scheme of his interpretation of those Mysteries of Compassion which summarise God's Providence towards man for the fulfilment of our return into union may be divided into a part of preamble and a part of definition. The preamble announces the conditions by which an entrance is hypothetically possible into the Communion of Saints. The requisite faculty is the interior sense of the transcendental world, and the opening of this sense is the beginning of Regeneration, understood as the eradication of that virus which entered into man at the Fall. Rebirth has three stages—that of the intelligence, that of the heart and will, but that in fine which—seeing that it embraces the entire being—is called corporeal rebirth, because the beast is also saved together with the man, and the Great Quintessence by which the soul is converted transmutes the body as well. It is held to follow herefrom that union with God is possible in this life in the opening of the world within us by a triple gradation through the moral, meta-physical and plenary worlds, wherein is the Kingdom of the Spirit. This is the process of Regeneration expressed in other terms. So far as regards the preamble; but the dogmatic part affirms: (1) that an Advanced School has existed from the beginning of our history, deriving directly from Christ, as He in Whom there dwells substantially the whole plenitude of God; (2) that this is the enlightened Community of the Interior Church, disseminated throughout the world and governed by one Spirit therein; (3) that it is the most hidden of all Sodalities; (4) that the Outer School, which is the visible Church, is founded thereon and gives, by its Symbols and Ceremonies, an external utterance to that truth which abides in the Hidden Sanctuary; (5) that the work of the Interior Church has been the building of a Spiritual Temple of Regenerated Souls; (6) that it possesses a direct knowledge of those means by which man is restored to his first estate; (7) that the External Church became a necessity owing to the weakness of man; (8) that a time arrived when its outward worship fell away from the service within; (9) that the Church which was founded in Abraham was raised to perfection in Christ; (10) that the Inmost Sanctuary is without change

<sup>1</sup> THE CLOUD UPON THE SANCTUARY, by Councillor Karl von Eckartshausen, translated by Madame de Steiger and introduced by myself. Third edition, 1909, p. xiii.

or shadow of vicissitude; (11) that it is the union of those who have received the light and share in the Communion of Saints; (12) that it unites the science of the old External Covenant with that of the New and Interior Covenant; (13) that it has three degrees corresponding to the stages of Regeneration; (14) that therein repose the Mysteries of all True Knowledge; (15) that it resembles no secret society, for all external forms have passed utterly away; (16) that the path thereto is Wisdom and the way is Love; (17) that although the Inner Sanctuary has been separated from the earthly Temple, they are destined for reunion; (18) that the Way which is Wisdom and Love is also Christ; (19) that the Mystery of the Incarnation is the deep Mystery of Reunion with God; (20) that man in his first estate was the Temple of Divinity, and God in His wisdom has projected the rebuilding of this Temple; (21) that the plans of His scheme are in the Holy Mysteries and constitute the Secret of Regeneration, which is the Royal and Sacerdotal Science; (22) that man approximates to Regeneration, and does in fine attain it, by the discernment of the Body and Blood of Christ,<sup>1</sup> or, as I have expressed it myself continually throughout this work, by the Mystery of the Eucharist.

The same testimony was given independently at the same time by the Chevalier Lopuhin in his little tract on the CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERIOR CHURCH.<sup>2</sup> He defined the higher spiritual mind as that of consciousness in Grace only, by which those who participate therein become that which Christ is by His nature. Here also the Great Work is that of Regeneration, which is accomplished in Christ, and the Church within has the keys of the process. The testimony is also identical as to the sanctity and indefectible character of the external Church, which is the means of entrance into the Church of Christ unseen. The way, again, is Love, as the essence of the Body of Christ; by Regeneration that Body is reborn in us; and so the whole process—though in neither case is the truth stated expressly—becomes the Arch-Natural Mystery of the Eucharist.

There are errors of expression in both these works, and, as I have said, there is a certain confusion; they are not to be taken by themselves or in connection simply with one another; but it will be evident that, after their own manner, they bear the same testimony as other Schools of Tradition in Christian Times and as the higher literature of the Grail.

It will be seen that in the mind of Eckartshausen the Office of the Secret Church is that of Divine Communication; but it should be understood that such Communication attained, and this only, gives entrance to the Inward Church. It abides behind the Sacraments, and yet it is their source. So far as its Office is typified symbolically it can have no more efficient and unspotted outward signs than the Bread and Wine of the Mass. It is in this sense that it connects more

<sup>1</sup> Eckartshausen, *Op. cit.*, pp. 59, 72, 73, 74; and INTRODUCTION, p. XXXIII.

<sup>2</sup> I. V. Lopuhin (Lopukhin), translated from the French by D. H. S. Nicholson and introduced by myself, 1912.

especially with the Eucharist than with any other observance in the wide world of Rites and Liturgies. Christian Temples are oriented to shew that there is a light behind, and our Churches with open doors are the thresholds of that other Church which is not entered by doors because it has not been built with hands. There is another sense in which the so-called Secret Church is the Manifest Church glorified and installed in the Spiritual Kingdom, even as the latter is installed and set over the kingdom of the beautiful world. It is therefore the withdrawn spirit of the outward Holy Assembly, and it would seem unreasonable for those who acknowledge the visible body to deny that which transcends it. But to speak of a spirit which thus transcends a body is to say that—because the lesser is contained by the greater—the latter is until now not exactly without the former or apart therefrom ; while its mode of manifestation, in so far as it can be said to manifest, is not otherwise than from within. There is no separate incorporation. It has no ambassadors or *chargés d'affaires* at any Court of the Hierarchies, nor does it send out visible physicians and healers, for it has no conventional offices either in the interests of things above or even of those below. If some have spoken of it as leading the Official Church, there is here an imperfection of expression, because it is speaking after a formal manner concerning modes which are apart from all whatsoever that we understand by convention. Without in any sense representing and much less exhausting the process, it draws rather than leads ; and if I may attempt one further definition, as a synthesis of all these statements—echoing and reflecting all—the Secret Church is the integration of believers in the higher consciousness.

## VIII

## SUMMARY

**B**UT now in conclusion generally as to all the Schools of Symbolism, successive or coincident : it follows from the considerations which have been developed in what approaches an exhaustive manner that we are confronted by two theses, from the first of which it results that the Mystery of Divine Attainment is of that order which passes into experience, while dubiously and illusively its traces are met with even in the modern world, though it does not say "Come quickly" to the majority of Aspirants. From the second it ensues that the Great Secret—at least so far as its specific declaration and visible existence are concerned—has passed into abeyance in the external Sanctuaries. I can scarcely conceive of a clearer issue established by way of contrast. Several accredited scholars have recognised the evidences of Secret Doctrine in the Grail literature, more especially in respect of the Eucharist, but some of them

have been disposed to account for its presence by a familiarity with obscure Apocryphal Gospels. This is a source in Legend, and of sources in experiences of Sanctity or of perpetuated Secret Doctrine they knew little enough. In particular they did not dream that such perpetuation could have taken place except in Schools of Heresy. They appreciated the concealment of Sects which carried their lives in danger, but not the concealment of the Sanctuary. There is, however, that Vision of the Third Heaven, about which—in the typology of the subject—it is not lawful to speak, the reason being that it exceeds expression except by way of similitude, and this tends to erroneous apprehension. The Secret School towards which I look and of which I recognise the existence did not differ, so far as terms are concerned, in respect of Doctrine from the external ways of salvation, but it opened out an infinite realm which lies behind the manifest life of teaching—that realm which was in the mind of St. Augustine when he said, as we have seen, that the definition of Three Persons subsisting in one God was not an expression which satisfied the intellect, but that some kind of formulation is necessary. This School did not come forward with improvements on Doctrine, with proposals to reduce Doctrine, or with new opinions on the Eucharist. It carried the implicits of religious teaching to their final issue: the implicits were catholic and the issue also was catholic; but the language-symbols dissolved or were left behind in approaching thereunto.

So it remains to this day, while we in our spiritual isolation are conscious of loss everywhere.

The Great Rites are celebrated, the High Offices continue, the moving Liturgical Formulæ are recited from day to day and year after year: we pass hurriedly through crowded streets and over the quiet country-sides; we pause by solitary seas. The veiled voices signify the Presence, yet the Master is taken away, and we know not where they have laid Him. The Great Legends tell us that He has been assumed into Heaven because of the evil times, or that He is in a place of Hiddenness, or that He is not seen so openly. Prohibited, spoliated and extirpated with fire and sword, the memory of the dead sects of Southern France can offer us at their highest only the lips of the noble lady Esclairmonde communicating the *osculum fraternitatis*—*consolamentum* of all things saddest—through the flames of the *auto-da-fé*. One Masonic Chivalry consents to protect us from the insidious attacks of the infidel if we visit the Holy Fields, but it is confessed that the Sepulchre is empty and we know that the worst danger is from the infidel who is within. A later and more obscure Chivalry, with a vainer office of observance, keeps Ritual Guard over the shadow of a Sacred Legend, we asking the daughters of Zion whether there is any greater desolation. It pledges us to maintain the Sepulchre when it is agreed that the Master is not there, and we continue to say with our lips: *Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam*, with a certain unconscious relief that the word *Credo* stands far away in the symbol. Saddest

and proudest of all, next to the immortal ZOHAR, the great Legends of Masonry tell us that until that which from time immemorial has been lost in the secret places is at length restored to the Mysteries, the true temple can be built only in the heart. The Kabbalistic Sages are also waiting for the Word, that there may be mercy on every side, and the stress and terror of the centuries is because Adonai has been substituted for Jehovah in the true form thereof. It is only the higher side of Alchemy which, without faltering, has continued to point the Path of Attainment, speaking of no change, no substitution therein—telling us of the one Matter, the one Vessel, the one Way of Perfection, yet also saying that except the Divine Guidance lead us in the Path of Illumination, no man shall acquire the most hidden of all secrets without a Master, which is another mode of expressing the same thing. I suppose that there is no more unvarying witness continued through the ages, amidst all which we have felt, as we still feel, that only a small change in the axis of inclination would transform the world of greatest inhibition into that of the greatest grace. It is as if we were in the position of Perceval, according to the HIGH HISTORY—as if we had failed only on account of “one little question.” But we do not know what it is, or rather we know it only in its external and substituted forms. We go on, therefore, sadly enough and slowly, yet in a sense we are haunted men, with a voice saying ever and again in our ears: “Ask, and ye shall receive”; search your heart, for the true Question is within and the answer thereof.

A sad and strange enchantment has fallen even over the animal world, and all the gentle creatures with kind eyes are waiting with us for the close of the Adventurous Times, the term of Enchantment in Logres, and the unspelling Quest. Of these three things, two are of the Order of Mercy and one is of the High Order of the Union. All this is not to say that the High Offices fail, that the great conventions are abrogated, that the glorious sense of chivalry towards our Second Mother in those Sodalities which are external—but yet in that order are some intellectual and some also spiritual—that this sense is not of the highest counsel. But a time comes when the “glory to God in the highest,” having been declared sufficiently without, is expressed more perfectly within, and we know in fine that this glory is to be revealed.

The same story of loss is therefore everywhere, but it is never told twice in the same way. Now it is a despoiled Sanctuary; now a withdrawn Sacramental Mystery; now the abandonment of a Great Military and Religious Order; now the age-long frustration of the greatest building plan which was ever conceived; now the Lost Word of Kabbalism; now the vacancy of the most holy of all Sepulchres. But the Sanctuary is sacred, the King is to return, the Order of Chivalry has not really died; at some undeclared time, and under some unknown circumstances, the Word which gives the key to some Treasure-House of the Building Plan will be restored in full, and meanwhile the Quest is continued for ever. The True Word will be restored also to Israel;

and so from age to age goes on the great story of divine expectation. Meanwhile also the Christian Mystics say: "Take no thought for the morrow, because it is here and now"; and to this Grand Antiphon the Responson of the Hermetic Mystery is: "Even so, in the place of Wisdom there is still the Stone of the Wise".

BOOK XII

THE SECRET OF THE HOLY GRAIL





## THE ARGUMENT

I. LATER INTIMATIONS OF SCHOLARSHIP.—A Retrospective Glance on the Results of previous Critical Studies—Albert Pauphilet on the Quest of Galahad—Galahad as a Minister of God—A Gate of Understanding opened in this Manner—Étienne Gilson on the Mystery of Grace in the Quest—Cistercian Mysticism and the Ecstasy of Love—The Beatific Vision—Grace and the Holy Spirit—Summary of this Thesis. II. A FURTHER REVIEW OF THE QUESTS.—Recurrence to the Grail as a Reliquary—The Grail as the Grace of the Holy Spirit—Consequences of this View on the Removal of the Grail—A Call to proceed further—Consideration of the Quests in Search of their present Message to the World—Judgment on the PARZIVAL—Position of the later TITUREL—The Epistle of Prester John—Decision in respect of the Albrecht Poem—Views of Miss Weston on the CONTE as pure Romance—The Borron Perceval—Age-long Vigil of the Keepers—Grail Ecstasy and the Voice of the Holy Spirit—Intimations of the PERLESVAUS—Masses of the Grail—An implied Sequel to the PERLESVAUS—The Grail removed from the Castle but not from the World itself—Inward Message of the Story—The GALAHAD QUEST—A Personal History and a Parable of the Soul—Of Parable and Allegory—Fatalities Attached to the Round Table and the Kingdom of Arthur—The Quest as an outward and inward Story—Intermingling of these Elements—The Grail Message begins in the Sanctuary and returns thereto—The Birth of Galahad—The Last Scene at Corbenic—The Scene in the Spiritual City—The Dilucid Contemplation of the Grail—Characteristics of the Experience implied—Of that which was seen by the Maimed King—Galahad and the World of Ascension—The Divine in the Soul and the Divine in the Universe—That this is the Secret of the Grail. III. A PRELIMINARY EXCURSUS CONCERNING THE GREAT EXPERIMENT.—A Definition of the Grail Quest—Testimony of the Admirable Ruysbroeck—Testimony of the Galahad Quest—Term of the Great Experiment—The Witness of all Churches and all Religions—A Note on the Secret Orders—Inward Doctrine of Religion—The Communication of Divine Substance—Tradition in the East and the West—The Unity of Witness—Questions of the Path—The Rule of Sanctity—Catholic Doctrine and the Church Mystical—Religious Experiment of the Quest—Counsels of Perfection—Qualifications of Galahad—Grace and the Sanctified State—The Condition of *Virgo Intacta*—Sanctity and the State of Union—The Attainment of Galahad—The Vision of Nasciens—The Quest as a Tale of Eternity—The Gate of the Eucharist—The Secret Temple of the Soul. IV. THE SECRET SCHOOL.—The Grail and Secret Doctrine—A School of Christian Mystics—The School and the Church—The Mass and Beatific Vision—The Inward Secret Church and the Mass therein—The Church and the Eucharist—The Rumour in Romance—An Experiment which is always in the World—The Secret of the Sacrament—The Path which leads to the

Union—How it leads behind the Church—Other Aspects which environed the Grail Literature—State of the External Church—The Ferments at work in the Western Branch—Transubstantiation and Communion in one Kind—The Voice of Debate and the Voice of Silence—Personalities of the Hidden School—The efficacious Grail—Mysteries of Sanctity—The Dominant Church and its Voided Claims—The Term of Quest and the Term of Union—The Grail Witnesses—Secrets behind the Altar and the Sacrifice—The Mass of St. Thomas Aquinas—The Secret Church and the Holy Assembly—Of a Mass behind a Mass—A Dream of Chivalry Spiritualised—Tradition and its Many Voices—The Church in Widowhood and Desolation—The World of Loss and the World of Attainment—Christian Witnesses of the State beyond the Vision—Testimony of Hierotheos on the Christ-life in the Soul—Pseudo-Dionysius on All-perfect Agnosia—A Ladder of Paradox—The Way of Negation and the Way to God—The Latin Church and the Mystics—The Areopagite and John the Scot—The Franciscan Movement and other later Developments—Dionysius and Theosis—The Catholic Church and the Mystics—Ruysbroeck and Gerson—The Abbot Joachim—Innocent III and the Papal Empire—Of those who led the Life and found the Doctrine.

V. THE CONCLUSION OF THIS HOLY QUEST.—Of Mystical Transmission from the Past—Of Masses heard in the Heart—Of an unexplored World behind Rite and Symbol—Depth and Wonder of the Mass—Keywords of the Mystery—Lights and Incense of the Outer Sanctuary—Mystical Loss of Logres—The Path of Dereliction and the Path of Heaven—The Pageant of the Eucharist—The Veil of Consecrating Words—Of those who are Called and Chosen—Shadows of Secret Memorials—Antecedents of the Cup Legend—Of a Sanctuary within the Sanctuary—The Spirit imparted to the Soul—Dissolution of Doctrine in Experience—The limits of Expression—The Divine Unimaged Vision—Exotics of the one Subject—The fact of the Great Experiment—The Churches as Witnesses—A Question of the Stewards—The Pearl of Great Price—The World of Quest and the World of Attainment—The End of these Pleadings.

VI. EPILOGUE.—The Grail and its Temple of Images—The Masses of the PERLESVAUS—The Inner Chapel of the Grail—The End of Sacramental Marvels—Messages of Many Voices—How the Quest goes on.

## BOOK XII

### THE SECRET OF THE HOLY GRAIL

#### I

#### LATER INTIMATIONS OF SCHOLARSHIP

IT has to be confessed that we have come forth from a prolonged study of the Grail Critical Apparatus with empty hands: The explanations of purpose and intention, of meanings behind the Legend, the suggested origins have fallen to pieces in their examination. In the majority of cases they are anything but idle inventions, and a few had so much in their favour that they held the field for years; but it has not proved in the end that they cover the ground. They have been abandoned by others before myself, sometimes for reasons which seem sufficient in themselves, sometimes on the basis of considerations which have called to be expressed differently or enforced by others. On the one hand, the Templar hypothesis was never justified evidentially and might have slept to this day if Wolfram had not called his Grail Knights *Templeisen* and clothed them after the manner of the Templar Chivalry. If such imitation proves anything, then certain Masonic High Grades are warranted to the same extent and within the same limits, seeing that they claim descent from the Templars; that they have been called for generations by the old historical name; that they wear the identical habit; that they meet in Preceptories and Priors, and are governed by a Grand Master. On the other hand, *pace* Dr. J. D. Bruce and the implication behind his suggestion that the Tuatha de Danaan Talismans were never heard of in writing till Keating produced a HISTORY OF IRELAND in the seventeenth century,<sup>1</sup> I do not suppose that their antiquity is seriously at issue; and in any case it is not to be questioned that there are folk-lore elements in the wonder-stories of the Grail. But the fact remains that they do not account for the Grail, being its accidents, not of its essence. Miss Weston discovered this after forty years of expatiation on folk-lore subjects; but unfortunately her Ritual alternative offers no help in turn. Finally, the sects have failed us, though there was good reason to turn in their direction for light,

<sup>1</sup> It was completed *circa* 1625 and was written in the Irish tongue. The English version mentioned in a previous note was the work of Dermot O'Connor. I have heard also of another translation which appeared at New York about 1865.

having regard to the claims put forward by two historicity texts of the Grail literature and reflected into the Quests as their developments, actual or assumed. On the surface therefore it looks as though the whole subject has been landed in a *cul de sac* and will have to be left therein. I am proposing, however, to try one journey more, hoping to escape Miss Weston's refuge by way of appeal to Bishop Butler, who said in his ANALOGY OF RELIGION that we must rest content with probabilities when we are denied certitude.

That excellent lady—whose reasonable panegyric will be found in my Appendix II—had made her last contribution to the Grail subject when M. Albert Pauphilet produced at Paris in 1921 his *ÉTUDES SUR LA QUESTE DEL SAINT GRAAL*—otherwise *L'ÉVANGILE DE GALAAD*.<sup>1</sup> The question, for him, is no longer that of the Perceval Cycle, "Who is served of the Grail?" (and its variants), but *qu'est-ce que la Quête du Graal?* It is answered in notable ways. (1) "It is more than a convenient framework for stories of adventure: Knightly prowess, love and women have no place of honour here; and the great heroes of Romance—Lancelot, Gawain, etc.—are put to shame or defeated. (2) We are no longer in the romantic world."<sup>2</sup> The Grail itself is *la romanesque manifestation de Dieu*, while the Quest thereof is the search after God, "under the veil of allegory" and *sous l'apparence chevaleresque*. It is also a presentation of Christian Life "as observed or dreamed by a mind of the thirteenth century."<sup>3</sup> (3) As regards Galahad, he is God's own minister after more than one manner. "Other Saints are engrossed exclusively with the business of their own salvation"; but he seems charged with a mission which passes far beyond his personal concern. *Éternel croisé, il marche au milieu des prodiges, escorté du vol des anges*. In a word, he is the personified Imitation of Christ, *un modèle de vertu Chrétienne assez parfait pour reproduire la terrestre de Jesus*—the Eternal Pattern.<sup>4</sup>

Such is the thesis in brief and broad outline; but as my readers must not presuppose M. Pauphilet's unconditional approval of his graphic picture, it is desirable to quote the last paragraph of his second Study. "In this our day the inspiration and the form of such a work"—meaning the QUESTE of Galahad—"are alike remote from us. This is no moment for explaining the world by Mysticism or recalling the import of mediæval allegories. We have other views, moreover, on the medley of the sacred and profane in literature than prevailed in the thirteenth century. No second spring is possible therefore for this book, which came to be misconstrued so speedily in its own day. Incomparably less human than any TRISTRAM, it will never become popular again. It is reserved for the admiration of those alone who, by virtue of learning, are qualified to sympathise with forgotten ways of thought and to discern, *même dans des œuvres pirimiés*, some aspects of that Art which is eternal."

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 3-11.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 24, 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, p. 155.

I am inclined to speculate whether M. Pauphilet is making an astute concession to his age in France, that he may secure the sympathetic fraction which he separates from the *profanum vulgus* as initiatable, if not initiated; but it happens, in any case, that there are those in England, and they are not few but many, who not only have ears to hear, when such new views are promulgated and such a gate opens. They are likely, I think, to listen with all their souls, and perhaps even will call on the stars to hearken.

If they turn from this outline sketch to the author's own STUDIES, they may question—on the one hand—whether (1) the attributes of the Grail are described correctly as those of God Himself;<sup>1</sup> and—on the other—whether (2) he is right in proposing a Cistercian origin for the Galahad Quest.<sup>2</sup> Personally I do not see eye to eye with M. Pauphilet on the second point, partly because I remember that the political Antichrist, *sub nomine* Innocent III, entrusted the preaching of the Albigensian Crusade to that Monastic Order, thus blotting all its scutcheon; and otherwise (1) because he or they who produced the QUESTE and represented the Second Joseph, First Bishop of Christendom, coming down from Heaven to say Mass at Corbenic and Sarras would be certainly acquainted with the Arch-heretical claim of the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, which no Cistercian would have tolerated;<sup>3</sup> (2) because one of its fatal preachments, placed in a Hermit's mouth, propounds the unorthodox thesis that human beings were created with immortal souls, that they might fill the thrones left vacant by fallen angels. That is doctrinal fable and not good Theology.<sup>4</sup>

For the rest, M. Pauphilet, as suggested, is like one who opens a gate. He is a scholar of the Grail subject, and one of his STUDIES establishes the text of the QUESTE with reference to the available MSS. Moreover, in 1923 he edited the QUESTE itself on the basis of this research. He is important therefore, not only for his standpoint respecting the Legend of Galahad but because he speaks with a certain authority. It is to be hoped that my old casual acquaintance Alfred Nutt, with whom I talked in early days about LE GRAND PERCEFOREST, that Dr. J. D. Bruce and Miss Weston will not hear on their intellectual thrones in some Elysium of scholarship the far-off echo of Pauphilet's voice on this to them tabooed subject, the praise of Galahad and *le caractère exclusivement chrétien du Graal*. For us, however, it is one more piece of evidence that "the old order changeth" and that to-day's criticism of literature, like to-day's science, revokes the findings of yesterday. It is good to be alive when such things happen in our motley Arcadia. It is also a call to proceed and find, if that be possible, what strange things may lie beyond the gate of these ÉTUDES.

We have not to go further at the start than that beloved review which is devoted to all the letter and a modicum, on rare occasions,

<sup>1</sup> ÉTUDES, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> See Sommer's edition of the QUESTE in *Op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 189, 190, 197, 198.

<sup>4</sup> It happens to be merely fantastic, with little attaching thereto.

of the spirit of Romance—the ROMANIA of 1925. We can read M. Étienne Gilson on *la mystique de la grâce dans la Queste del Saint Graal*. He is working from Pauphilet's edition of the text and admits the latter's contention that romantic themes are used therein to express a Christian conception of man and the universe;<sup>1</sup> but he is far from accepting the suggestion that the Grail is God, which he reads, like myself, into the affirmation that the attributes of the Grail are Divine Attributes. Perhaps, however, there is a sense after all in which this statement is true, though it is not in the extreme sense. The Grail for M. Gilson is Grace, and this is a gift from God but is not God Himself. Grace is defined as Love, "the Love given us by God to call us back to Him;" and the canonical maxim which belongs hereto is: *Charitas ex Deo est*,<sup>2</sup> the counter maxim notwithstanding, on the same authority, which affirms a little later that *Deus charitas est*.<sup>3</sup> This may be left to the theologians, so far as the New Testament sources are concerned, though a few figurative hairs could be tendered for splitting on my own part, were space and time provided.

I am wondering, however, what M. Gilson understands by the Grail: it must be surely the traditional content which empowers the Vessel, while it seems obvious that for Robert de Borron and the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, the Precious Blood was not a mere Passion Relic but a living thing, and that with which it was alive was the Real Presence. Even the Talismanic Stone of Wolfram had this Presence within it—of course, *ex hypothesi*—because of the Sacred Host brought down from Heaven to renew its powers from year to year. The PARZIVAL forgets to tell us whether Angels carried the old one back to a Place of Reservation beyond the skies. It looks in any case as if there were something to be said for Pauphilet's alleged implicit, following the Catholic Doctrine that Christ Jesus—who is God, *ex hypothesi*—abides in the Altar Tabernacle under the elements of Hallowed Bread and Wine. We must remember also that for Robert de Borron the abiding Presence in the Grail was the Voice of the Holy Spirit.

This is by the way only; but it belongs to the logic of the debate and clears the issues. M. Gilson affirms that the central theme of the Galahad Romance is Grace, and that it is moved thereby towards those ecstasies of love which are the Supreme Crown of Grace in Cistercian Mysticism.<sup>4</sup> The allocation may pass; but it happens that neither then nor subsequently were those Divine activities pursued in one only House of Religion, in one Monastic Order. M. Gilson says that "there are two ways of attaining God for a Cistercian Mystic, in this world by ecstasy and in the other by the Beatific Vision."<sup>5</sup> He adds that the Vision is attained in and through Love for the Augustinians and Cistercians, but by intelligence for the Thomists. He might remember at the same time that the Path of Love is mystically a Path of Contemplation and that it is the Angel of the Schools who

<sup>1</sup> M. Gilson agrees also that the QUESTE is of Cistercian origin.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Ep. St. John iv, 27, Vulgate version.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*, iv, 16.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 323.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, p. 345.

has given us the great definition on this subject, namely, that Contemplation is Love. The question may be left at this point, having been discussed in some other writings of mine, where it has been shewn that the state of Vision is not the state of Union, from which it follows that Thomists, as well as Cistercians, fell short of the true mystical term in their records of experience.<sup>1</sup>

M. Gilson explains further that the Grace of the Grail is the Grace of the Holy Spirit, leading to the knowledge of God, and the Life of God in the soul, not by way of knowledge but by that of feeling—otherwise, the Way of Love. It is certified that the operation of Grace is seen best in Galahad—of course within the measures of Romance. He is its “perfect incarnation”, and as such he is a symbol of our Lord, Who is the *plénitude de la grâce du Saint-Esprit et son distribution parmi les hommes*. Galahad is not merely on the Quest,<sup>2</sup> he is also the Guide of the Knights and goes before them on the way—a manifest type of the Saint and Captain of Souls. As to the Quest of the Grail, “it is the search after the secrets of God, unknown in the absence of Grace and by those who know inexpressible,” because they are attained in ecstasy.<sup>3</sup> It follows that the Arthurian Chivalry pursuing the Quest of the Grail were pledged to a Spiritual Work, otherwise the Quest of the Divine, “as seen by the soul, without the aid of bodily sense.”<sup>4</sup> Galahad, Perceval and Bors “attain the Supreme Ecstasy

<sup>1</sup> See THE WAY OF DIVINE UNION, 1915, and especially LAMPS OF WESTERN MYSTICISM, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> It might be said truly that Galahad is the Quest itself—at once the Path and End. By virtue of that which was within him, he fulfilled the Quest.

<sup>3</sup> The author regards the Mysterious Bed in the Ship of Solomon, which haunts the sea in the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, as a symbol of the mystic ecstasy. It must be confessed that I do not find the evidence, though the suggestion itself is intriguing. The original and admitted object of the Ship and its building was that it might convey to Galahad the foreknowledge of his ancestor concerning the coming of the High Prince in the fullness of far-off times. It was also or became a symbol of Faith, and those who did not possess that Theological Virtue in an eminent degree entered the Ship at their peril. As regards the Bed, no one slept thereon, till Perceval and Bors, sailing towards Sarras with the Grail and Galahad, reminded him that, according to a certain scroll preserved on board, the last Knightly Descendant of Solomon was to repose thereon (Sommer's edition of the QUESTE, *Op. cit.*, pp. 161, 193). Galahad followed the counsel *et dort grant pièce*. He did not awake in fact till the Ship reached Sarras, but as to all that happened in his sleep the text is silent. It follows that M. Gilson's view is a matter of simple inference. He would say no doubt that such a Bed could not have been prepared and that such a rest could not have been taken thereon without a signal object in view. It stands at this, but I think personally that the true mystical ecstasy of Galahad was reserved for the Mass at Sarras.

<sup>4</sup> The words of the QUESTE are, however: *Et il—that is Galahad—se traist avant et regarde devant (variant: dedens) le saint vaissel. Et si tost come il i ot . . . regardé, si commencha a trambler moult durement, si tost comme la mortels char commencha a regarder les espritels choses.*—Sommer, *Op. cit.*, VI, p. 197. Cf. Pauphilet: LA QUESTE DEL SAINT GRAAL, pp. 276, 277. The passage is represented in the condensed version of Malory by the crucial sentence only: “And then he began to tremble right hard when the deadly flesh began to behold the spiritual things”.—MORTE DARTHUR, Bk. XVII, cap. 22. The point is that, according to the alleged Cistercian author of the QUESTE, the “bodily sense” did begin to see, and M. Gilson is to all appearance at issue with his source. This notwithstanding, it is indubitable that he is right, thus making the QUESTE wrong, at least to all appearance, in like manner. But the explanation is that Galahad's experiences opened in the physical by the contemplation of a physical object, which began to exhibit a Real Presence within it, belonging to another order. The flesh trembled therefore, and then for the time being, as it were, “passed in music out of sight”. But it is obvious that the whole experience was of a time-moment only, like the proverbial twinkling of an eye.



at last, but have visions and partial illuminations to prepare the way".<sup>1</sup> Lancelot, on the other hand, got no further than the revelations of a dream-state.

In summary of all the thesis, (1) the supreme prize reserved to those who are victorious in the Quest is an open vision of the Divine Secrets ; (2) the Quest of the Grail does not cease to be a Romance of Grace because it is a Quest of Ecstasy ; (3) it cannot be the one in very truth without being also the other, since ecstasy is the final efflorescence of the life of Grace in the Christian Soul ; (4) the simple faithful who follow the strait way of salvation and perfect Mystics who enjoy already the Presence of God are alike nourished by the Grail ; (5) but the ecstatic is seated at the Table of God, while the others rest content with the broken meats of the Festival ; (6) from its lowest manifestations to the Highest, it is one and the same life which works in all ; (7) to identify ecstasy therefore as the end proposed by the Quest is to set for their attainment before the Knights of the Round Table the Life of Grace in its perfect state.<sup>2</sup> It is not surprising that many died therein and that all but twelve failed. The Round Table broke about the Quest and Logres drowned in blood.

Remembering my own original book on the Grail subject,<sup>3</sup> for long years out of print and less or more incorporated herewith ; it is a little like coming into my own to read this interpretation of the *QUESTE* in the desirable pages of *ROMANIA*, and to realise how at least one other than myself—and knowing nothing of my excursions—has found that the High Mystery of the soul in the Blessed Vision and of the soul in the Union has once at least been drawn into Romance. Here then, and again in brief outline, is some part of that which lies beyond the gate opened—so to speak—by M. Albert Pauphilet. I say again that it is a call to go forward : it is another sign-post on the road.

## II

### A FURTHER REVIEW OF THE QUESTS

**T**HE studies which have passed under review in the previous section offer their pregnant suggestions on the Path of Quest and on that which may be understood mystically as the finding of the Grail ; but they leave the last and most vital problem of the whole literature not only unsolved but untouched. It seems handed back to us in fact underscored. If the Precious Blood of Christ Jesus, in its literal pouring out, can—as orthodox dogma

<sup>1</sup> There is no authority in the text for saying that Perceval and Bors saw or experienced anything except a Bishop, encompassed by Angels, reciting a Mass of the "Glorious Mother of God". They did not look within the Grail like Galahad, and they did not receive the Host, which was offered to him alone.

<sup>2</sup> *ROMANIA*, Vol. LI, pp. 342, 343.

<sup>3</sup> *THE HIDDEN CHURCH OF THE HOLY GRAIL*, 1909.

affirms—cleanse the whole world from sin, there is no question that a Reliquary containing some part or modicum thereof, is the greatest Palladium in the Christian Treasury of Relics,<sup>1</sup> though the difficulties which it offers to literal Theological Doctrine might baffle all the Doctors and all the Casuists. Now, when it is said to have been removed because the world was not worthy to possess the Vessel of singular devotion, the issue is clear and simple. Yet those who define the Grail as the Grace of the Holy Spirit do so at their peril, in view of those texts which certify that in fine it was taken away.<sup>2</sup> On the authority of the CONTE and the QUESTE, the Comforter has gone back into Heaven. On the authority of the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL, He has one Shrine in Northumbria, and two of all humanity may worship there. On that of the PERLESVAUS the Divine Presence is hidden in an isle unknown, far across the sunlit sea. There is also the testimony of Albrecht which certifies on this hypothesis that the Abiding Spirit is leading in perpetuity the Romanised Nestorian Church of Prester John. It has to be remembered that the QUESTE—so called *par excellence*—does not stand alone and that its various competitors must be taken into account, for which reason it has been desirable to make these otherwise preposterous enumerations. But if it stood alone, if it were the one and only Quest, the root difficulty would remain, namely, that the Grace of the Holy Spirit ascended to Heaven with Galahad and has come nevermore to earth.<sup>3</sup> It follows that MM. Pauphilet and Gilson are in the position of Sebastian Evans, who forgot unaccountably that to remove the Papal Interdict from Logres was in fact to restore the Grail and not take it away, as the PERLESVAUS, his authority, does. It follows also that, having dwelt for a few moments in the sunlight of their suggestive intimations, we are called to go further and, in the first place, to glance again at the Quests in search of their message, if any, for us at the present day. We are concerned no longer with questions of dates and developments, so a beginning may be made with a text which has been regarded very long and very often as among the most significant of all.

If we take Wolfram's PARZIVAL at the highest of all the valuations which ever have been put thereon, what is the message which it offers to the ages continued thereafter? The victory of self-endeavour, if you will; the personal values of heroic purpose and self-government

<sup>1</sup> Of course on the hypothesis that sanctity resides in Relics or a certain consecration which justified the Roman Persuasion in their contribution to Pagan Idolatry when it was decreed that no building unprovided with a Relic should be hallowed for Church purposes or used as such.

<sup>2</sup> It happens that they can cite textual justification from which there is no appeal. Not alone does the Voice of the Holy Spirit speak from the Grail in the Metrical Romance of Borron, but the QUESTE implies in formal and literal words that the Grail is the Grace of the Holy Spirit (Sommer, *Op. cit.*, VI, pp. 13, etc.).

<sup>3</sup> The position is that Christ promised to send down the Comforter, in accordance with which the Holy Spirit came into the world at Pentecost; that this Spirit was the Guiding Voice which span the ever-expanding mesh of doctrine, according to the claim of the Church. Against this we have the authority of the QUESTE that it was removed from the world and therefore also from Rome; that we owe this ultra-heretical thesis—*ex hypothesi*—to that Cistercian source which was concerned at the same time in preaching the Albigensian Crusade.

to attain their end: add all the others at need, as contributed by many panegyrics. But the world of letters, not to speak of the world's history, is full of these examples, and the machinery of the Grail Mystery is not needed to enforce them. Apart therefrom, how are the Talisman and its winner left when the story ends? It is (1) a writing oracle which appoints successive Wardens and maintains the Chivalry by selections drawn from all quarters. (2) It gives wives to the Grail Kings. (3) It preserves the appearance of youth. (4) It produces that inexhaustible larder on which I have dwelt previously in words of comedy. But it remains *in futuro* that which it was in the past, even from the beginning, a family affair or the heirloom of a self-contained petty principality, which *vi et armis* keeps its gates and walls against all uninvited comers. What message to the world at large lies within these measures, that a Stone should be brought from Heaven by Angels—or fall, mayhap, to earth from the crown of Lucifer? There is nothing that belongs to eternity; there is no record of religious observance within the Castle of Montsalvatch; *Philosophia, Theosophia, Verbum Mysticum*, Secrets of the Vision and the End: there is none of these in the Oracle. And so far as Wolfram is concerned, this kind of thing may go on for ever, as tabulated, unless an individual *Templeise* may chance to fall in battle, worsted by some warrior without. It happened on one occasion, but only once.<sup>1</sup>

There is an independent direction, however, in which it looks as if another story might emerge from the PARZIVAL; for it is difficult to remember Feirfeis and the Grail Maiden whom he took back as his second wife to the Land of Prester John without concluding that much yet remains to be said in respect of both. Now, this also occurred obviously to the poets who made up the later TITUREL; while to them as to myself it may have seemed that the Grail hidden in the family repository of Montsalvatch, with no obvious occupation henceforward for Warden or *Templeisen*, lacked something in respect of finality. So they took the whole cohort and their Talisman into that far Cathay, whither the original Grail Bearer had gone before. The plea put forward—borrowed from the French Cycles—was that the Western world had proved unworthy to possess the priceless treasure, however out of view. There were great activities in consequence, and thereafter followed a reign of ten years for Parzival, whose story ends in death, and he is succeeded, as we saw, by the Son of Feirfeis, having regard doubtless to the claims of the Mother who bore him. In this manner the Talisman is removed from a Sanctuary somewhere in the visible Pyrenees into a fabulous region—a Myth into a World of Myth. It has also changed its nature, reverting from a Stone of Destiny to the Chalice or Dish of French Legend, while the problem of its dubious orthodoxy has been cleared up once and for all; for its Sanctuary is a magnified St. Peter's and the Palace of Prester

<sup>1</sup> See Wolfram's PARZIVAL, Book VII. There is a recurrence to the subject in Book IX.

John seems an exaggerated Vatican. It is all, if possible, more Popish than the Pope himself and more Latin than the Roman Hierarchy. So also the super-ecclesiastical potentate has overlord titles which would have satisfied Innocent III, and a warlike disposition which preached the "Gospel" with a sword in the spirit of Albigensian Crusades. Albrecht and his *coadjutores* in the work of the later TITUREL did not realise that the "spoofery" of the Prester John Epistle to Western Popes and Potentates was in all probability a skit on the Italian Papacy and its bids for universal dominion at a period when it was more than usually "drunk with the blood of the saints".<sup>1</sup>

It may be submitted in all seriousness that the belated sequel which passes under the name of Albrecht has no message to deliver at this day—or any other—to justify and much less to exalt the Grail, whether regarded as a Stone in the Crown of Lucifer or as a Reliquary of "the Blessed Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, blessed mote it be", as the Caxton colophon puts it. In truth, some readers of DER JÜNGERE TITUREL, might be disposed to exclaim as they read, in the words of the same text: "Therefore, on all sinful souls, blessed Lord, have Thou mercy," realising the sense of utter frustration which underlies the crude reverberations of the final lines. The new law of Grail succession has been declared, apart utterly from Quests and Questions: the veneration of the Grail is to continue through ages and ages in its own Shrine and Sanctuary, while Wardens follow one another, while Prester Johns on their jewelled throne contemplate their magnificence and proclaim it, demand and obtain their tributes and doubtless wage their wars. I have rendered to folk-lore the things that are folk-lore's and to the Grail the things of the Grail: not these are they. It is the story of the Grail in another kind of decadence than that of the Venusberg or the Sone de Nausay: it is the Grail in dullness.<sup>2</sup>

I suppose that if there or here, in France or elsewhere, the excellent Eugène Aroux finds his readers still,<sup>3</sup> and if Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, his English disciple, still finds a few to turn her suggestive leaves, they may object that my critical apparatus "pumps out with a ruthless ingenuity," not indeed "atom by atom" but explanatory thesis after explanatory thesis, concerning the great Mythos, and leaves "vacuity" alone, like Browning's critic. And now it may seem that I am taking the Grail texts and presently may leave no Grail, all my testimony in preceding pages notwithstanding. Let it rest on the knees of the gods for the time being, seeing that we must glance once again at the CONTE DEL GRAAL, with the same purpose in view—whether it has a

<sup>1</sup> I do not know whether Dr. Sebastian Evans was himself under the obedience of the Latin Church; but those who would care to inspect a half-hearted attempt at excusing the Albigensian Crusade may be referred to IN QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL. It is the thinnest coat of whitewash which was ever applied to anything.

<sup>2</sup> It does not follow that the story itself is dull, and I would that Sebastian Evans were alive at this day to render it in his talismanic version of Archaic English, under the auspices of a Grail Text Society.

<sup>3</sup> I have spared all reference to DIU CRÔNE in the German Cycle and its story of the Dead-Alive. No maker of wildest hypothesis could look for messages in that quarter of Dreamland.

message which signifies, on or beneath its surface, from the Grail *qua* Grail standpoint, in spite of its motley growth and authorship. I have spoken freely about it already on general lines; and Miss Weston, who lived with it for longer years than I, shall offer her own witness, in the course of a single paragraph. "To Chrétien the story was Romance, pure and simple. There was still a certain element of awe connected with Grail and Grail Feast, but of the real meaning and origin of the incidents he had, I am convinced, no idea whatever . . . We have here passed completely and entirely into the Land of Romance: the doors of the Temple are closed behind us. It is the story of Perceval le Gallois . . . which fills the stage, and with the Story of Perceval there comes upon the scene a crowd of folk-themes, absolutely foreign to the Grail itself."<sup>1</sup> That is the considered judgment of her own final and most ambitious message to the world of scholarship, written when she believed that she had found "the Secret of the Grail." As regards Chrétien, I am in complete accord, on the understanding that her "real meaning", rooted in Pagan Myth, is about as far from the living point within the circle of true research as the dedications of Roman legionaries were likely to have been removed from Ruysbroeck's ADORNMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE, or other still contemplations in the heights above the activities of the logical mind. It remains to point out that the continuation of pseudo-Wauchier is in like case, with its partial restoration of Nature—through the half-fledged offices of Monseigneur Gawain—and its utter absence of Perceval, the acknowledged hero of the story. So also is Wauchier himself, with his Light-o'-Love Seeker of the Grail, who neglects his Sister, betrays his Sweetheart and obtains his reward from the Lady of the Chess-Board Castle, on the threshold of completing the Quest. He does complete it, to all intents and purposes, for he asks the Question, which is the sole condition of attainment according to Chrétien's plan; but he does not heal the King, as that plan provided also, though before he breaks off Wauchier had an available moment, and let the moment slip, when the Question should have performed its work.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Manessier is out of court altogether, so far as any spiritual or even a moral lesson is concerned (1) because he is the exponent only of a commonplace Vengeance Legend, (2) the consummation of which, and this only, makes whole the Fisher King, thus stultifying Chrétien, as well as the Grail story on its Perceval side. There remains Gerbert de Montreuil, and I have said enough already to shew that his prolonged fragment breathes a different atmosphere and reveals a higher purpose; but it is a fragment only and does not disclose the whole mind of Gerbert as to beginning or end.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FROM RITUAL TO ROMANCE, pp. 152, 153.

<sup>2</sup> Immediately prior to the moment when the Grail Keeper exclaims *Sires, soiés de ma maison*.

<sup>3</sup> There is of course no question that he followed Chrétien, while it seems arguable still that either he was unacquainted with or ignored the two Wauchiers; in which case his asserted virginity of Perceval means that he interpreted innocently the youth's relations with Blanchefleur on the night of their first meeting.

I proceed in the next place to the Perceval Quest which passes under the name of Robert de Borron. It is characterised by a simple directness and unity of theme which renders it conspicuously attractive as a Quest in brief; and as regards its occasional stultifications of the Borron and Merlin texts from which it derives, it should be realised that they are of the letter, so to speak, and do not affect the unity of spirit which prevails throughout the trilogy. They may be accounted for readily enough by that favoured device of the past, the existence once upon a time of texts now lost. It was usually invoked then for the benefit of some orphan speculation in search of a foster father. There is no axe to grind in the present case, it being wholly indifferent to my own object whether certain contradictions can be taken out of the way or must be referred to the carelessness of those who produced continuations and sequels at that period. I incline to think on my own part that the author of the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL had variant prose versions of Borron's poems and that he worked on these, instead of on extant texts.<sup>1</sup>

The unity of theme to which I have referred above belongs in part to its links with antecedent branches of the Trilogy, in part to the comparative absence of irrelevant episodes.<sup>2</sup> The spirit of secrecy concerning the House of the Grail is maintained throughout. It will be remembered that the EARLY MERLIN indicates an abode in Northumbria, while the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL—on the authority of a Most Holy Voice—mentions the Isles of Ireland. In any case, it lay beyond all finding, except by Merlin and the one Warden in succession who was called thereto. The Grail itself sends forth no message in the text, save that only which imposed the Quest on Perceval at the Royal Court. It cannot be said therefore that the Search and Finding of the Grail ascribed to Borron has anything to tell us at this day, unless and until we turn to explore in thought those wells of deep experience which were attained once upon a time in ecstatic contemplation of some Hallowed Object. We may speculate then concerning the inward worlds which might have opened to Blaise and Perceval in their age-long Vigil of the Grail—as if it were a Golden Monstrance uplifted on a High Altar in a very Secret Shrine. Some of us would call it Paradise, some the Blessed Vision and some Nirvana. I can say only that the last words of the text bear witness that there was no further story concerning the Grail, meaning on the surface that its rumours ceased in the outer world, but perhaps also for the Heaven-appointed Keeper and the Hermit Priest: they knew within and without, from its first beginning in time unto its eternal end, the true story of the Holy Grail.

<sup>1</sup> We can account in this manner for things outside the Borron Cycle, and among them for the GRAND SAINT GRAIL appointing Alain as the next Keeper after Joseph II.

<sup>2</sup> The story of the stag and basset is irrelevant enough in one sense; but it is so prominent in Wauchier's continuation of the CONTE that it could not well be omitted in an alternative Perceval Quest. As critical opinion has decreed that the Borron Quest is late in the literature, it follows that the Wauchier episode is decisive evidence thereof.

This is like that "new star in Serpentarius," in which the first Brethren of the Rosy Cross saw bright and shining Mysteries; but there is no evidence before us. We might picture alternatively the Priest and the Keeper listening to the Still Small Voice of the Holy Spirit, speaking from the Grail continually to their inward ears; and it would be like a Mass of the Comforter communicating, at "the Sacring of the Mass," a Food of Souls, the Words—for us ineffable—behind the Secret Words,<sup>1</sup> and secrets of the Centre which have "never been spoken or spell'd" in any Church on earth. Let us leave it at this, because such dreams are golden and, for the rest, we do not know.

There are yet two Quests to follow, and one of them witnesses over and over that it was written in the Latin tongue by the First Bishop of Christendom and the "First Priest who Sacrificed the Body of our Lord"—at Sarras, namely, after he had been consecrated and enthroned by Christ. This is "an the Latin lie not" concerning the long tale and its source. We may look in such case for great tidings, even for living messages. It happens, however, that the PERLESVAUS is not a Quest of the Grail, and more than this, that it is a record of Quest failure. The woe on the world of Logres arose solely from the fact that Perceval asked nothing when he paid his first and only visit to the Grail Castle, whether in the official capacity—so to speak—of a Knight on Quest or as a casual errant caller—of course until that time when he himself became the Heir of the Grail. The mind of the story is obviously shewing that the Grail is not won by search. It is reserved to a House of the Elect, an Elect Family, as if to an Adept Company, a Secret Order or Hidden Church. Now, the PERLESVAUS implies a Quest, but in so doing it excludes all Quest-stories which end in attainment, it being understood that the GALAHAD excludes itself. It is not therefore a sequel to the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL, the Wolfram PARZIVAL, to Manessier or to Gerbert. Among Perceval texts there remain only the poem of Chrétien and its continuation by Wauchier de Denain; but it is not less certain that it does not arise from these. As regards the allegation that the Grail is not won by seeking in the mind of the PERLESVAUS, the fact is underscored by the institution of a Gawain Quest which is doomed to end in failure.

I am shewing elsewhere that the Masses of the HIGH HISTORY are Grail Masses and that its Hermit-Priests are all in the Secret of the House.<sup>2</sup> It is to be noted, however, that Perceval is not a participant of any Arch-Natural Sacrifice. These are witnessed by Arthur and others, but not by him. It is to be noted further that the Grail Castle fell into his hands by the right of conquest on the surface side of things; but he was also the Heir thereof and of all its Hallows. In witness hereto the Grail came back when he took possession of his own. But the succession was not priestly, and Perceval never said Mass. A link is created here with the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL, in which story of the Quest attained Blaise is the Priest-in-Charge at the end

<sup>1</sup> Appendix I, Note 27.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix I, Note 28.

of all, while Merlin is Prophet and Perceval is Grail King. There is also an analogy with the Metrical Romance of JOSEPH, in which there is no Mass because there is no Priest. Joseph is instituted Keeper of the Grail, deriving from Christ Himself; but he is appointed and not ordained; and this is a ready argument for refusing to recognise the Secret Words imparted at the time of the gift as Words of Consecration. They do not appear as such in any of the events that follow, for the Grail is always an oracle and never a Sacrificial Vessel in the Borron Cycle.

It is to be noted here as a point of criticism which applies to all the literature that the idea of the Grail Reliquary serving as a Chalice stultifies the whole doctrinal claim as regards the Mass.<sup>1</sup> It is essential to the sacrificial nature of the great ceremonial that the Elements of the Sacrifice are consumed or at least reserved thereto; whereas a Reliquary containing *ex hypothesi* the Precious Blood is an impossible matter of sacrifice, because it must be kept and not consumed. It is likely enough that here is one ground for the hostility of the Church to Grail literature as a whole. We should remember also that in the LONGER PROSE PERCEVAL the Grail does not go about as it does in the Galahad QUESTE, though an Arch-Natural Mass is celebrated once outside the Grail Castle.

It is celebrated within and, as it may be, other Services, from Saturday to Monday in every week of the year. He who will ask the Question, and heal thereby the Grail King, shall enter the Chapel of the Grail and hear the Mass therein. But this is not done in the Keeper's lifetime, nor yet after, for then the need has passed. We know, however, that Arthur saw the Grail much later and was present at the Mass. Moreover, Monseigneur Gawain was with him: he saw also and heard, being shriven after this manner for his trance of silence and adoration when he was called to heal the Keeper.

The PERLESVAUS is like a great procession of pictures in the master-craft of glass that is richly stained and a wealth of colour, with Sanctuary Lamps burning at every window. But we know the heads of the story, above all of the ship which took Perceval to an island of the sea, where he was welcomed by men with "beards and hair whiter than driven snow, albeit they seemed young of visage"—as might be sons of the Valley or Keepers of the Mystical Heredom and the hills of isles about. We know also of Masses said therein, in a Holy Chapel. Thither the Grail was taken at the close of all and thither Perceval followed to receive another Kingship and its diadem. The former Grail Castle, that Holy House in the Hiddenness, waited well and patiently through the days and the years till all the manor wasted and fell into decay. But there is an Epilogue to this story which has not been "drawn into Romance"; for it was allotted to Perceval that he should approve himself in the work of his new royalty. It must be

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered, on the occasion of the Grail Mass at Sarras, after the consecration of Joseph II, that there was another Vessel on the Altar, admittedly containing Wine.



agreed therefore that a tale which does not finish can offer only an incomplete message. Furthermore, the last Title says paradoxically that "here endeth the story of the Most Holy Grail," whereas it should have added "and here again begins," seeing that there was more to follow. It does not say, and is notable, that the Grail was taken away but only that it "shall appear herein no more," referring to the former Castle of the Hallows. It is somewhere in the lands or in the islands; and those—if any—who at this day are like Perceval may doubtless find the Grail. It seems to me that this is the message, for which reason—and on many other accounts—there is one thing only nearer to my heart than the PERLESVAUS and its High History.

And this is the Galahad Quest, which in the deep spiritual sense is eminently a personal history and a parable of the soul on its way through the world to God. It is parable rather than allegory, but with occasional allegorical excursions, which on account of their utter crudity come perilously near to making shipwreck of the whole story. Monseigneur Gawain, Bors, Perceval, even Galahad himself are schooled like children in the lowest forms, while their doctrinal teachers, their unknown Masters, Hermits, Recluses and so forth may have sailed over strange seas in mysterious ships, may dwell in immemorial Abbeys or keep their fasts and watches in the shadow of the Holy Grail; but their expatiations are like dry wood and their expository interpretations as lead for dullness.<sup>1</sup> Malory saved the QUESTE when he heaved them over among the rubbish, leaving the great parable to teach its own lesson. It is that of the Christ Life, from Birth to Death, from Death to Resurrection in the Soul, and then unto the Soul's Ascension into the ecstasy of Union. This is the message of that which has been called by scholarship—all unconsciously—the QUESTE, as if *par excellence*. They knew not what they said; but it is such in very truth. The exhaustive process of my criticism in the present section has led up to this: it is *aut* GALAHAD, *aut nihil* in respect of the Grail and its finding.

The great prize has been thrown open, as if to all comers. The Grail is not only going about as a veridic rumour through the world of Logres but it is shewn under its proper veils even in the King's Palace. By the hypothesis concerning it, the King's Palace is a place of highest dedication to "high erected thought" and action, "seated in a heart of courtesy". But the seeds of its own destruction have been sown therein. It is foredoomed from the beginning by the adultery of Arthur, committed on the body of his half-sister, though he knew not what he did. He became in this manner the father of Mordred, by whom the High Chivalry of the Round Table was destroyed finally in the last great battle of the West. Mordred also knew not what he did, for it does not appear in any text that Arthur and he ever saw one another in their true relation of father and son. It follows that a very simple sin of sense became pregnant

<sup>1</sup> Appendix I, Note 29.

with fatality for what looks like the greatest scheme conceived in the mind of Romance. I speak of a world of myth, the significance of which may be somewhere in the world of fact, if a star would lead us to find its right direction. As such, it would be a reading of history, a construction placed upon events and a lesson drawn therefrom. But if no such events are found, it is alternatively the shewing of a vision, a lesson on high aspiration defrauded and stultified by the sense-life—otherwise, the world and flesh.

But there was not alone the foredoom of the Mordred episode : there was the fatality of the passion of Lancelot. Arthur was unfaithful from the beginning to his high election, and Guinevere proved unfaithful to the great place assigned her in the Holy House of Chivalry. Part of the intention may be, by possibility, to indicate that Arthur was handicapped *ab origine* by the forbidden passion of his conception. So also Lancelot was handicapped by the vigilance of his nurture in the Faërie of the Lady of the Lake, in virtue of which he came forth at length to face the world and Court devoid of warning or experience. It was another working of doom, by which even the Lady of the Lake contributed unawares to the downfall of the Round Table. So also the course of later events contributed yet further, all through the Table's history. The membership thereof became a prize for valour and not a prize for virtue. It fell away from its high intent by the attraction of Adventurous Times, into sex indulgence as into Times of Enchantment, into endless Knight-Errandries for the sake of errantry and murderous joustings for the sake of the glory of jousting. Galahad alone was the great intent, the high erected thought and the clean heart of courtesy ; did he ever joust for the sake of jousting, except on that one day which followed his Knighting, when all men tried their skill ? Did he ever kill for valour, to give his evidence thereof ?

Year after year, through all his years of Quest, he went about, putting an end to Adventurous Times, which were also Times of Enchantment in the terms of the Great Parable, much as might have fared a Catharist Apostle, commissioned from his Church of the Spirit, ever reforming the misbelief of Christendom, writhing under the yoke of Rome. This is only a casual illustration on the historical plane, and it has been agreed already that the Grail and its literature are not to be explained by reference to the Sects of Southern France. But if the *QUEST*, as I have intimated, is above all things a personal history and representative as such of the Christ-Life in the soul of man, then Adventurous Times and their Enchantments are indicative of the states and stages of the soul's experience on its way of return to God, and there should be no need to dwell upon their material nature. They are of course the outward preoccupations and the manifold sense-illusions which must be dispossessed of their engrossing power by those who seek Reality. It is indubitable, however, that there is an outward as well as an inward or personal meaning of the Quest ; and it

is desirable to say that, in the story itself, not only do the two meanings co-exist but interpenetrate each other, a fact which would make the work of their disentanglement a very arduous task, were it possible to attempt it here. I am of necessity concerned only in this Twelfth Book with an indication of the Grail Secret, as I understand it, and as the subject is left when all the other theses have been tested and found wanting. A volume of exposition would be needed to go further, and it might prove a failure, because the matter placed in our hands is neither metaphysical solely, nor only of external appeal, but a confusing combination of both, while the vehicle is that of Romance, which there and here obtrudes its own elements.

As regards their message, we must remember that it begins in the Sanctuary and that behind the *QUESTE* there lies the problem of the Birth of Galahad. It is like a Sanctuary Mystery. Because it is such obviously, a thing pre-arranged and a sacrificial act on the part of the Grail Maiden, it involved no fatality for Galahad, as their own births proved for Arthur and Mordred. It is never mentioned in the *QUESTE*; but had the story been told therein, and not in the *LANCELOT*, I should have felt that it required to be understood mystically, recalling that the soul is born into the flesh of this world through fleshly intercourse, but that some souls are subsequently born again, not after the will of man or the blood of man, but of the Spirit of God. There is no call to pursue this subject, because the Great Prose *LANCELOT* is not a story of the soul, nor is it under any circumstances to be regarded as the Book of any Sanctuary, though I shall not readily divorce my mind from the feeling that the Birth of Galahad is a theme which in its final understanding does not belong to Romance.<sup>1</sup>

The *PERLESVAUS*, at least on the surface, ends as it began, among the images, though its *exitus in mysterium*, all pageants notwithstanding of sun-blazed voyage and venture, may suggest a recession which seems analogous to the withdrawal of the Grail and Galahad. But the key is given—as one might say, almost openly—in the *QUESTE par excellence*, which is the crown of the Quest Cycle, and we can see its whole *processus*: (1) The miracles and marvels of Times of Enchantment and Times Adventurous, Times above all of Quest, when the Grail went about, when the Grail healed and hurt, when the Lance was broken on the Keeper, when Knights fell on one another, bewrayed and foiled in Quest, when many died therein. (2) The last scene at Corbenic, when Transubstantiation made its last stand and produced the mournful disillusion of its plenary manifestation, an ensanguined figure bearing the sigils of the Passion, after which the House was voided, the Apostolate scattered, the Keeper disinherited, while the Grail went voyaging on its homeward way, “far in the unapparent”. (3) The last scene in the Spiritual City, when Galahad “received” his

<sup>1</sup> In the purely literal sense, it has been treated as negligible from the *QUESTE* standpoint, because the great parable is not of marrying, of giving in marriage, or of births according to the flesh, howsoever encompassed.

“Saviour”, when Galahad only saw the hidden things in a world beyond the vision, and nothing is said of the “seeing”, because it lies outside the world of words and as much beyond the psychic eyes as beyond the eyes of flesh. (4) Thereafter Galahad claimed or exercised his now inalienable right, being that of Ascension, which in highest Christian Theosophy is to return with Christ to the Father, far past dilucid contemplation, into the Mystery of Union.

On the day of his final departure the PERLESVAUS Perceval was visited, as we know, in the Grail Castle by voyagers from afar and clothed as if to celebrate Mass. But no Mass was said. He left the Castle in their mystical ship and was seen no more. The Grail had gone before him, thither where he was called to follow. He had distributed the other Hallows, and the outward Holy Place was dismembered. These things were left to the world without, in place of the Great Palladium. Perceval was withdrawn, as if into another Sanctuary where there is celebrated only the Mass of Union. It does not shew the five changes of the manifesting Grail. So also, and we know also, at the end of all Galahad beheld no outward sacramental marvels. He saw no doubt in the perfection of his prepared state that which *le Roi Mehaigné* surprised against the Law and the Order. This is the dilucid contemplation, in which state Ruysbroeck sailed the uncharted sea of Godhood—*vastissimum Divinitatis pelagus*. It is the state also in which St. Bonaventura beheld the deeps within the outward and expressed word: *sub cortice litteræ apertæ occultata mystica et profunda intelligentia*,—the illumination of Doctrine by a light shining from within it.

From the Spiritual Palace at Sarras, the soul of Galahad carried the Vision which is he into the World of Ascension, and this, like all things else that belong to reality in experience, is an exploration—further, deeper, higher—of our own world within. Here is the end of the Valid Mysteries, howsoever denominated; and hereof is that which is descried at the term of the Great Quest—the Vision that is He, “and after this the Union.” We think and speak in pictures, while the distinctions which experience attains cannot be conveyed in words, save only at a far distance by a certain change in these. But he who can apprehend the one will apprehend also the other, while he who misconceives the other will scarcely grasp the one. In my oft-quoted witness of the old THEOSOPHIA, Galahad bore the Divine within him to the Divine in the universe—the realm within which lies beyond distinctions. And this is the Secret of the Grail. We have known it under other vestures of language before we found that it had been drawn also into Romance. The testimony of the QUESTE is full of imperfections and calls for re-statement everywhere; but if I speak the truth as I see it, under all the aspects and in all the directions, so also does the witness of all the Masters, from him who is called Dionysius to St. John of the Cross and those who came after him in their several schools of discipline.

## III

## A PRELIMINARY EXCURSUS CONCERNING THE GREAT EXPERIMENT

THE Quest of the Holy Grail is for the wonder of all sacredness, "there where no sinner can be"—until he has ceased from sin. The provisional manifestation is in the LONGER PROSE PERCEVAL,<sup>1</sup> while the full disclosure—not as to what it is but as to what it is about—is in the Romance of Galahad. If, after the HAUT PRINCE had given his final message, "Remember of this unstable world," he had been asked what he had seen and what led him to exercise his high prerogative and call to be dissolved,<sup>2</sup> he might have answered: *visi sunt oculi mei salutare suum*; yet he would have said in his heart: "Eye hath not seen". But it has been divined and foretasted by those who have gone before the cohorts of election in the life that is within and have spoken with tongues of fire concerning that which they have seen in the vista. One approximation has told us that it is the (realised) "eternal intercourse of the Father and the Son, wherein we are enveloped lovingly by the Holy Spirit in that love which is eternal." Now this is not of doctrine but experience put forth in consecrated symbols. And him who said this the wondering plaudits of an after-age termed the admirable Ruysbroeck. He knew little Latin and less Greek, and, speaking from his own root, he had not read the authorities; but he had stood upon that shore where the waves of the Divine Sea baptise the pilgrim, or in that undeclared sphere which is *Kether*, the Crown of Kabbalism, whence those who can look further discern that there is *Ain Soph Aour*, the Limitless Light. They can realise also the truth of that High Theosophical axiom which affirms that *linea media ascendit usque ad Ain Soph*. It is the Path of the Mind's ascent to the altitude of its own being.

The equivalent hereof is that which was said by Jesus Christ to the Men of the Quest: "My Knights and my Servants and my true Children, which have come out of deadly life into spiritual life, I will now no longer hide me from you, but ye shall see now a part of my secrets and of my hidden things".<sup>3</sup> And in the measure of that time

<sup>1</sup> *Li Graalx s'aparut el secré de la messe, en V manières que l'an ne doit mie dire; quar, les secrées chosses del seremant ne doit nus dire an apert, se cil à qui Dex an a donée (la puissance). Lis rois Artus vit toutes les muances; la dariane si fu el calice.*—Potvin, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 250. "The Graal appeared at the sacring of the Mass, in five several manners that none ought not to tell openly but he unto whom God hath given it. King Arthur beheld all the changes, the last whereof was the change into a Chalice."—HIGH HISTORY, Branch XXII, Title 3. It is to be observed that the mutations were those of the Vessel and not of its content.

<sup>2</sup> We have seen that the message of Galahad was that of a Son to his Father; but it is peculiar to the text followed by Malory, or is alternatively his own addition. The Vulgate text gives only the first part of the greeting: *Puis dist à bohort (biaus très dous ami), salues moi mon père lancelet quant vous le verrois.*—Sommer, *Op. cit.*, VI, p. 197. Pauphilet's codex agrees, being a collation of many manuscripts. The WELSH QUEST cuts out the message entirely.

<sup>3</sup> Malory's MORTE DARTHUR, Bk. XVII, *cap.* 22. Cf. Sommer, *Op. cit.*, VI, p. 190.

they knew as they were known in full, that is, by participation in and correspondence with the Divine Knowledge. Meat indeed: it is in this sense that Christ gave to Galahad "the high meat": and "then he received his Saviour". Vavassour or Graduate of the Classes, or unknown Master of Sentences, he who wrote thus might have exhausted all the language of the Schools, or he might also have known little Latin and less Greek, if any; but in either case he said only of the Communicants: "They thought it so sweet that it was marvellous to tell."<sup>1</sup> And of Galahad he said later that "he received it right gladly and meekly".<sup>2</sup> But yes; and that is fuller and stronger than all the eloquence of the authentic Master of Sentences. It is the voice of Ruysbroeck, in a simpler manner of language, saying the same thing: "And he tastes and sees, out of all bounds, after God's own manner, the riches which are in God's own self, in the unity of the living deep, wherein He has fruition of Himself, according to the mode of His uncreated essence". Here is the Great Term of the Great Experiment followed by the Mystic Schools; and it is bodied forth by the Grail Legend in its own words and symbols, as in a shadow-light of earthly human language. And there are some of us who have put forth all powers of mind and all our hearts of yearning in the hope to go further; but we have been given at our best and highest the changes and counter-changes of other approximations which are also remote from the Term. The Experiment has been made, within their several measures, by all Churches of all Religions, for which reason I have said elsewhere that the skilled craftsman does not quarrel with his tools. All the rough ashlar are possible; the ascent to Eternal Life can be made on any ladder, assuming that it is fixed in the height: there is no need to go in search of something that is new and strange. Those also who can receive this assurance will understand, I think, that even the Church of one's childhood—assuming that it is a Church and not a latitudinarian chapel of ease or a narrow and voided sect—may contain for him the raw materials of his work; and these he will be able to adapt as an efficient artist. There is neither compulsion nor restraint; but the changes in official religion, the too easy transitions from one to another kind, taking the Sanctuaries as one takes High Grades in Masonry, offer a note of weakness rather than a pledge of sincerity or of the true motive which would impel the soul on its quest.

There are undeniably many helpers of the soul in the course of its progress and among these are possibly two or three of the so-called Secret Orders, meaning those which contain the counterparts of authentic Catholic Tradition.<sup>3</sup> They offer no royal road, seeing that there is none of these; but they do or may shorten some of the preliminaries, awaking and unfolding the implicits of a man's own

<sup>1</sup> This was at Corbenic, when Twelve who had fulfilled the Quest were fed in the body substantially and supersubstantially in the soul of each.

<sup>2</sup> This was at Sarras, where we have seen that One of Three was fed by himself alone.

<sup>3</sup> They may be counted on the fingers of one hand, and even then it may prove an exaggerated estimate.

consciousness, which is the setting of a Prepared Postulant on the lineal path. There are of course some who enter within them having no special call, and these see very little of that which lies beyond their official workings, just as there are many who have been born or brought within the Church, considered as the Body of Christ Mystical, but have never entered into that life of the Christhood which is communicated from Christ the Spirit. They remain as children of this world and its pieties, participating according to their degree of so much grace and salvation as is possible within their individual modes. There are others who out of all time have received the High Election, and for them the subject is often found resident and undivided in that state of external religious life into which it has pleased God to call them.

The Inward Doctrine of the Religions and the Schools equally is that of the communication of Divine Substance. I speak of it as inward in both cases, though it is obvious that official Churches have no instituted reservation or conscious concealment on any point of Doctrine or practice; but the language of the heights is not the language of the plains, while that which is heard in the nooks, byways and corners, among brakes and thickets, is not the voice of the rushing waters and the open sea. That is true of it in the uttermost which was said long ago by Paracelsus: *nihil tam occultum erit quod non revelabitur*. But as there are few with ears to hear, it remains a voice in the wilderness crying in an unknown tongue. We know only that, according to Highest *Theosophia*, the Divine Substance is communicated *ex hypothesi* in the Eucharist—normally in a symbolical manner, but, essentially and vitally in cases here and there, according to true testimonies. It is as if the Elements were at times Consecrated normally, at the speculative value of the work and intent of an Official Priesthood; but at times by other words, more secret and more efficient arch-naturally. But these are a work of reception and not uttered with lips. It is, I think, in the notable examples, because *signum* has withdrawn into *signatum*, or in other language because communicants have passed behind the symbols.<sup>1</sup> Then do Enchantments terminate which are the swoon of the sensitive life in respect of the individual: he enters into real knowledge—the soul's knowledge before that supervened which is termed mystically the fall into matter.

The Great Experiment is therefore one of Emblematic Reintegration in the Secret Knowledge before the Fall;<sup>2</sup> and when or if the Holy Grail is identified with the Stone in the Crown of Lucifer, that which is indicated thereby is (1) the perpetuation of this Secret Knowledge and (2) that under all circumstances there is a way back whence we came. So also close those Times of Adventure which—among other

<sup>1</sup> In variant words, they have passed unawares or otherwise behind the Veils of Doctrine, or more actually are in that state of experience where Doctrines cease from troubling and the Symbols are at rest.

<sup>2</sup> I have said "emblematic" because the "Fall" is itself figurative of an æonian diversion from true ends of being.

things and manifold—are the life of external activity governed by the spirit of the world ; and this is accomplished by taking the Great Secret into the heart of the heart, as if the Blessed Sacrament, truly and virtually, into the inmost being.

Of such is the Office of the Quests ; but it should be understood that it is not of my concern to postulate these realisations as present in a plenary sense to the minds of the old *scriptores*, who wrote the greatest of the books : they spoke of things which they knew up to a certain point. Without reference or intention, they said—as it befell—what others had said before them of the same Mysteries, and the testimony continued through the centuries. The story of the assumption of Galahad draws into Romance the hypothesis of the Church Catholic concerning the term of all attainment manifested : in both cases it is exemplified by the Eucharist.<sup>1</sup> But the Church is not of Rome, as such, protesting against the Greek Orthodoxy, nor is it of any surviving Bethel preaching against the abuses of Roman Doctrine. The Catholic Church is the eternal spirit of Religion within and behind the Churches—the Christ, the Guide, the Comforter, leading those who can follow unconditionally into all Truth. As regards the Eucharist, I mean to say that this is, by the hypothesis, the symbolical channel of Divine Communion ; and the devotion which was shewn by the Saints to the Sacrament of the Altar was the witness of their dedication thereto, of their belief in its living reality, and was not like a particular, sentimental disposition in pious minds to the Precious Blood or the Heart of Jesus. Concerning these exercises there is no call to pronounce here ; but among the misjudgments on spiritual life under Roman rule has been the frittering of spiritual powers in popular devotions. If the Great Mysteries of and behind the Churches are insufficient to command the dedication of the whole world, then the world is left best under interdict, just as no pictures at all are better than those which are bad in art, and no books than those which are poor and trivial.

We have been trending here in directions which will call for more full consideration presently. I have mentioned Secret Orders—not without an implied animus—and I cannot affirm too early that any Secret Tradition—either in the East or in the West—has been always an open secret in respect of the root-principles concerning the Way, the Truth and the Life.<sup>2</sup> It is the experience therein which is for ever secret and incommunicable to those who have not shared it. We are only beginning, and that by very slow stages, to enter into our inheritance ; and still in respect of the larger part we are seeking far and wide for the figurative Treasures of Basra. It is desirable therefore to remember that the great subjects of preoccupation are all at our very doors. One reason, of which we shall hear again in another connection, is because among the wise of the ages, in whatsoever regions of the world, I do not think that there has been ever any real difference of

<sup>1</sup> Figuratively, that is to say, in ten thousand cases, and once behind the symbols.

<sup>2</sup> The occult associations—and they are many—which claim to convey secrets, as such or as if such, traffic in bogus wares.



opinion about the true object of research. The modes and forms of the Quest have varied, and that widely; but to a single point have all the ways converged. Therein is no change or shadow of vicissitude. We may hear of shorter roads, and we might say at first sight that such a suggestion must be true indubitably; but in one sense it is rather a convention of language and in another it is a commonplace which tends to confuse the issues. It is a convention of language, because the Great Quests are not pursued in time or place, and it would be just as true to say that in a journey from the circumference to the centre all roads are the same length, supposing that they are straight roads. It is a commonplace, because if anyone should enter the by-ways or return on his path and restart, it is obvious that he must look to be delayed. Furthermore, it may be true that all paths lead ultimately to the centre, and that if we descend into hell there may be still a way back to the light: yet in any house of right reason the issues are too clear to consider such extrinsic possibilities.

There is one thing more, however, in this connection; and I bear my witness concerning it with a mind convinced but an anxious and trembling heart. It is true that there is one short road, but it is within us—you even and even me, all expectations contradicting and all contra-judgments notwithstanding. It is not travelled but over-leaped. It is not a road at all, as if that which is higher within us drove that which is lower till it should be crushed out of all being in the path of a cross beyond all weight for bearing. There is something realised in the stillness beyond our world of images; and that which is immortal within us, "the supernal part which does not leave the Supernals" takes possession of our henceforth undivided being; takes seat upon the "intellectual throne"; and translates therefrom all life in the terms of eternity. The appetites are transformed and the ambitions, *sub specie æternitatis*.<sup>1</sup> We abide in another mode, under another aspect. The ordeals are over, the temptations dead and done: we are at the beginning of life in the unity.<sup>2</sup>

On this and on any consideration, we have to lay down one irrevocable law, that he who has resolved—setting all things else aside—to enter the Path of Quest must look for his progress in proportion as he pursues holiness for its own end—holiness being the unremitting direction of mind and thought and heart to the Divine End. He who in the imputed Secret Orders dreams of the adeptship which is claimed by some as communicable to those who can receive and who does not say SANCTITAS in his heart till his lips are cleansed, and then does not say it with his lips, is not so much far from the goal as without having conceived regarding it.

Now, it is precisely this word SANCTITAS which takes us back a little unintentionally, to the claim of the Churches, and raises the

<sup>1</sup> Appendix I, Note 30.

<sup>2</sup> There are only the vaguest hints extant on this *pansophia* of highest practical experience. It may be worth while to mention THEOLOGIA ESOTERICA—in reality, THEOLOGIA EXOTICA—which I contributed to THE QUEST of Jan., 1928.