Against the Lie: Part I (A Preliminary Draft)
(*Full version*)

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Chapter 1: On lying in general

I strongly believe that *all* of the problems facing human society can be traced to people's collective choice to embrace the Lie, with the Lie being viewed as a metaphysical force in the world. That, however, is not how most other people see things. They might agree that—as a general proposition—lying is the source of many problems in the world. But even though they will claim not to *like* lying, they continue to *tolerate* the people and institutions that do the lying so long as none of the specific lies they tell happens to greatly disadvantage or displease them personally; and, needless to say, they also tend to be quite tolerant of their own lies. In other words, they often have a very easy-going attitude regarding lies they consider "harmless"—but what they really mean by "harmless" is harmless *to them* and *their* narrow range of goals and concerns.

People's overall tolerance of lying is thus a product of their readiness to make a mental distinction between "big lies" and "little lies." (What I am calling "little lies" are not necessarily the same as what people ordinarily consider to be "white lies"—although "white lies" would be included within the class of what people would consider to be "little lies.") A "big lie" is any lie that is considered to be especially egregious from their own perspective. For that reason, lies of this type will often be ones that they have heard told by persons holding positions of power and influence, since such lies will be more likely to entail widespread negative repercussions for society; but a "big lie" can also include any lie otherwise perceived by a person as having a significant negative impact on his emotional life. A lie regarded by a particular person as a "big lie" is not easily forgiven. But that same person will often readily make excuses for what he perceives to be "little lies"—that is, the type of lies whose harmful impact are not apparent to him, usually because they do not have a significant impact on him personally (or, more likely, because he does not *understand* how they impact him personally, and does not see the connection between a particular lie and his own suffering). One way of thinking about it is that a "big lie" is the kind of lie that a person cannot ordinarily imagine *himself* telling or having the opportunity to tell, while a "little lie" is the kind of lie that a person both tells and would like to keep telling—or *hearing*, in the case of the mass media, politicians, book authors, and everyday gossips. As an example of this second type of situation, involving a willingness to *listen to* lies, those who are passionate about party politics will be quick to rationalize or diminish the seriousness of lies told by a member of the political party they support, but will be merciless toward any member of the opposing political party caught telling a lie of any kind.

Some of the theoretical and practical problems with the attempt to divide lying into degrees of importance or magnitude of harm should be obvious. One problem with it is that the social hierarchy is a continuum; and a person's "little lies"—the ones he can imagine himself telling—will always tend to shade into more and more influential "big lies" if he moves up the hierarchy, as those remote "movers and shakers" become less remote from him, and he begins to find it easier to imagine *himself* telling the same type of lie to further his *own* self-interest. A second problem is that *every* individual always has at least some influence on others, and this influence cannot be contained within neatly circumscribed limits. If one person becomes accustomed to the idea that lying is acceptable, then that makes it more likely that others in his circle of direct influence will also become accustomed to the idea, and the ripple of influence will continue to spread out from there. A third problem is that those at the top of a social hierarchy require the

support of those below them in the hierarchy; social elites need the common people to at least *believe* that they more or less share the same values. The less honest the common people are, the more lying the elites can get away with out in the open—which means that they are emboldened to try to get away with even more than *that* in secret, knowing that even if their secret does come out, it will not seem as shocking and unforgivable as it otherwise would, so that they will likely be able to recover from the disclosure. In other words, it is the dishonest tendencies of ordinary people that *make possible* the dishonest tendencies of society's governing and influential elites.

But all of these points also help to show why, even if one were to accept the theoretical possibility of making of some sort of objective distinction between "big lies" and "little lies" based on magnitude of harm, it is not a distinction that should ever be made in practice. That is because, as a practical matter, ***it is impossible to clearly identify and then punish the liars in a society when everybody lies***, even if only to a supposedly "small" extent. But, by the same token, ***the dissemination of "big lies" would be impossible*** if people as a whole refused to keep laughing off the "little lies" that they regularly tell and encounter in their day-to-day lives, since in that case ***any*** lie would begin to appear far more conspicuous and remarkable when it occurred than it otherwise would; it is just that the so-called "big lies" would appear *even more* conspicuous and remarkable than other lies in the eyes of those persons who saw them as "big lies."[1]

While people are generally able to agree on what constitutes honesty or dishonesty in a particular case, people as a whole will *never* agree on what constitutes a "big lie" or a "little lie": One person's "little lie" will often be another person's "big lie," and vice versa, depending on their respective interests and temperaments. The result of trying to make a distinction between "big lies" and "little lies" is that people as a whole keep lying and enabling other liars, all the while thinking quite highly of themselves as "*pretty much* moral." They will continue to condemn the lies told by others that do not happen to be to their liking, and this is what allows them to claim to hate lying and to love honesty just as much as anyone else—that is where the "moral" part comes in. But at the same time, lies that are thought to be conducive to their own (relative) personal advantage will be given a free pass—that is where the "pretty much" part comes in. *This is an unworkable system*. Even though people as a whole will never agree with each other on what qualifies as a "big lie" or a "little lie" in a particular instance, if they make the attempt to think rationally, they should recognize that ***it is precisely because people will never reach agreement on these questions that everyone benefits in absolute terms if all people agree to stop all lying***.

For example, people often complain about the many lies regularly told by mass media outlets. But what if *everyone* had stubbornly refused to have anything more to do with any television network, newspaper, or website the very first time it had been discovered telling its first lie, *regardless* of whether that lie seemed to benefit "their" political party or the other one? That media outlet would never have had an opportunity to tell a second lie; or, the price it would have paid to get back into people's good graces would have been so high that it would never have even considered telling a second lie. *All* lying can be stopped if the benefits expected to come from telling any single lie are always greatly

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[1] For example, the organizing of any kind of secret conspiracy would be impossible in a more "hygienic" or "sanitary" social environment in which no "little lies" were permitted. The organizing of a secret conspiracy of any size or significance requires the telling of lots and lots of *publicly known* "little lies," each of which, taken individually, might appear insignificant.

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exceeded by the anticipated costs of telling that lie. But if only the occasional lone individual makes this decision to boycott a media outlet, it has no positive effect on society as a whole; it only succeeds in making it more difficult for that individual to communicate with other members of society, by making him ignorant of his society's common terms of reference. Individuals must associate and find support for their moral principles in communities of people sharing the same beliefs if there is to be any hope of moving society as a whole in the direction of greater honesty.

Historically, providing the institutional framework for such moral communities has been the function that Christian churches and other traditional religious organizations have claimed to serve. But, as I now proceed to argue, it is a function that they are incapable of carrying out **by their very nature**, since they have embraced and they promote the practice of religious esotericism—which is itself a form of lying. But esotericism in religion is not merely one form of lying: I believe that esoteric religion— also sometimes known as "traditional religion," or "revealed religion"—is the ultimate **source** of lying in human society.

Chapter 2: On religious esotericism in general, and how it is really just a form of lying

"Esotericist writing" can generally be defined as writing in which an author uses a word to mean one thing (namely, the "<u>inner</u>," or "intended," or "<u>esoteric</u>" <u>meaning</u>) in his own mind and perhaps also in the minds of close associates, while the general reading public, being unaware of the author's secretly intended meaning, is left to assign a different meaning to that same word (namely, the "<u>outer</u>," or "standard," or "ordinary," or "conventional," or "<u>exoteric</u>" <u>meaning</u>).[2] In other words, "esotericist communication," or "esotericism," is really just a fancy name for **lying**. Unfortunately, it is a practice that characterizes and provides the basis for all of the so-called "major world religions," including Christianity.[3] And not only the "major" religions: I am not aware of a single traditional religion anywhere in the world, including among all the so-called "shamanistic" or "primitive" religions, that does not or did not employ "secret languages" and conceal knowledge from the "uninitiated" members of the religious community.

At the same time, I have also come to the conclusion that the authors of both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible were actually, at least to some extent, *opposed* to the practice of esotericism, and were subtly and surreptitiously working against it. That is to say—*whether or not they were fully aware of it*—they were providing later generations with the means by which they would be able to slough off these oppressive systems of organized deception. I think that the "subversiveness" to be found in the Bible must have been partly the result of some sort of unconscious or non-conscious (or, if one prefers, "providential") process at work; but the evidence has led me to conclude that it must have also been partly the result of conscious and deliberate choices and planning by certain individuals. However, it is often very difficult to determine just how much of the "subversiveness" that one might discern in a particular passage from the Bible was consciously or unconsciously intended by the author (and I *do* consider "unconscious intentionality" to be a genuine kind of intentionality), since the two types of thinking easily blend together. But I will be discussing these matters more in subsequent chapters.

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[2] It ought to be pointed out that it would not be entirely accurate to call the "esoteric" meaning the "intended" meaning if doing so were to create the impression that an author did not *intend* to create a writing with multiple meanings, or that he did not *intend* that the "exoteric" or "outer" meaning would be the meaning that some portion of the reading audience would believe had been the *only* meaning intended by the author. In other words, the split between meanings—and the associated deception—is never accidental. Esotericism is always the result of an author having *deliberately* introduced verbal ambiguity into a writing. At the same time, there is a sense in which (at least some) esotericist authors probably *wished* that all readers would be able to understand their "inner meanings"—but it seems to have been their expectation that if readers really wanted to understand their "inner meanings," it was their *readers* who would have to change their thinking to make it become more like theirs, no matter how eccentric it may have been; the authors were not willing to adapt their communication to meet the current state of their readers, which they did not consider worth condescending to. So there is a sense in which the "inner meaning" is the "true meaning," but also a sense in which it is not; and, there is a sense in which the "inner meaning" is the "intended meaning," but also a sense in which it is not. (It might be helpful to think of the "inner meaning" as what the author would have considered to be the "best meaning." But, be that as it may, do note that in this essay I will be regularly referring to the "inner meaning" both as the "true meaning" and as the "intended meaning.")

[3] Certain forms of Theravada Buddhism might constitute an exception to this generalization, but I am not familiar enough with the religion to say that with any certainty.

First, let me give you an example of how esotericist deception works by telling you a little story about myself:

> I worked for forty years in West Virginia as a coal miner. I now receive health benefits from the federal government because of the fact that I got black lung disease as a result of my job.

Now, by ordinary standards, what I just told you is a flat-out lie. I have never worked as a coal miner. I have never lived in West Virginia. But an esotericist has a neat trick he can use to make a passage like that suddenly become all "true" in his own mind. He simply puts *invisible quotation marks* around various words and then supplies each of those words or phrases with his own private definitions. Doing this serves basically the same function in his own mind as that served by a child crossing his fingers behind his back when he tells a lie. Practitioners of this trickery will often give their hidden definitions a euphemistic name, such as "the spiritual interpretation." Now watch and begin to perceive the deep "spirituality" contained within my own little fib story:

> I "worked" "for forty years" "in West Virginia" as a "coal miner." I now "receive health benefits" from the "federal government" because of the fact that I got "black lung disease" as a result of "my job."

Because of the presence of these previously invisible quotation marks, an esotericist might be of the view that I had actually, in some sense, been "telling the truth" all along when I said that I worked as a coal miner in West Virginia (on the grounds that I was really only claiming to have been a "coal miner" in "West Virginia"). But ordinarily, an author who was writing esoterically would not feel morally obligated to publicly reveal what these words actually meant in his own mind, or even that his words *had* concealed alternative meanings (in other words, he would not even indicate to the reader where the "invisible quotation marks" were located). That is because an esotericist author usually fancies himself to be one of the relatively "holy people," while most of the persons into whose hands his esotericist writings could be expected to fall would be counted among "the profane." (From what I have been able to gather, those who write in an esoteric manner generally think of themselves as being of better spiritual quality than all those persons who make a point of not lying to others.) The reasoning seems to be that those persons who are "in the spirit"—that is, those who are counted among the "holy people"—will already know what the "real" meanings of these words are. And those persons who are not "in the spirit"—that is, those who are counted among "the profane"—do not deserve to know. However, since my goal here is not to practice esotericist trickery, but to expose it, I am perfectly willing to publicly reveal the (itself fictional) "spiritual interpretation" of my story:

> I "engaged in meditative thought" "until I reached spiritual enlightenment" while "in an altered state of consciousness" by "plumbing the depths of my unconscious mind." I now "enjoy the ineffable bliss of a continuing stream of spiritual wisdom" imparted to me by "more advanced spiritual beings" as my reward for "the sacrifices incurred" in choosing to follow "the arduous spiritual path."

In other words, to obtain the "spiritual interpretation," the words in the original text are redefined in such a way that the "exoteric" meanings are being made to serve as *metaphorical symbols* for the "esoteric" meanings that the author *really* has in mind. You might ask: Why would an author not simply provide the reader with that sort of "spiritual interpretation" in the first place? Why would an author expect a reader to break his "secret code" to arrive at his "real" meaning? As far as I have been able to determine, no rational justification exists for the practice (although there are of course *explanations*, just as there are explanations for everything). None of the justifications that I have encountered—to the extent that esotericists have even felt any need to justify what on its face appears to be an immoral practice—have struck me as being the least bit satisfactory or persuasive.

Unfortunately, the practice of writing or speaking esoterically—a practice found universally in traditional religion—has, understandably, helped to discredit the general idea of "organized religion." But usually this discrediting has occurred indirectly and indiscriminately, so that it has not been the esotericist method *itself* that has been specifically targeted for blame and identified as the true source of what they dislike about religion. What has ended up getting blamed is, say, the "childishness" of the literal interpretation—which allows the "spiritual interpretation" or "allegorical interpretation" to be seen as more "spiritually mature," or "spiritually advanced," or "profound." Or, at other times what has been criticized is the notion of a group of people congregating around commonly-held religious beliefs—for fear that those beliefs and interpretations will *necessarily* have been irrationally and coercively imposed upon the individual members of the group.[4] As I consider such criticisms to represent misdirections of appropriate blame, I offer the suggestion that people who think of themselves as "anti-religion," or "anti-organized religion," or "anti-Abrahamic religion," or "anti-Western religion," make a grave error by indiscriminately denigrating as "organized religion," or "Abrahamic religion," or "Western religion," what should instead be specifically characterized as *esotericist* religion. It is the *deliberate encryption* or *obscuration* of an author's meanings—and, closely related to this, the author's fundamental desire to *avoid being held responsible* for his intended meanings—that is the source of all of the problems flowing from the currently existing (i.e., "traditional") world religions, and not the fact that religiously inclined people happen to organize in groups for mutual support, encouragement, and validation of their shared beliefs. Because of the fact that the esotericism existing within traditional religion has helped to discredit the idea of religion in general, and also because of the enormous harm that it otherwise makes possible in the world, it is imperative that people learn to regard the cryptic symbolism of esotericist religions not as merely "silly" or "stupid" (much less "charming," or "intriguing," or "fascinating," or "profound"), but as *evil* and *immoral*. The esotericist use of symbolism, inasmuch as it first creates and then exploits ambiguity of meaning, is an inherently *dangerous* phenomenon, and it potentially gives certain people enormous amounts of

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[4] But to the extent that such mental coercion was ever actually "necessary" or "inevitable" in any sense, I believe it was only made so by the deception introduced by the esotericists' "splitting" of meanings, which made it imperative that a set of orthodox "outer meanings" be maintained as "cover" for the "inner meanings" beneath them—even if maintaining that "cover" required that a *profession* of belief in the "outer meanings" be made *mandatory* for all members of the religion.

power: power that they do not deserve and that history has shown they do not know how to use responsibly.

Chapter 3: An anti-esotericist approach to the interpretation of esoteric symbolism: Using existing symbolic ambiguity to subvert religious esotericism

[If you are reading the essay for the first time, feel free to skip both this chapter and Chapter 4 for now and consider returning to them later, after having read the last two chapters beginning on page 119. I also strongly recommend that during a first reading you skip all of the footnotes in the essay, and skim over the bracketed content that I have inserted within the block quotations unless my discussion calls attention to it. And, if you find dealing with this type of material irritating, frustrating, and even exasperating, please know that I do as well. I discuss it not because I find it interesting or enjoyable to do so, but rather because I am hoping that at least some of my ideas might be of use to others in their efforts to put this whole subject matter and this whole way of thinking behind us once and for all.

[I furthermore wish to stress that I am *not* trying to offer any new breakthroughs in scholarship with this essay, or to advance "knowledge for its own sake." I am not able to read ancient Greek or Hebrew, so by no means do I consider myself to be anything like a scholar in any of the subject areas with which which I am concerning myself in this essay. Everything that I write is intended to be used *solely* for the ultimate purpose of weakening support for esotericist religion. Hopefully some of it will be of interest to those with scholarly backgrounds in the revelant subject areas who happen to share anti-esoterist objectives; but, even if not, I hope that at least some of it will prove useful to other amateurs like myself who are opposed to religious esotericism, and want to fight against its pervasive influence in human society and the status of legitimacy and respectability that it has generally been accorded. Anti-esotericists should feel free to simply disregard whatever material in the essay they do not consider useful for the specific purpose of opposing religious esotericism. And I emphasize that the strength of the general argument against esotericist religion *in no way depends* upon the validity or lack of validity of any of my speculations about the originally intended meanings of the Bible or other esoteric religious writings—since many of those speculations are necessarily quite speculative.]

At the most fundamental level, what makes an esotericist system of religion dangerous is the ambiguity of the meanings of the symbols, parables, and figures that it employs; all of the other problems associated with esotericism essentially flow from this. (And it is the *deliberate* introduction of ambiguity of meaning by esotericist writers that makes esoteric symbolism *deceptive* in nature.) This ambiguity of meaning is dangerous because those who promote and use these esoteric symbols are not required to *take responsibility* or *be held accountable* for the meanings of those symbols, since no one can ever be entirely sure what those meanings *are*.[5] Those who promote the symbols as

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[5] This desire to avoid responsibility is noted by Dr. R. D. Laing in connection with the tendency that he identifies in at least some schizophrenics to use language in a highly metaphorical and cryptic manner. He says that in some cases, "The schizophrenic is playing at being mad to avoid at all costs the possibility of being held *responsible* for a single coherent idea, or intention." *The Divided Self* (Pantheon, 1969), p. 177; the italics are Laing's.

I will be referring to schizophrenia at various points in this essay. In terms of a definition, at this point it suffices to state that I when I refer to "schizophrenia," I specifically have in mind only those presentations of schizophrenia in which the schizophrenic person speaks, as just mentioned, in a highly cryptic manner, involving the frequent and extensive use of obscure metaphors and allusions. In the essay I have not made

something valuable do not believe it is necessary that the meanings that were *intended* by the author of a writing using those symbols be more or less definitely established according to generally accepted, reason-based principles of interpretation *before* the body of symbols be promoted as something valuable and praiseworthy. According to the basic arrangement created by esotericist religion, the body of esoteric symbols is viewed as coming from God, and *the symbols themselves* are therefore treated as "sacred," while it is assumed that the specific *meanings* of those symbols can be determined later.[6] (But without first knowing what their meanings were, it does not seem rational that any society would feel obliged to treat those symbols, or any writing that used them, as "sacred.") Then, to the extent that various persons in a community or society revere the

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any effort to definitely establish the underlying cause or causes of this phenomenon, and have mostly been content merely to point out the fact of its frequent association with the clinical diagnosis of schizophrenia—a fact which deserves much more attention and investigation than I have been able to give it in this essay, and also more than it has generally received elsewhere. The use of cryptic metaphor is the "symptom" of schizophrenia with which I am primarily concerned here. I wish to stress that I do not claim to have a thorough understanding of what schizophrenia is, especially with respect to its various sub-types, so I do not want to give the appearance of trying to present myself as an expert regarding the subject. In fact, it is not certain that these various sub-types have any single, common cause; it is possible that one sub-type has one cause, while another sub-type has a different and unrelated cause. Nor are the symptoms of any two persons diagnosed with "schizophrenia" necessarily the same: "[T]he diagnosis of schizophrenia is often made on the basis of the occurrence of one or more symptoms that may or may not appear in different patients." (Mary Hollis Johnston and Philip S. Holzman, *Assessing Schizophrenic Thinking* [Jossey-Bass, 1979], p. 106.) As a result, even those who specialize in the research and diagnosis of schizophrenia often find it difficult to agree on exactly how to define it, and so regard it as a "syndrome" characterized by a constellation of various symptoms, any one of which may or may not apply to a given individual. So, ***for any generalization that I make about schizophrenia in this essay, please keep in mind that there may well be many exceptions to that generalization***.

For example, based on what I have read I am satisfied that there tends to be a significant *correlation* between the occurrence of schizophrenia and the dysfunctional state of the childhood families of those persons who are subsequently diagnosed with schizophrenia (and, furthermore, I believe that this correlation may play an important role in generating the phenomenon of religious esotericism). But this does not mean that I am claiming that *all* persons diagnosed with schizophrenia come from (unusually) dysfunctional families. Similarly, I do not mean to suggest that *all* persons diagnosed with schizophrenia speak in highly cryptic metaphor. ***To the extent that what I write does not apply to certain people formally diagnosed with schizophrenia, the term "schizophrenia" as I use it can be replaced in the mind of the reader with some other term with a less expansive application.*** But I do not yet know enough about schizophrenia to know what the more appropriate term would be, or even whether it yet exists.

However, with the foregoing in mind, the following passage from Johnston and Holzman might provide a useful working or provisional overview of schizophrenia in view of the purposes of this essay: "For the most part, people do make themselves understood. But schizophrenic persons seem to have a harder time in that effort. Their ***language*** is sometimes loose or tight, sometimes figurative or literal, sometimes full of logical shifts or almost devoid of logic. In short, their ***speech*** makes it difficult for the listener to ***interpret*** the ***thought processes*** without considerable effort and interpretive leaps. Interruptions, looseness, new words, shifts in direction—all of these modes and more are characteristic of thought disorder. They impart to the speech of the schizophrenic speaker a quality of bizarreness. Yet a careful listener can ***decipher*** and ***interpret*** the ***meaning*** of such speech, and skilled therapists have demonstrated that ability many times (see, for example, Sechehaye, 1951). [The authors are citing Marguerite Sechehaye, *Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl* (G. Rubin-Robson, trans.) (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1951).] Apparently, schizophrenic ***thought disorder*** is not either loose or concrete or illogical; rather, it is periodically derailed, intruded upon, or interrupted." (*Assessing Schizophrenic Thinking*, pp. 175-76; all of the emphases are mine.) [I have included the emphases to point out the fact that there seems to be a distinction to be made between the schizophrenic person's "inner logic," and what may appear in some cases to be a lack of "outer logic" in his communication. And I think this distinction might relate to the distinction between what I am

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same symbols, they can *pretend* to inhabit the same community of meaning—even though, in fact, they do not.

Thus according to this arrangement, the symbols initially enjoy *automatic social authority*; and then, numerous interpreters will (for various reasons) try to *take advantage* of that already-existing social authority to induce or persuade "worshipers" of those symbols to assign the kind of meanings to the symbols that the interpreters would like them to. And when I speak of an "interpreter" here, I have in mind *any* individual reader of an esoteric writing, and not necessarily only someone trying to induce *other* people to adopt his own preferred meaning or meanings; moreover, the individual "interpreter" I have in mind is not necessarily restricted to assigning only a single meaning to a single symbol (or figure, or parable). The inevitable result of such a multitude of interpreters and possible interpretations is a plethora of *competing* and *inconsistent* meanings available for any given symbol (or figure, or parable). According to this arrangement, it is not deemed necessary that the range of possible meanings considered legitimate be limited to the meanings that a society *customarily*, in practice, gives to its symbols (especially including its words, idioms, and figures of speech) as they are used in specific contexts—although this is what would have served to ground the use of the religious language in a shared and commonly recognized social reality. And the fact that even a single interpreter can assign multiple and logically inconsistent meanings to a given symbol or a given set of symbols, gives rise to a *conflict* between meanings, or *anarchy* of meaning, that is found not only among the various individuals of a society, but also, quite frequently, within a single individual mind.

At the same time, from the perspective of those opposed to esotericism, the ambiguity of meaning in esoteric symbolism does have one possible saving grace: In any particular instance, to the extent that a symbol, parable, or figure is "open to interpretation," such that its meaning is not yet clear to the reader, one meaning that might potentially be assigned to that symbol, parable, or figure is ***a meaning that has the tendency to oppose or undermine the esotericist arrangement itself***. In other words: ***the ambiguity of esotericist writings can be turned against itself***. And if an esotericist scripture is considered authoritative, then that means that the full *authority* of the esotericist scripture can be made to oppose the esotericist arrangement. Because of the fact that this possibility is always available, there seems to be an inherently "self-annihilating," or "self-neutralizing," or "self-refuting" tendency within the basic phenomenon of religious esotericism that still remains to be exploited.

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calling the "inner meanings" and the "outer meanings" of an esoteric writing, as well as the distinction that Genesis 11:1-9 (which I quote and discuss later in the essay) appears to draw between the more interior "message" (or "words": Hebrew plural *dabarim*) of a person's communication, and the more exterior "language" (more literally, "lip" or "edge": Hebrew *saphah*) of that communication. Moreover, the emphases point to the fact that a difficult process of interpretation or "deciphering" may be required to make the transition from the outer "language" of an esotericist author to his inner "message."]

[6] Notice that my description of the way in which religious "symbols" are—as a result of the esotericist religious arrangement—now generally regarded by persons affiliated with a formal religion, is somewhat reminiscent of the way in which the Bible describes "idols." My own position is that it is the understanding of *meanings* that brings us into the realm or "kingdom" of what the Bible calls "God" or "spirit" or "the heavens"; and that to the extent symbols are unable to bring about a *shared* human understanding of *meanings*, they are worthless. And I think that, at a more unconscious or subconscious level of thought, the authors of the Bible may have felt the same way.

I hasten to point out that an anti-esotericist interpreter would not be justified in being intellectually dishonest in the way in which he assigned meanings to esoteric symbols, and I do not wish to suggest that it would be legitimate for him to reach conclusions that appeared to him to be *contrary to* the available textual evidence: conclusions, that is, that ignored clear evidence of how the esotericist authors *actually* understood the words that they were using—and this *even when* they were using those words in an esoteric manner. But, having said that, it must also be recognized that it is in the very nature of an esotericist writing that an interpreter can *never* be overwhelmingly certain of what the intended meanings of the author were.[7] There will *always* be significant uncertainty about what those meanings were, even after every attempt has been made, by making use of the available evidence in a kind of "deciphering" or "decoding" process, to eliminate as much uncertainty and ambiguity as possible. *To the extent that* a meaning for a symbol—or, at least, a range of meaning—could be made clear beyond reasonable argument, the symbol would no longer pose the same "danger" that it once did. That is because, at that point, the *merits* of the "meaning"—that is, of the claim or proposition being made—can be evaluated on its own terms. But to the extent that the meaning was still *not* clear, and could not be made clear by any kind of scientific method, then it will often be possible for an interpreter to (legitimately) turn any *remaining* ambiguity or mysteriousness in the symbolism *against* any type of religious system that depends upon symbolic ambiguity for its continued existence.[8] And, by doing so, the anti-esotericist interpreter would have reduced the *remaining* danger posed by the esotericist religious arrangement.

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[7] This is because esotericist writing is not like an ordinary "code" in which one symbol can be *reliably* determined to refer to another symbol, or to some already understood concept or result. An esotericist author will often take up one symbolic metaphor to express his intended notion, and then suddenly switch to some other symbolic metaphor—which, in certain respects, is *not logically consistent* with the first one —without ever alerting the "uninitiated" reader; and, quite possibly, without ever even consciously taking note of the fact himself. The author is so focused *in his own mind* on the *similarities* between the two metaphors that he is oblivious to the ways in which they differ; and so he is oblivious or indifferent to the ways in which his use of language might *mislead* "uninitiated" readers, or give rise to unnecessary *confusion* about his intended meanings.

To communicate in this way exhibits the sort of "autistic thinking" of which I speak later in the essay specifically in reference to schizophrenics and malignant narcissists. When this type of thinking is present, the burden is effectively being placed on the "uninitiated" reader to continuously try to figure out which aspects of a particular metaphor are being carried forward and which are being changed from moment to moment—since, given the very fact that it *is* an esoteric writing, the "uninitiated" reader cannot be sure what the intended "inner meanings" are, so that he cannot know in advance what the "essential" or "continuing" aspects of a particular symbolic metaphor are, and which aspects are merely "incidental" to the writer's actual (but publicly undisclosed) intention. While it is not entirely *impossible* to reconstruct the author's intended meaning from such written metaphors and allegories, it can never be entirely successful. And, in any event, it is highly—and unnecessarily—taxing on the brain of anyone who feels required to do it. (And I am willing to state categorically that those who do *not* find it mentally taxing to read an esoteric writing such as the Bible—and who perhaps even find it relaxing—are not trying to reconstruct or recapture the author's *intended* meaning, and are instead, in effect, using the writing as a vehicle to facilitate their own day-dreaming. If the author's intended meaning were obvious, the writing could not be considered esoteric.)

[8] That is because it is not possible to *refute* such an interpretation with any certainty; if it were, whatever the basis was for a particular refutation would *be* the consensus understanding of the intended inner meaning of the symbol or parable.

Doing this essentially involves making a conceptual division between what might be called the "propositional aspect" or "philosophic aspect" of an inner meaning of an esoteric writing, and its "unconscious aspect." The "inner meaning" of an esoteric writing, viewed according to its "propositional aspect," is capable of being understood with *some* degree of certainty—though never complete certainty—as the result of making a series of rational inductions and deductions, and arriving at propositions that can be clearly and intelligibly stated (some of which I will be offering in this essay for consideration). The "unconscious aspect" is that aspect of the esoteric writing which has not been reduced to discursive, expository, or propositional form—whether because it is not *possible* to do so given the nature of the thing, or because it has not yet been *figured out* how to do so.[9] The work of interpretation involves coming to view an esoteric writing less from its "unconscious aspect," and more from its "propositional aspect" (to the extent that the esotericist writing and the available explanatory evidence make this possible).

Further, the "propositional" and "unconscious" aspects can *each* in turn be divided into a "pro-esoteric" and "anti-esoteric" component or tendency. The *pro-esoteric* component of the "propositional aspect" can easily be refuted on logical grounds.[10] The *pro-esoteric* component of the "unconscious aspect," since it too is pro-esoteric, is similarly illogical—but since this illogic occurs at an unconscious level, it is best thought of merely as a symptom of some sort of mental disturbance or pathology (in other words, it represents a person's *misguided* and *socially harmful* unconscious efforts at individual ego-defense).[11] The *anti-esoteric* component of the "unconscious aspect," on the other

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[9] However, before we have already accomplished such a "translation" in any particular instance, it is often difficult to know which of these two reasons accounts for our previous failure to do so. Moreover, it is difficult to clearly distinguish between the two reasons, since it is the degree of *inherent impossibility* of "translating" the unconscious symbolic form of the writing into the form of propositions that accounts for the *unavoidable uncertainty* of the correctness of our interpretations—even when we are able to state them in the form of propositions.

[10] This is partly because by being put into a position where it even *needs* to justify itself on rational grounds, esotericism is implicitly forced to concede the illegitimacy of its choice to depart from open and rational dialogue in the first place. That is, if a philosopher and an esotericist entered into a public debate over the merits of esotericism, the esotericist might choose to maintain a consistent stance by speaking only in cryptic metaphor; but if he did, nobody would be able to understand his arguments, and so he would lose the debate. On the other hand, if the esotericist were to present logical arguments in defense of esotericism, the philosopher could say (assuming it had been a good argument), "Why didn't you just tell us that in the first place, so that we 'non-esotericists' or 'non-initiates' wouldn't have had to waste our valuable time and energy trying to extract that rational justification from you?"

The esotericist might (if only in his own mind) respond to such a question by saying that the reason why he did not "just say that in the first place" was that no forum had ever been provided in which anyone had shown any willingness to *listen to* what the esotericist considered to be his rational and meritorious arguments. But even if we were to assume that he was entirely correct in saying this, I nevertheless believe it is imperative that he *be forced* either to speak openly and rationally—and take the chance that no one will listen respectfully or care what he has to say, and possibly even that he will incur the hatred of others for what he has to say—or else resign himself to the fact that he will not be allowed to publicly communicate at all; and he can then decide which of these two options he considers preferable. In no way do I wish to suppress the *content* of the esotericist's self-expression; but a person's choice to depart from open and rational dialogue can never be considered a legitimate one by the rest of society if it sincerely expects to create a generally sane social climate.

[11] It should be noted that it is precisely *because* the "pro-esoteric" component of an esotericist's "propositional thinking" can be so easily refuted on logical grounds that it may well get "driven underground," so to speak, and be expressed in the form of *quasi-consciously* organized religious

hand, corresponds to what might be thought of as an individual's "true self"; this represents the unconscious part of an esotericist author—which, though not "logical" *per se*, has not yet become *hostile toward* truth and rational thought—that is trying to find some way to "escape" from the "esotericist trap" in which the person finds himself caught.[12]

The "deciphering" of the symbolism of the Bible can thus be done in such a way that an interpreter *assumes*—and not arbitrarily, but based on a substantial amount of actual textual evidence, some of which I present in this essay—that at least some part of the "unconscious aspect" of the inner meaning was (unconsciously) intended by its creators to be *anti-esoteric*. If *at least some part* of the "unconscious aspect" of the inner

conspiracies or secret societies whose members will not feel that they are under much if any requirement to rationally justify their ways of thinking to the general society when they make their esoteric communications public.

[12] To the extent that the propositions found in the "propositional aspect" of the original "inner meaning" of the esoteric writing are not *intrinsically* and *necessarily* "pro-esoteric," their specific content does not concern me for present purposes, even if I were not *personally* willing to adopt such propositions as true. For example, let us say—speaking purely hypothetically—that, after following a scientific interpretive (and historiographical) approach, it was somehow determined that the "inner doctrine" of the first initiated Christians probably held that there were *exactly* seven levels of heaven—no more and no less—and that all persons, after they had died, would go to one and only one of those seven levels and stay there for all eternity. If members of a non-esotericist religion happened to adopt this *very same* belief for reasons *other than* the mere social authority of Christian esoteric scriptures—even if for no better reason than that it "felt right" to them—I would have no objection to their doing so, since I would not consider their holding that belief to be fundamentally inconsistent with the goal of promoting logical and honest thinking in general. (However, speaking for myself, this "seven levels of heaven" theory does not "feel right" to me, and so I choose not to accept it.) But to adopt such a belief on the basis of the social authority of esoteric scripture effectively endorses and upholds the esotericist system; and, because this is a *fundamentally irrational* type of system, I would have to strongly object to any such belief that was justified in that second way.

I expect people to *take responsibility* for their own beliefs; but that requires knowing what those beliefs *are* with some minimal degree of precision. To the extent that they do not understand their beliefs, it is impossible to make them feel responsible for them (but without encouraging them to personally *identify with* those beliefs), such that they would feel a desire to consciously *replace* a belief once it was no longer found to conceptually "work" for them. If a person *instinctively feels inclined* to hold a particular belief after giving the matter some serious reflection and self-examination, then he should feel free to hold it. (But if he eventually comes to take the exact opposite view, or at least a logically inconsistent view, then I expect him to be able to forthrightly acknowledge in his own mind that his holding the first belief *was a mistake* on his part—and he should not mindlessly assume that a belief and the exact opposite of that same belief can both legitimately be thought to proceed from the same esoteric writing, such that so long as his faith or belief *in the esoteric writing* has remained firm all along, he has not actually been inconsistent in his thinking.) At the same time, while it is not necessary for a person to seek permission from an outside authority before believing what he is already inclined to believe, I do not wish to discourage a person from seeking *support* and *validation* for his beliefs among other, like-minded people—as long as it was understood that the *ultimate authority* for those beliefs must always come from the thinking of the individual person, and that the individual person is alone *responsible* for the beliefs he holds.

I make these comments, which may seem quite tangential at this point, because there seems to be a widespread but irrational fear among people that if they were not able to rely on some esoteric writing as the source of some desired belief (which writing is invariably a *very old* writing—as if that actually made it *more* reliable), they would no longer "be able to" or "get to" maintain the desired belief, such as a belief in the existence of an afterlife, or a belief that people ought to treat each other with kindness. I think the fact that they even *feel* that fear shows that the belief never actually depended on their faith in the esoteric scripture: rather, it was the other way around. A non-esotericist religion would develop an understanding of and explanation for those *original* reasons for the belief that people found compelling, instead of trying to offer (at least with regard to the "exoteric" way of presenting such a scripture) *alternative*, *external*

meaning can be reasonably assumed to have been anti-esoteric in intent, then there is no reason why interpreters who are opposed to esotericism should feel the need to grant equal status or recognition to *any other part* of the "unconscious aspect" of the inner meaning. (But, by the same token, since logical argument is *not* unconscious in nature, any sincere attempt at logical argument—even an allegedly bad one—always deserves a sincere attempt at a logical response.) In making attempts to interpret that "inner meaning," there is nothing objectionable about "taking the side" of *anti-esoteric* tendencies within the "unconscious aspect" of the inner meaning against *pro-esoteric* tendencies within that same "unconscious aspect" of the inner meaning. Everyone's time and mental energy are scarce, so that those of us who are anti-esotericist have no obligation to devote our efforts to helping the pro-esotericist "side" to explicate its various alleged "esoteric teachings" as well as they might be explicated by raising them out of the unconscious and symbolic form in which they have initially been presented— except to the extent that doing so aided us in advancing our own anti-esotericist position. A person's choice to take this particular type of selective interpretive approach would be based at least partly on his first having been convinced of the basic immorality of esotericism—inasmuch as it is a form of organized deception—as well as of its irrationality (and indeed its *anti*-rationality). The *pro-esoteric* component of the "unconscious aspect" of the inner meaning would thus be regarded as *valueless*, since it is driven by what we should be able to agree is an *invalid* source of motivation.[13] The esotericist phenomenon has caused almost unimaginable harm in the world, and it continues to pose a grave threat to all of humanity; and because of that, a sense of urgency requires that an interpreter not feel content to pursue "knowledge for its own

explanations for that same belief that only end up confusing people and distracting them from an awareness of their *own* instinctual motivations for wanting to maintain the belief—which, *if they clearly understood*, I believe they would find both instinctually and rationally satisfying. It is only because they do not clearly understand the basis for their own desires that they worry that they will not be able to *defend* or *justify* them in their own minds, and so for that reason make sure they are hidden from criticism and scrutiny, even (or especially) including self-scrutiny. The distracting "external" explanations (especially including *historical* explanations) that are offered by traditional religion only encourage psychological habits of projection, displacement, and transference (and not only with regard to religion), and they accomplish nothing positive. In short, I believe that there is nothing that any esotericist religion currently does for people that a well-designed non-esotericist religion could not do *much better*. So I again emphasize that the target of my criticism in this essay is not *religious belief* in general; it is *religious esotericism*.
[13] In practice, such an approach resembles a kind of psychoanalysis or psychotherapy that makes the assumption that at least some part of the patient or client ultimately *wants* to be well, and *wants* to become free of counter-productive thought patterns, but either does not know how to do so effectively, or is being prevented from doing so by some other "part" of him. Such a conceptual analogy seems to be especially appropriate given the fact that esotericist symbolism involves exactly the same kinds of symbols that the unconscious, dreaming mind makes use of.

It should be pointed out, however, that the problem with religious esotericism is not merely that it has a character that is strongly "unconscious": it has a character that is *perversely* unconscious. In other words, the problem is not that it has a "pre-rational" dimension or element. All rational thought finds in its roots in some "pre-rational" ground. The problem with esotericist thinking is that it is fundamentally *anti*-rational; it is *inconsistent with* rational thought, and indeed feels *threatened* by it. It is this that gives it the character of "mental pathology" and even "psychosis" in my estimation. In fact, I believe that the pervasiveness of esotericist religion in human society has been responsible for humanity being stuck in something that—on a collective scale—might be analogized to a waking schizophrenic nightmare: one from which various persons have made sporadic attempts to free both themselves and others over the centuries and millenia, but in which humanity still finds itself trapped. (I say "attempts" because I doubt it is possible for any one individual to successfully exit the nightmare unless and until the rest of humanity does so as well.)

sake" (as if doing such a thing were even possible) or refuse to "take a side" in the struggle between esotericist methods of deception and the goal of creating an honest form of society.

So, while we anti-esotericists should not affirmatively *misrepresent* the "esoteric teachings" or "inner meanings" to the extent that we are able to determine them, it is also not our responsibility to make a better argument for the pro-esotericist "side" than it could make for itself; nor need we accept that, with regard to our own anti-esotericist purposes, the authors' intended meanings or "teachings" must be perpetually viewed as something *completely* indeterminate and open-ended unless and until we were able to *fully* explicate those intended meanings or "teachings" in *all* of their various facets. In other words, it is possible for anti-esoterist interpreters to be *intellectually honest* but still not *disinterested* in this dispute, so that we would be willing to take advantage of explicated meanings *as they became available to us* in the course of employing our own anti-esotericist approach to interpretation. (And to speak of an "anti-esotericist approach to interpretation" is really just to describe the particular way in which we would choose to *focus our attention*, which would play a role in determining the associations and patterns within the symbolism that we ended up noticing.) In theory, perhaps, there would be nothing objectionable about pursuing other interpretive approaches to the esoteric symbolism—but only if time allowed for it, and only if there was some "payoff" for doing so. My personal hope is that by the time interpreters had the opportunity to explore the intended meanings from those other points of view, the question would have become largely moot, since much of the original interest in what those meanings were would have disappeared by then.

I am willing to concede that none of the authors of the Bible could have been *entirely* opposed to esotericist religion; otherwise, I believe, they would not have been willing to do *anything at all* that might promote it, even in the role of supposed "insider" or "subversive esotericist." That is why I do not think it is possible for a person to assume that *solely* "conscious" motives were at work in the minds of the Bible's authors if he hopes to show that their writings are opposed to esotericist religion. But whether conscious or unconscious in origin, there *is* copious evidence to be found within the Bible that indicates unease with and hostility toward the esotericist arrangement on the part of the Bible's authors. The existence of such evidence cannot legitimately be ignored or discounted as merely allowing "one more way of interpreting the symbolism," to be given dispassionate academic consideration and then, perhaps, rejected as "possible but unlikely," or "possible but uninteresting." That is because this interpretive approach is the one approach that cannot be regarded as "just another view," since it provides the one reading that cannot possibly be *made consistent* with any of the other readings—since, unlike this one, all of the others implicitly *accept the continuing existence* of the esotericist arrangement, and so regard a multiplicity of interpretations as merely "enriching" that basic arrangement with an abundance of different meanings, no one of which is especially dangerous to the others—and no one of which especially *matters*. Thus one might say that the anti-esotericist approach is the only interpretive approach that creates a "house divided against itself that cannot stand."[14] No matter the extent to which the anti-esotericist view was held unconsciously rather than consciously by the authors of the Bible (assuming, of course, that there is any significant evidence at all

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[14] See, for example, Mark 3:25; also compare Judges 16:29-30.

indicating that they indeed held this view), the very nature of the mental dynamic or "logic" that it sets up makes it impossible to ignore, because it gnaws relentlessly at the sense of coherence, certainty, and reliability enjoyed by the Bible as a source of authority in many people's minds. I believe that in the long run, the "logic" set up by an anti-esotericist interpretation of the Bible (and of other esoteric writings) will make it literally more "compelling" than other interpretations—even if some people might at first resent the fact. I anticipate that the pervasive sense of doubt that it must inevitably tend to create in the minds of the Bible's defenders will prove to be more than they can sustain, until they finally decide that the mental effort required to keep trying to validate it in their own minds is simply not worth the cost, and they move on to better, non-esoteric religious options.

The medieval Jewish theologian Moses Maimonides, in his *Guide of the Perplexed*, writes regarding that work, "If anything in it, according to [the reader's] way of thinking, appears to be in some way harmful, he should interpret it, even if in a far-fetched way, in order to pass a favorable judgment."[15] While I do not advocate that esoteric writings (or any writings) be interpreted in a "far-fetched way," I do think that the idea he expresses is relevant to the approach I am offering. Once a person has become convinced of the immorality and irrationality of esotericism, the only way in which he can "form a

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[15] Shlomo Pines, trans. (University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 15; the brackets are mine. For the reasons that I give in my discussion of the passage in the main text, I see this passage partly as an expression of the "anti-esotericist" tendencies within the *unconscious* mind. But if that assessment is valid, it would show how any such "anti-esotericist" tendencies in the unconscious mind also have the inadvertent effect of promoting the illogical thinking of the "*pro*-esotericist" tendencies of the unconscious mind—since the former would be advocating "far-fetched" interpretations in its desperation to "get free" of the esotericist trap. Advocating "far-fetched" interpretations is "pro-esotericist" for the following reason: There is only ever one *probable* interpretation in a person's mind (which cannot be a "far-fetched" interpretation); furthermore, the probable interpretation of a single person can only become the single *shared* probable interpretation in the minds of many persons by means of rational persuasion (as opposed to coercion) if it was achieved as a result of the rational analysis of commonly available evidence by those persons. Meanwhile, there is a virtually infinite number of *mutually inconsistent* "far-fetched" interpretations. So, any encouragement of the latter type of interpretation should be considered "pro-esotericist," in that it fails to encourage *open*, *public* discourse, conducted according to *shared* standards of rational analysis.

The fact that in this instance, both "anti-esotericist" and "pro-esotericist" tendencies might be seen as being combined in practically the same thought, should serve as a reminder that the division that I am making between "anti-esotericist" and "pro-esotericist" tendencies or separable "components" or "elements" in the unconscious mind is actually somewhat arbitrary, and the two cannot be easily separated due to the fact that since both of these "components" or "elements" are unconscious, they are equally *incapable* of conducting rational analysis. The "anti-esotericist" element knows that it wants to "get out"—which is why I am even calling it "anti-esotericist"—but the unconscious mind of the esotericist (which, I believe, is allowed to play an *excessively large* role in his thinking) does not understand that its attempts to "get free" only manage to strengthen the "pro-esotericist" element, *because those attempts are not rationally directed*. That is why *only* the rational conscious mind can "save" or "rescue" the unconscious mind from *its own* misguided efforts to "get free"—by logically and objectively analyzing and explaining the irrationality of the esotericist system; and also by *taking appropriate action* in accordance with a firm conviction of the irrationality of such a system. The more that the rational conscious mind can rid the Biblical symbolism of its ambiguity and murkiness, the more that it can reveal underlying *propositions*— including logically *fallacious* propositions—and it can then proceed to deal with these on a logical basis. (Observe that this involves using rationality against esotericism in two different ways. First, a rational and scientific method—but, at the same time, a necessarily quite intuitive method—is used to determine the inner meanings of the writings, at least to some extent, so that they can be stated in the form of clear and intelligible propositions. Then, at that point, these propositions can be analyzed for logical validity.)

favorable judgment" of the authors of esotericist writings, including the Bible, is to deliberately *overlook* any tendencies on their part to *maintain* the esotericist system, while, at the same time, calling attention to any tendencies on their part to bring it to an end: in other words, to make a distinction or separation between *two or more different motives* that *co-exist* in their writings, and that are *working at cross-purposes*. In doing this, the interpreter makes the charitable assumption that their authors were trying to bring the esotericist system to an end *in the best way they knew how*, but that something —whether that "thing" was wholly inside themselves, or partly outside as well, for all we know—was *preventing* them from doing so immediately and outright. We can take it as a given that there were ways in which the unconscious minds of the New Testament authors were deviously trying to maintain the esotericist religious system, perhaps even as they told themselves that they were trying to oppose or reform it; but we might choose to instead focus our attention on the ways in which the unconscious minds of those authors may have been trying to *get out* of that mental quagmire, and trying to provide the means by which others might be able to *help* them get out. It is thus possible for an interpreter to make the existence of just such an underlying "desire to get out" his axiomatic starting point, so that he makes all of his interpretive decisions *with reference to* that basic assumption; and even if he does not entirely ignore other ways of interpreting the symbolism, he will at least "put them on the back burner," so to speak.

Because of its deliberate *selectivity*, such an interpretive approach would of course not be able to provide convincing esoteric meanings for all of the symbols, figures, and parables found in the Bible; but then, *no* interpretive approach is able to provide convincing esoteric meanings (or, in some cases, *any kind* of plausible meaning) for all of the symbols, figures, and parables in the Bible. At the same time, there is a very good chance that interpretations generated by following such an approach might be made *at least as* persuasive as any other interpretations of the Biblical symbolism; and to be able to offer interpretations of that kind would facilitate the desired self-neutralizing of the Biblical esoteric symbolism, as well as of esotericist religion more generally.

Chapter 4: Evidence in the Bible of a desire by its authors both to "reveal" and to eliminate the practice of religious esotericism

    The authors of the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, left numerous clues—whether consciously or unconsciously—indicating that they hoped the esoteric or secretive way of structuring religions would someday be ended;[16] or, to put it another way, indicating that they hoped that the esoteric/exoteric *split* in the interpretation of religious symbols would someday be overcome.[17] In other words, I believe that these esotericists—or at least some "part" of each of them—was *hoping* that their "cover" would eventually be "blown," or that their "veil" would eventually be "pierced." And I do not think that the authors of the Bible were opposed to the systematic concealment of meanings merely in what we now know as the Jewish and Christian religions, but in *all* of the world's religions: I believe that what they saw as needing to be eliminated was the very *type* or *form* of esotericist religion in general.[18]

    As an initial matter, there are a number of relatively explicit indications to be found in the Bible that tell the reader that he should presume that *nothing* within the Bible is to be read as a literal account of historical facts. For example, Psalm 78:2 basically states flat-out that the story of the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea is not to be understood literally: Before beginning to recount the story of the Exodus and the Israelites' subsequent wandering in the wilderness, the psalmist writes,

> I open [*pathach*; LXX: *anoigō*] my mouth [*peh*; LXX: *stoma*] in parable [*mashal*; LXX: *parabolé*, derived from *para-ballō*, meaning "to compare," and more literally meaning "to throw next to"]; I utter [or bring forth; more literally, "let flow" or "let gush forth": *naba*; LXX: *phtheggomai*][19] dark sayings [or riddles, or puzzles, or

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[16] If one can accept the concept of "unconscious intentionality," then it is not crucial to decide whether the authors of the Bible were *consciously* aware that they were expressing this hope in their writings in any particular instance. At the same time, while the question of conscious awareness may not be *crucial* in all cases, it is also not an insignificant one; but, for the purposes of this essay, I will usually not be concerning myself with the question. (In fact, as I have already indicated, I am forced to conclude that the authors of the Bible were *not* fully consciously aware of the opposition to esotericist religion that they were expressing in their writings.)

[17] This general notion of a "split"—whether between an "inner meaning" and an "outer meaning," or between an "inner self" and an "outer self"—plays a very important role in the subject matter discussed in this essay. In Chapter 5 I present some evidence of a relationship between esotericism and schizophrenia. At this point it suffices to note that the word "schizophrenia," derived from the Greek language, literally means something like "split mind" or "torn mind"; and my general sense is that this similarity is not entirely coincidental, as will hopefully become more evident as the essay proceeds.

[18] However, it should be stressed that persons involved in religions other than those based on the Bible may also have meant to express this hope in their writings and myths, at least at some level of awareness.

[19] Incidentally, the Hebrew word *naba* (ending with the Hebrew letter *ayin*) means "to gush forth, to spring up, to bubble up, to flow" (as well as "to utter"). This presents us with the idea of a "spring" or "fountain." The Hebrew word *naba* (ending with the Hebrew letter *aleph*) means "to prophesy"—perhaps because originally, authentic "prophesying" would have occurred in a trance state, and the contents of prophecy would have come forth as a "stream," without self-restraint or self-censorship by the prophet. (And Gesenius takes the position that the two words are probably related.) The similarity between the two words suggests that the "spring" or "fountain" (Greek *pégé*) of the "water of life" that Revelation 21:6 and 22:1 describe as being found in the "new Jerusalem" may have been understood to represent a kind of "prophetic utterance" whose meaning would, for the first time, be *clear* to others. And the fact that it is said in Revelation 21:6 that the "water of life" from this "spring" would be provided "without cost" (Greek

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enigmas, or obscure sayings; more literally, "knots" or "twistings": *chiydah*; LXX: *probléma*, derived from *pro-ballō*, literally meaning "to throw before"] from early times [or "from the east"; more literally, "from before": *qedem*; LXX: *arché*, meaning "origin, beginning"].[20]

Consider that "dark saying" is little more than a euphemism for "deceptive saying" or "misleading saying," at least from the point of view of the "uninitiated." "Light" is the perennial symbol of truth, openness, and imparting of knowledge and meaning, while "darkness" is the perennial symbol of falsehood, deception, and concealment of knowledge and meaning. And in the context of this particular verse, there is a possible suggestion that these cryptic sayings, which originally came "from the east" (Hebrew *qedem*)—at which point they were still infused with "light" (that is, when their meanings were still understood)—have become more and more "dark" to the extent that they have traveled toward the "west," which is the direction traditionally associated in world myth with "death."

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dōrean) might be read to indicate that to understand the meaning of such communications would no longer require extraordinary mental effort or strain on the part of listeners. (But at that point, perhaps, the communication would no longer be considered exactly "prophetic," for the reason that the intentions of the unconscious mind would have been *made conscious*.) And if this is correct, then John 7:37-39 seems to suggest that the authors of the New Testament expected that the "clarifying" of the "prophetic utterances" would accompany the "glorifying" (*doxazō*) of Jesus, and the first would not occur until the second occurred; but when both of them did occur, people would have the ability to both speak and listen "in the Spirit" (and since they would all be in the same "Spirit," they would all be able to understand one another).

[20] There are several important warnings that ought to be given at this point. **First, both here and in the remainder of this essay, in most cases (unless I think there is some good reason to do otherwise) I do not provide the actual Hebrew or Greek word form that appears in the text of the Bible, but rather the word in Strong's Concordance under which that word form is listed; so the English translation that is given in the text of the essay will not necessarily correspond to the grammatical form of the Hebrew or Greek word that is provided.** That means that **whenever I give the definitions of a Greek verb, I will give the Greek verb in the first-person singular present active indicative form, but its English equivalent in the infinitive form.**

Second, it should be understood that the hyphens that appear in the Greek words provided in this essay are found neither in the original Greek words, nor, ordinarily, in English transliterations of the words. I have inserted them to "break down" the words for the purpose of aiding the reader in seeing etymological relations between various Greek words that the reader might not otherwise have noticed.

Third, in any passage that I provide from the Old Testament, unless otherwise indicated, the italicized word that I give in brackets will be the (likely) Hebrew equivalent of the word, and in any passage from the New Testament, it will be the (likely) Greek equivalent. In some cases, in translations from the Old Testament I will use the abbreviation "LXX" to indicate the Greek word that was used in the Greek Septuagint ("LXX") translation of the Old Testament to translate the original Hebrew word—which probably, but does not necessarily, correspond to the Hebrew word found in the 9th-10th century A.D. Hebrew Masoretic text that serves as the primary (but not the only) source for modern scholars' and translators' knowledge of the original Hebrew version of the Old Testament writings. (The Septuagint is a 3rd century B.C. Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible that appears to have influenced the authors of the New Testament.)

Fourth, all translations from the Bible are my own. As I have already mentioned, I do not read either Greek or Hebrew, so I have obviously had to rely on the translations of others (along with what I have learned from Greek and Hebrew lexicons), but the final decision on how I think a particular passage is best translated has always been my own. (And my inclination has always been to translate the text as literally as possible such that it does not lead to grammatical or stylistic awkwardness in English—but in some cases I have opted for a literal translation even if that is the unavoidable result.)

In like manner, Acts 8:30-31 should make it clear that the Bible is written in a "secret language" that a person should not ordinarily expect to be able to understand:[21]

> And Philip, having run up to (the Ethiopian eunuch), heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, "So do you really [or truly, or even, or at least, or indeed: *ge*] understand what you are reading?" And (the eunuch) said, "How indeed could I be able (to do so) [or, 'have the power (to do so)': *dynamai*], unless someone will guide me?"

An even more open admission of the esoteric nature of the Bible can be found in 1 Corinthians 9:9-10. In this passage, Paul, in justifying his right to "reap fleshly things" from the Corinthian church members after having "sown spiritual things" among them, writes,

> For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is threshing out the grain."[22] Is it with oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake?

I would describe this as a kind of "smoking gun" passage. In effect, whether he realized it or not, Paul was telling the reader: ***You are not entitled to assume that any word in the Bible necessarily means what it at first appears to mean***.[23] To illustrate the logical implications of this, consider the fact that Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In commenting on this passage, in order to persuade those whom he was addressing to give it some interpretation other than a literal one, Paul could just as easily have written, "Is it with (literal) heavens and earths that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake?"[24] In both cases, the implication would be that everything of which the Bible speaks is potentially serving as a symbol or

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[21] When I use the term "secret language," what I mean by this is that a person should not expect that he will know what *experience* or *concept* is being referred to by the symbols that are being used—possibly because it is an experience or concept with which he has no familiarity, or possibly because there is simple deception being deliberately employed "to keep people in the dark" through the use of code words. (However, I firmly believe that using *ordinary* words to describe *uncommon* experiences or concepts—and then choosing to *publicize* them to ordinary people knowing that those people will almost certainly refer the word-symbols to a variety of *other*, allegedly "unintended" experiences or concepts—constitutes deception in its own right, albeit of a kind slightly different from the kind in which it can be confidently known in advance *what specifically* the misled people will have been misled to believe. That is why I believe all religious esotericism can be fairly regarded as *intrinsically* deceptive, whether the deception it produces be of one kind or the other.)

[22] Paul is quoting Deuteronomy 25:4. There is absolutely nothing from the context of that verse to indicate that it was meant to be read metaphorically. It is simply given as one in a list of enumerated laws. If Paul thought that this verse was meant to be read metaphorically, then there is no reason to think that *every other* verse in the Old Testament is not capable of being read just as metaphorically, regardless of context.

[23] Notice the similarity between the way in which Paul gives a "spiritual interpretation" to Deuteronomy 25:4 and the way in which I give a "spiritual interpretation" to my "coal miner" story in Chapter 2—which shows that the type of example I was presenting there was not at all a fanciful or exaggerated one.

[24] There are reasons (which I will not bother discussing at this point) to think that Paul would indeed have encouraged the church members *not* to interpret Genesis 1:1 literally.

metaphor for some idea *other than* the one that is *seemingly* being presented to the reader.[25]

Furthermore, when Paul rhetorically asks, "Does (God) not speak entirely for our sake?" he also seems to be implicitly stating that if a person interprets a passage of the scriptures according to its literal meaning, rather than some other meaning—and in either case, apparently, the meaning ought to be one that advances human welfare—it is because he has decided that that is how he *wants* to interpret it. After reading this passage and thinking through its full implications, a Christian reader can no longer feel justified in believing nutty things and then blaming it on God. Like it or not, the *individual interpreter* has now been made completely morally *responsible* for what beliefs he chooses to take away from the scriptures.[26]

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[25] Consider that if Paul was not offended by the esotericism that he implicitly alleges was involved in the writing of the Old Testament, then there is no reason to suppose that he and the other Christian apostles would have expected converts to Christianity to be offended, or to feel misled, by the heavy use of esoteric symbolism in the Christians' writings. An anti-esotericist would not have used an esoteric writing as authority for his own arguments (unless he were doing so for subversive purposes—which Paul was not doing). (In fact, I think the Christian Jews were probably even more inclined to read the Old Testament esoterically than, on the whole, the non-Christian Jews would have been; indeed, I believe that it was probably the Christians' proclivity to provide "spiritual interpretations" for whatever in the Old Testament did not make sense to them that allowed them to make the Old Testament *palatable* to themselves.)

That in itself provides one good reason to think that the narrative of Jesus's life contained in the Gospels may have been meant by the founders of Christianity to be read as allegory.

[26] My characterizing Paul's position in this way should be not understood to imply that I mean to *endorse* his approach to the interpretation of esoteric writings; rather, my point is that if one follows out the logical implications of passages such as this, they undermine the intellectual foundations of traditional forms of Christianity. Paul's approach would mean—whether or not he had clearly understood those implications— that some sort of standard *apart from* the scriptures themselves must be used to determine whether a particular interpretation was a good one: namely, whether it was humanly beneficial; and, also implied in that, I would think, would be whether it was rational. But that would mean that some standard existed that was ultimately more authoritative than the literal terms of the scripture itself—and that would raise the question of why it should be necessary to feel bound by any authoritative standard *other than* that of human benefit and rationality. It would raise the question of why anyone would expect the existence of sacred scriptures, considered as a competing but subsidiary authoritative standard, to be something other than a constant source of mental distraction and interference, and the source of a never-ending barrage of cleverly opportunistic interpretations that some people would continually be putting forth and that other people would continually be forced to wrestle with and fend off—in spite of the fact that they obtained no benefit in exchange for being forced to do so. Even if the Mosaic law not to "muzzle an ox when it is threshing out the grain" was of no obvious benefit either to human beings or to oxen—and even if no one ever made the claim that it was, except in so far as doing it was believed to avert "God's wrath" for unknown reasons—it would at least provide clear guidance as to how people ought to behave. But to try to combine a revealed religious law of some kind with a standard such as "human benefit" or "reason" manages merely to combine "the worst of both worlds," so to speak, thereby creating a situation in which no one can ever feel certain how he ought to act, because he has no single standard to look to as a source of guidance. And that ever-present sense of uncertainty and confusion creates tempting opportunities for a society's predators and mischief-makers. (This is not to say that authoritative religious writings should not exist; but their purpose ought to be to express a community's collective sense of how human benefit is best advanced, and not merely because they "came from God"—apart, that is, from the question of how human benefit is best advanced.)

And so I would argue that these types of dramatic transformations of meaning are anything *but* humanly beneficial. While it is true that in a given instance, and taken in isolation, a particular "inner meaning" might be preferable to its corresponding literal or "outer meaning," any *system* in which so much uncertainty of meaning exists, and in which so many shiftings of meaning are expected and encouraged to take place, is a *system* that is itself dangerous to human welfare.

I believe that another indication of the existence of esotericism in the Bible, at the same time as its authors' opposition to it (albeit in spite of themselves to some extent), is provided by the fact that at several points, the Gospels openly acknowledge that the figure of Jesus—who, I believe, *at least as he is presented in the Gospels*, was understood by the authors of the New Testament to be a fictional literary character— engaged in both secrecy and deception during his ministry. For example:

And (Jesus) said to (his disciples), "To you has been given the mystery [or the secret doctrine, or the secret teaching: *mystérion*] of the kingdom of God, but to those who are outside [*exō*], everything happens in parables [*parabolé*]…." [Mark 4:11.]

And with many such parables [*parabolé*] he spoke [*laleō*] the word [or message, or meaning: *logos*] to them, in the degree they were able to hear [*akouō*]. And apart from a parable he would not speak [*laleō*] to them; but in private he explained [or interpreted, or determined, or resolved, or solved: *epi-lyō*, derived from *lyō*, both of which words can more literally mean "to untie, to release, to loosen, to open, to unlock, to set free"] everything for his own disciples. [Mark 4:33-34.]

(Jesus) said to (his disciples), "Our friend Lazarus is taking his rest [or, 'has fallen asleep': ***koimaō***], but I go (to him) that I might awaken him [or, 'bring him out of sleep': ***ex-ypnizō***, derived from ***hypnizō***, which means 'to put to sleep' and is in turn derived from the word ***hypnos***, meaning 'sleep']." Therefore his disciples said to him, "Lord, **if** [*ei*] he is taking his rest [or, 'has fallen asleep': ***koimaō***] [in other words, "*If what you are telling us is in fact true*"], he will be kept safe [or made safe, or saved, or rescued, or preserved: *sōzō*, related to the Greek word *sōtér*, meaning 'savior']."[27] Now Jesus had spoken [*ereō*] about his death [***thanatos***], but **it seemed** [or appeared: *dokeō*, related to the word *doxa*, which can mean either "opinion" or "glory"][28] to them that he was speaking [or "meaning": *legō*] about the rest [***koimésis***, derived from the word ***koimaō***] of sleep [***hypnos***]. So then Jesus told them plainly [or openly, or forthrightly: *parrésia*], "Lazarus has died [***apo-thnéskō***, related to the word ***thanatos***, meaning 'death']." [John 11:11-14.]

In this last passage, carefully observe the Greek words being used, and notice how Jesus's disciples initially took everything that he said *at face value*.[29] **The disciples'**

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[27] Consider the use in the quoted passage of the Greek word ***ei***, meaning "if," and how it might suggest that the idea of "being saved" (or "being rescued": ***sōzō***), and that of "finding rest" (or "becoming calm," or "finding stillness": ***koimaō***), may have been associated in the minds of the authors of the New Testament with the notion of arriving at *an accord* between expressed utterances (i.e., "appearances") and intended meanings; and "death" (***thanatos***) may have been associated with the failure to arrive at such an accord. There would thus be an association between the idea of "death" and that of meaninglessness (as well as the dishonesty or excessive self-involvement that produced the meaninglessness).

[28] Consider Matthew 25:31, in which Jesus says, speaking of the Second Coming, "And when the Son of Man comes in his glory [*doxa*], and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his throne of glory [*doxa*]." Perhaps with the arrival of the "glory" (*doxa*) of the Second Coming, the outward "appearance" (*doxa*) of a person's communication would finally coincide with that person's genuine intentions, i.e., his or her "inner meanings"—unlike what we find in John 11:11-14.

[29] The metaphor of the "face" as I am using the word here is, I believe, not unrelated to the "seeming" or "appearing" (*dokeō*) spoken of in the passage; and similarly, I think that there may also be a relation

supposedly incorrect "interpretation" of what Jesus said was essentially nothing other than a straightforward <u>restatement</u> of what Jesus had <u>himself</u> told them. In other words, what Jesus "really meant" was something *other than* what he actually *said*.[30] Furthermore, it can be assumed that Jesus was not simply using a generally understood euphemism in the same way that other persons of the time would have used it, since in that case his disciples would not have been confused by what he told them; and I think it can also be reasonably assumed that Jesus knew that his disciples did not already speak his "secret language"—since, after all, they were *his disciples*, who were studying under him precisely for the purpose of *learning* his "secret language." Based on that reasonable assumption, then by any standard definition of the word "lie," Jesus brazenly told a lie to his trusting disciples (even though in this particular case he admitted his actual intended meaning immediately after he told the lie). For a person to secretly have one meaning in mind, but then knowingly speak to other people in such a way that they would likely think that he had something else in mind, is nothing other than to mislead and lie to those people. It could not be any more simple and obvious. So the question naturally arises: Why would the author of John 11:11-14 have wanted to portray Jesus as a liar?

I think part of the answer might be that this passage actually constitutes an attempt by the author—whether conscious or unconscious—to *educate and warn the reader* about the dangers of verbal ambiguity and the supposedly "harmless" use of elaborate

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between the goal of seeing "the face of God" and that of seeing God's "glory" (*doxa*). In passages such as Psalm 10:11 and Psalm 27:9, the author speaks of the Lord "hiding [or concealing, or covering: *sathar*] his face [*paneh*]" from the worshiper. I think what is being expressed in passages such as these may be the sense of *a loss of meaningfulness*—which I believe inevitably accompanies the esoteric form of religion. And the hope that this sense of meaninglessness might somehow be escaped may be what Paul meant to express in 2 Corinthians 4:6, in which he writes, "For (it was) God who commanded [or told, or spoke: *legō*, related to *logos*, which can mean 'meaning'] light [*phōs*] to shine [*lampō*] out of darkness [*skotos*], (and) who shone [*lampō*] in our hearts [*kardia*], unto the illumination [or enlightenment: *phōtismos*] of the knowledge [*gnōsis*] of the glory [*doxa*] of God, in (the) face [*prosōpon*] of Jesus Christ." A possible suggestion is that the "glorified" Jesus would show a new and different kind of "face"—that is, a more "radiant" and less "dark" or "concealed" face—than was generally shown by the "non-glorified" Jesus prior to the Crucifixion and Resurrection (with the exception of the episode of the Transfiguration, which I think may have been meant to serve as a "prefiguring" of that final "glorification").

The relation between the symbolic idea of the "concealing of the face" and the idea of "meaninglessness" can be found illustrated in 1 Corinthians 13:12, in which Paul writes, "For now we look [or see: *blepō*] into [or through: *dia*] a mirror [or looking-glass, or glass: *esoptron*] by enigmas [or in obscurity, or by means of riddles, or darkly: *en ainigmati*], but then (it will be) face to face [*prosōpon pros prosōpon*]. Now I know [*ginōskō*] in part, but then I will fully understand [*epi-ginōskō*], just as I have also been fully understood [*epi-ginōskō*]."

I believe that in this verse Paul is relating the existence of "enigmas" (or "puzzles," or "dark sayings," or "riddles," or "obscure discourse": *ainigma*) to the "hiding of God's face"; and, whether or not he was fully consciously aware of it, I believe he is also telling the reader that the existence of these "enigmas" or "riddles" or "obscure discourse" is really just a product of the fact that human beings have chosen to hide or obscure their *own* "faces" (read: "true selves," which would correspond to their "inner selves") from public view. In other words, the "hiding of God's face" is nothing but a *reflection* of the "hiding of man's face." This reading receives support from Genesis 3:8-10 (keeping in mind that the Hebrew word *paneh* can mean either "face" or "presence"), which indicates that it was human beings who first hid themselves from the "face" of God before God ever hid his "face" from them.

[30] And it is not even clear that in the author's use of the words "death" (*thanatos*) and "died" (*apo-thnéskō*), he was not still speaking metaphorically—just at a different "level" of metaphor. If he did it once, there is no reason to think he would not do it again—especially since he had just given "warning" to the reader that that is the sort of thing one ought to expect that he might do again.

undisclosed metaphors or private meanings that have the potential of evolving into full-blown "secret languages"; and also to *alert the reader* to the basic fact that the Bible was written in an esoteric manner. So I think one of its purposes may have been to lead the reader to be far more *wary* about the way in which words are used in esoteric writings (and perhaps in non-esoteric writings as well) than the reader was probably already accustomed to being, and to encourage him to *start asking more questions* about the *meanings* of the words that he found being used in such writings. In fact, it may have been just this—that a "disciple" was willing to *ask* these sorts of questions about *meanings*—that was deemed to distinguish a "disciple" from other persons.[31] And if so, then perhaps it can be inferred that if "Jesus" had been speaking to "non-disciples" or "non-initiates," he would *not* have bothered to clarify himself (that is, speak "plainly," or "forthrightly," or "openly": *parrésia*) in the way that he did for his "disciples."[32]

In response to my suggestion that Jesus was lying, a Christian (or devotee of some other esotericist religion) might still say that what Jesus told his disciples does not actually constitute a "lie" lie: he was just "being poetic." It is the whimsical kind of lying that spiritual gurus and prophets are allowed to engage in, even if it is considered immoral when the rest of us do it. One problem with such a line of thinking is that the Bible itself does not appear to agree with it. Zechariah 13:2-4 says,

> And it will come to pass in that day [that is, "the day of the Lord"], says the Lord of hosts, I will cut off [*karath*; LXX: *ex-olethreuō*, meaning "to extirpate, to obliterate"] the names [*shem*; LXX: *onoma*] of the idols [*atsab*; LXX: *eidōlon*] from the earth [or the land: *erets*; LXX: *gé*], and they will be remembered [*zakar*] no more [the LXX has "there will no longer be recollection of them": *mneia*]; and moreover **I will cause the prophets** [*nabi*; LXX: *pseudo-prophétés*, meaning "false prophets"] and the unclean [*tumah*; LXX: *a-kathartos*] spirit [*ruach*; LXX: *pneuma*] **to pass away** [*abar*; the LXX has "I will remove": *ex-airō*] **from the earth** [or the land: *erets*; LXX: *gé*]. And it will come to pass that if a man [*ish*; LXX: *anthrōpos*] still [or again: *od*; LXX: *eti*] prophesies [*naba*; LXX: *prophéteuō*], his father and mother who engendered [*yalad*; LXX: *gennaō*] him will say [*amar*; LXX: *ereō*] to him, "You shall not live [*chayah*; LXX: *zaō*], **for you speak** [*dabar*; LXX: *laleō*] **lies** [or falsity: *sheqer*; LXX: *pseudés*] **in** [or by] **the name** [*shem*; LXX: *onoma*] **of the Lord** [*yahweh*]"; and his father and mother who engendered [*yalad*; LXX: *gennaō*] him will pierce him [or pierce him through: *daqar*; the LXX has "will tie his feet together," or "will bind him hand and foot," or "will entangle him": *sym-podizō*] when he prophesies [*naba*; LXX: *prophéteuō*]. And it will come to pass in that day (that) every one of the

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[31] Cf. Mark 7:14-23.

[32] I think the author may also have intended (consciously or unconsciously) to portray Jesus as a liar simply so that it would be understood that the "Jesus" that was "crucified" or "pierced" signified the *deceptive* aspect of "prophecy"; and this was to be distinguished from another "Jesus": the one that would ultimately be "raised," which would signify that same body of "prophecy" once it had been "made true" by the assigning of *different* meanings to the words and other verbal symbols being used. (I discuss this theory at more length later in the essay.) However, this would be, in essence, really just a restatement of what I wrote in the main text, since I think a primary reason why the New Testament was written esoterically was so that it could serve as a kind of "education" for the reader who was open to receiving it; and this "educational material," precisely to the extent that it *succeeded* in educating the reader, would have been expected to lead to its *own* "crucifixion" or "piercing" precisely *because of* the deceptiveness contained in that same material.

prophets [*nabi*; LXX: *prophétés*] will be ashamed [*bosh*; LXX: *kat-aischynō*] of his vision [*chizzayon*; LXX: *horasis*] when he prophesies [*naba*; LXX: *prophéteuō*], and they will not put on [*labash*] [the LXX instead has "they **will** put on": *en-dyō*] an outer garment [*addereth*; LXX: *derris*, meaning "a skin"] of hair [*sear*; LXX: *trichinos*] **in order to** [or "having a purpose to": *maan*] **deceive** [*kachash*] [the LXX instead has "in exchange for having deceived": *anti* and *pseudomai*].

I suspect that what this passage is calling a "prophet" essentially corresponds to what I am calling an "esotericist," that is, someone who speaks or writes while having "hidden meanings" in mind. If so, then a "prophet" would have been understood to correspond to a person who had been "initiated" into some body of secret knowledge and hidden symbolic meanings that had been concealed from the "profane" or "unworthy." Also, observe that the author here associates "the prophets" with "the unclean spirit"—which perhaps means something like "the spirit of falsehood," as opposed to what in the New Testament is called "the spirit of truth."[33] It seems reasonable to suppose that what the author calls "prophecy" must have been deemed to be the cause (or at least one cause) of the "unclean spirit"; or else it must have been deemed to have been made necessary by the prior existence of the "unclean spirit"; or both at once. "Prophecy" as the term is used here may have been deemed to constitute a "defensive" or "subversive" use of esotericism (again, with "esotericism" being understood as the practice of communicating while having "hidden meanings" in mind), and thus a temporarily "justifiable" one. In addition, it is important to observe that, according to the Hebrew Masoretic text, the author of the passage neither states nor implies that the "prophets" he has in mind are "false prophets" (to be distinguished from some separate class of "authentic prophets," or "truthful prophets"); any such assumption would be a gratuitous one.[34]

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[33] See, for example, John 16:13.

[34] Not only is such an assumption gratuitous, it also tends to be negated if one makes a comparison between Zechariah 13:2-4, Zechariah 12:10, John 19:34, and John 19:37, as I explain below in the main text of the essay.

　Also, there are several reasons for thinking that the Masoretic text is to be preferred to the Septuagint text in this particular case. The first reason is that—in my opinion—the translator of this portion of the Septuagint failed to correctly understand the intended significance of the "hairy outer garment" as an allusion to the motif of "Jacob impersonating Esau," based on the episode recounted in Genesis 27 (as I discuss more below in the main text of the essay); and so "putting on the hairy outer garment" would have been something that the prototypical "prophet" would have needed to *stop* doing, and not *start* doing (as the Septuagint text seems to suggest). The second reason is that I believe the author of John 19:34 and 19:37 chose to follow the Masoretic text in regarding "piercing" rather than "binding hand and foot" or "entangling" (Greek *sym-podizō*) as being the "penalty" for "prophesying." [However, in possible support of the Septuagint's translation, see Genesis 22:9 (LXX), which describes Isaac as being "bound hand and foot" (*sym-podizō*) at the time that Abraham was about to sacrifice him as a whole burnt offering. In light of that fact, the "binding hand and foot" of the prototypical "prophet" may have been understood to be *preliminary to* a "piercing" or "slaughtering" of him, prior to his "burning."] The third reason to prefer the Masoretic text in this particular case is that after the Septuagint's use in the quoted passage of the Greek word *pseudo-prophétés*, meaning "false prophet," none of the remaining instances of the word "prophet" or "prophesy" distinguish between "false prophets" (or prophesying), and "truthful prophets" or "authentic prophets" (or prophesying)—which, combined with the fact that the Masoretic text never mentions any "false prophet" at all, leads me to think that the notion that the "prophet" being discussed was meant to be thought of as a "false prophet" (except in so far as *every* "prophet" is actually a "false prophet" in some sense) may have been added by the Septuagint translator as a supposedly "helpful clarification" that in fact departed from the intended meaning of the original Hebrew text.

I believe that Chapter 21 of the Book of Revelation, which is located at the end of that book and describes the "new Jerusalem," is pointing to the same ideal final outcome as does the passage from Zechariah 13 that I just quoted. But before considering the passage from the Book of Revelation, one ought to first give some thought to what the esoteric meaning of the Biblical symbol of a "stone" might be. I posit that the Biblical symbol of a "stone" (Greek *lithos*) was understood by the authors of the New Testament to represent a passage of scripture, word-symbol, idiom, figure of speech, allegory, metaphor, parable, or similitude, that makes little or no sense to the reader *except* when understood literally. Or, to state it in other terms, it may have been understood to be the deliberately obfuscating and misleading "outer meaning" of a religious symbol or passage of scripture; or, to put it yet another way, it may have been thought of as the bare physical symbol itself without its being accompanied by an understanding of the *significance* that the symbol had in the minds of "initiates." Assuming that a definition along these lines is correct, it would seem to follow that "gemstones," since they are "stones" that either reflect or transmit "light," may have been understood to signify the revelation of the "true" (i.e., "intended") meanings, or "inner" meanings, of these symbols; in other words, the symbol of "gemstones" may have been mentally associated with some process of *clarification of meaning* (or some state of *clarity of meaning*), as well as with figurative "enlightenment."

Now consider how the city of the "new" or "heavenly" Jerusalem is depicted toward the end of the Book of Revelation:

> And (an angel) carried me away in spirit [*pneuma*] up to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down [*kata-bainō*] out of heaven from God, having the glory [*doxa*] of God, its radiance [or light: *phōster*] like a most precious [*timiōtatō*, a superlative form of *timios*, meaning "precious, valuable"] (gem)stone [*lithos*], like a jasper [*iaspis*] stone [*lithos*], **being clear as crystal** [*krystallizō*]. … The material of its wall was jasper [*iaspis*: in other words, the wall "**was clear as crystal**"], and the city (was) pure [or clear, or clean: *katharos*] gold [*chrysion*], **clear** [*katharos*] **like** [*homoios*] **glass** [*hyalos*]. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious [*timios*] stone [*lithos*] … . And the twelve gates (were) twelve pearls [*margarités*], each of the gates [*pylōn*] (made) out of a single [*henos*] pearl [*margarités*], and the street of the city (was made out of) pure [or clear, or clean: *katharos*] gold [*chrysion*], **transparent** [*diaugés*, related to *di-augazō*, meaning "to dawn, to shine through (the darkness)"] **as glass** [*hyalos*].[35] [Revelation 21: 10-11,18-19,21.]

Furthermore, the esoteric definition of "stone" that I suggested might also help to explain the author's intended meaning in Matthew 24:1-2:

> And Jesus, having gone out [*ex-erchomai*] from the temple [*hieron*], was going away [or going, or going forth: *poreuomai*], when his disciples came [or came near, or approached: *pros-erchomai*] to point out to him the buildings [*oiko-domé*] of the

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[35] As an aside, consider the fact that ordinary gold is actually not clear or transparent. As a general rule, an incongruency such as this should probably serve as notice in the reader's mind that a "clue" of some sort has just been "dropped" by the author, whether consciously or unconsciously.

temple. And he replied to them by saying, "You see [*blepō*] all [*panta*] these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there shall not even be allowed (to remain) [*aphiémi*] here (one) stone [*lithos*] upon (another) stone [*lithos*], that will not be broken down [or broken apart: *kata-lyō*]."

I surmise that what the author was predicting or hoping for here—consciously or unconsciously—was that the whole existing system of obscure and cryptic religious symbolism would be thoroughly dismantled as the result of a process of *analysis* (that is, a "breaking down" or a "breaking apart" *of received meanings* for the symbols into more "interiorized" and therefore *meaningful* meanings).[36]

    On numerous occasions the "idols" referred to in the Bible are described as being made of "stone" or "wood"; and I think the reason for this may be that these sorts of "idols" were understood to represent the type of *symbols* that were neither "living" (that is, meaningful), nor "vivifying" or capable of "making alive" (that is, capable of conveying meaning). Consider that most speakers of the English language (and, I assume, of many other languages as well) would, if someone spoke to them of a "dead symbol," probably understand that to be a reference to the idea of a "meaningless symbol." At the same time, one symbol that *does* convey the idea of "vivification," or "nourishment," or "enlivening," is that of "bread." And indeed, we find the two symbols of "stone" and "bread" contrasted in Matthew 4:3:

And, having come near [***pros-erchomai***],[37] the tempter [or tester: *peirazō*; i.e., Satan] said to (Jesus), "If you are a son of God [or, 'if you are Son of God'], **speak** [*legō*] **so that** [or 'to the end that,' or 'with the result that,' or 'in order that': *hina*] these stones

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[36] In fact, the Greek verb used in Matthew 24:2, ***kata-lyō***, meaning "to break apart, to break down, to break up, to tear down, to (make) come apart, to dissolve," is closely related to the Greek verb ***ana-lyō***, meaning "to resolve (something into its elements), to dissolve, to release, to undo, to unwind"; both are based on the verb ***lyō***, generally meaning "to make loose, to release." The noun form of the verb ***ana-lyō*** is ***analysis***, source of the English word "analysis."

    At the same time, I believe that the passage may have been meant to be understood as a reference to the image of the "Tower of Babel" being broken apart into its individual component "bricks" or "stones." If so, then the author would have been comparing the "Tower of Babel" to the "Jerusalem temple"—an idea which finds independent support in the New Testament that I discuss elsewhere. Moreover, a comparison between this passage and Revelation 18:4 may explain the significance of the author's specifying that Jesus had "gone out" from or "come out" of (*ex-erchomai*) the temple before the exchange occurred.

[37] Another Greek word derived from the Greek word ***pros-erchomai***, meaning "to come near, to approach," is ***prosélytos***, meaning "proselyte." It is conceivable that the author meant for the reader of this passage to understood Satan to be posing (at first) as a potential proselyte who was trying to discover what sort of "arcane wisdom" Jesus possessed, in order to determine whether he was a genuine "son of God" (a term perhaps indicating a true "spiritual master" who had been "initiated" by God himself), and thus worth following as his student. In that case, in the quoted passage the author may have meant to portray Jesus as resisting the temptation to "show off" his knowledge of inner meanings in order to impress a potential proselyte.

    Alternatively, the use of the word ***pros-erchomai*** may have been meant to indicate that it was a fellow "initiate" or a would-be "initiator" who was speaking to Jesus. In any case, the likelihood that the reader was meant to discern a theme of "initiation" or "the transmitting of secret teachings" in this passage is increased by Luke 4:5-6 (relating the same episode of the "Temptation in the Wilderness"), in which the devil uses the Greek word ***para-didōmi***, which can mean "to give over, to deliver, to transmit, to hand down (a tradition)." [And from the verb ***para-didōmi*** is derived the noun ***paradosis***, which can mean "a transmission (of legends or doctrines), a (sacred) tradition, a (secret) teaching."]

[*lithos*] might become [or result in, or beget, or issue in, or give rise to: ***ginomai***] bread."

The Greek word used here that I have translated as "speak" is *legō*, which can also mean "to mean," and from which is derived the Greek word *logos*, which can mean "word" or "speech," but also "meaning." What I think might be happening here is that Satan, the "tempter" or "tester," is challenging Jesus to *prove* that he is "a son of God" by *explicating* the "inner meaning"—which he refuses to do, perhaps in part because if he had done so he would have given away the "big secret" by disclosing the most important "inner meaning" of all: namely, that the whole *system* of differentiating "inner meanings" (i.e., "bread") from "outer meanings" (i.e., "stone") **needed to be brought to an end**,[38] and that the entire practice of making a split between inner and outer meanings was *not* to be thought of as something laudable in itself.[39] It seems, incidentally, that as part of the movement away from such a system, the old kind of "bread" would have been replaced (though perhaps only as a temporary measure) by some different kind of "bread," namely, the "bread from heaven" or "manna from heaven" spoken of in John 6:32-51 (possibly signifying a type of discourse), all of which "bread" would have been highly "vivifying" or "nourishing"—that is, designed to readily *convey meaning*—and, at the same time, all of which would have been *available equally* to everyone (given inevitable differences in people's natural capacities to understand or apprehend another person's intended meaning in its fullness).[40]

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[38] The notion of "bread" signifying "inner meanings" and of "stone" signifying "outer meanings" also tends to be suggested by Matthew 7:7-11. And if that is correct, then consider that the words "son" (Greek *huios*) and "child" (Greek *teknon*) found in that passage were probably not meant to be read literally, but were referring to "spiritual fathers" and "spiritual sons": in other words, "spiritual masters" and their "initiates." Also consider that the following Greek words as they are being used in this passage may have been meant to carry esoteric connotations, all of which would relate to the transmitting of "inner meanings": *didōmi*, meaning "to give," *heusiskō*, meaning "to find, to discover," *anoigō*, meaning "to open," *lambanō*, meaning "to receive."

[39] But even though this is perhaps what a "son of God" would have wanted to *say*, this is not what many esotericists would have wanted to *hear*—which may in part explain the notion of "tempting" or "testing"; and one might relate this to the theoretical concept of the "double bind" that is sometimes used to explain the origin of schizophrenia, as is briefly discussed in Chapter 5 of the essay. The passage might thus also indicate how the "double bind" would have been at work *within* the esotericist religious system, which would have functioned as a kind of ersatz "dysfunctional family"—one in which "spiritual masters" served as substitute "fathers" and fellow "initiates" served as substitute "brothers."

Also, the notion of the existence of some single "inner meaning" to be regarded as being more important than all of the other possible "inner meanings" that people might discern in the scriptures—and, moreover, as deserving to displace them—can be found, I believe, in the Parable of the Pearl of Great Worth, told by Jesus in Matthew 13:45-46: "[T]he kingdom of heaven is like a man [*anthrōpos*], a merchant [or trader: *emporos*] seeking fine [or good: *kalos*] pearls [*margarités*]. And having found [or discovered: *heuriskō*] a **single** [*hena*] pearl [*margarités*] of great worth [or of much value, or of **many** values, or of **multiple** values: **poly**-*timos*], (and) having gone away [*ap-erchomai*], he sold [*pipraskō*] all (of them) [*panta*], as many as he had, and bought [*agorazō*] it." I think the "pearls" in the parable may have been meant to signify "inner meanings"; I make that suggestion partly because of where pearls are found (namely, inside "shells") and also because of the manner in which they are produced.

[40] However, it is also conceivable that the purpose of the "bread from heaven" (which the text of John 6:51 associates with the symbol of "flesh") was to provide some set of "inner meanings" that would be capable of doing away with all of the other "inner meanings"—so that this "flesh" could then in its turn be replaced by "spirit." This is suggested by John 6:62-63, as well as by 1 Corinthians 11:26 (which, when read in conjunction with one another, might be seen to indicate that "the Lord's death" was associated with the

As I already indicated above, Revelation chapter 21 says that even though the "new Jerusalem" would have a "great, high wall" (verse 12), the material out of which this wall would be built was "jasper" (verse 18), so that it would be "clear as crystal" (verse 11). But in addition to that, Revelation 21:25, speaking of the wall of the city, says,

<p style="color:red">And in the daytime its gates [pylōn] will never be closed [or shut, or locked: kleiō]—and there will be no night [nyx] there.</p>

I think what the author may have meant by this was that the inhabitants of the "new Jerusalem" would not be prevented from gaining an understanding of the meanings of religious symbols as a result of the practice of deliberate obscuration and concealment of meaning (signified by "night" or "darkness"); nor would any esoteric "keys" or "passwords" be required to "enter into" that understanding through "gates" that had been closed to them. Moreover, Revelation 21:27 says,

<p style="color:red">And nothing at all (that is) unclean [or profane; more literally, "common": koinos] shall enter [eis-erchomai] (the new Jerusalem), nor anyone [or anything: pan] practicing [or causing, or creating, or producing: poieō] abomination [bdelygma] and [kai] falsehood [pseudos], but only those who have been written [graphō] [or, "unless they have been written"] in the Lamb's book of life.</p>

Again, since I am assuming that the "unclean spirit" was meant to be contrasted with the "spirit of truth" or "Holy Spirit," it seems to follow that in the author's mind the "wall" of the "new Jerusalem" would have been designed not to hide or obscure the truth from genuine truth-seekers, but rather to separate unrepentant liars from those devoted to truth.

"eating" of this "bread from heaven" or "flesh," while "the Lord's resurrection and ascension" would have been associated with *an end being put* to the "eating" of this "flesh").

   Also, an alternative interpretation of the relationship between the symbols of "bread" and "stone" that has occurred to me—although it is conceivable that both it and the one I have provided in the main text would have been considered correct by the author—would be based on the assumption that the "stones" (**lithos**) spoken of in this passage were meant to refer to "millstones" (**mylos**) in particular. The alternative translations of **ginomai** I have supplied in the block quotation in the main text help to make such an interpretation seem more plausible than it otherwise might. The symbol of "working the millstone" might have signified the process by which esoteric meaning—i.e., "flour" or "meal"—was made accessible or "edible" once the symbolic "grains of wheat" had already been winnowed from their "chaff" (and this "winnowing" or "sifting" might have signified something like a person's initially becoming aware of the existence of the "inner meanings" within the symbolism, thereby creating a division or separation into an "inner" dimension and an "outer" dimension). By depicting Jesus as refusing to "work the millstone," the author might essentially have been depicting him as refusing to assent to the proposition that a person's willingness to "work the esotericist millstone" determined whether or not that person was or could become a "son of God"; and it might have thus been expressing Jesus's (and thus also the author's) opposition to a process by which meanings that had first been concealed within the esoteric symbolism would then be "extracted" by a relative handful of initiates ("extracted" in their own minds, anyway)—with this whole process or system of first concealing, and then *selectively* "sifting" and "extracting," being symbolized by the figure of Satan. The New Testament authors' basic hostility to the symbol of the "millstone" is made clear in Revelation 18:21, describing a vision in which "a powerful angel took up a stone [lithos] like a great millstone [mylos] and threw (it) into the sea, saying, 'Thus will Babylon the great city be thrown (down) with violence [or suddenness: horméma], and nevermore shall it be found [or discovered: heuriskō].'"

It is not clear to me what "abomination" (*bdelygma*) was understood to mean;[41] but notice that the text connects this word to the word "falsehood" (*pseudos*) by using the word "and" (*kai*) instead of "or" (*é*). So, whatever the term "abomination" was meant to signify, it can be assumed to have *invariably* accompanied "falsehood." Furthermore, by constrasting a person who was "practicing abomination and falsehood" with "those who have been written in the Lamb's book of life," the suggestion is created that the author's conception of "life" may have been understood to be either equivalent to or closely associated with his conception of "truth."

It should be noted that I do not think that by his saying that "nothing at all unclean [or profane] shall enter (the new Jerusalem)," the author of Revelation 21:27 meant to suggest that he envisioned that any kind of split between the "sacred" and the "profane," between "initiates" and "non-initiates," would be maintained in the "new Jerusalem." Rather, I think he meant to indicate that *the entire category of "the profane" was to be eliminated*, so that the desire or perceived need would no longer exist to "safeguard" certain kinds of knowledge by concealing it from those who supposedly could not be trusted with it (while, at the same time, effectively *lying about* having concealed it). In fact, such an idea is fairly explicitly stated in Revelation 22:3, which says,

> **And no longer will there be any curse** [or "anything accursed": *kat-anathema*] (in the new Jerusalem), and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will render service to him.[42]

According to my reading of this passage, once the "new Jerusalem" came into being, *everything and everyone* would henceforth be considered "sacred" or "holy" in the religious sense—unless a person chose, primarily by lying, to "profane" *himself* or make *himself* "unclean," and thereby *exclude himself* from the "new Jerusalem." This notion of the entire category of "the profane" being eliminated is also suggested by Acts 10:14-15, in which Peter, replying to a voice telling him to "kill and eat," says,

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[41] However, a clue as to what "abomination" may have specifically been referring to might possibly be found in the fact that the Greek word translated here as "abomination" is *bdelygma*, and the Greek word *bdella* means "leech"; so the notion of "abomination" that the author had in mind may have related to the notion of "parasitism" in some way.

Also, *bdelygma* is the same word used in Matthew 24:15, in which Jesus speaks of the "abomination [*bdelygma*] of desolation [*erémōsis*]." The word *erémōsis* can also mean "despoiling," or "stripping bare," or "laying waste," or "wasting," or "bereavement," or "isolation," or "abandonment," or "loneliness"; and this indicates to me that "those causing abomination" who were not to be permitted to enter the "new Jerusalem" may have been meant to refer either to those with a certain kind of "destructive" impulse, or to those who caused or exploited "isolation" or "loneliness."

[42] Incidentally, the Greek word *kat-anathema* is used in the Septuagint ("LXX" for short), a 3rd century B.C. Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, to translate the Hebrew word *cherem*, which can mean "accursed" or "dedicated to utter destruction"—including in Joshua 6:17 in reference to the city of "Jericho," which I think the authors of the New Testament may have understood to be functioning as a prefiguration of the symbolic city of "Babylon." So this language would seem to support a proposal that I present later in the essay, that the symbolic "present Jerusalem" may have been identified with the symbolic "Babylon," in which case the "new Jerusalem," i.e., "the Jerusalem above," would have been understood to be "hidden inside" the city of "Babylon" (cf. Matthew 13:33 and Revelation 16:19); and the "new Jerusalem" would have been expected to come into being or be "born" only after "Babylon"—symbolizing, I believe, religious esotericism—had been "sloughed off" or "put off," so that "Jerusalem" could finally "come out of (Babylon)," as it is put in Revelation 18:4.

"By no means, for I have never eaten anything unclean [or profane, or impure, or common: *koinos*] and impure [or unclean: *a-kathartos*]." And a voice [*phōné*] (came) to him again a second [*deuteros*] (time) [or 'in a second (way),' or 'from a second (place)']: "What God has made clean [or made pure: *katharizō*], you must not profane [or defile, or make unclean, or make impure, or make common: *koinoō*] (in your own heart)."[43]

This same idea is also indicated by Romans 14:14, in which Paul writes,

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[43] I think this might mean something like, "Those esoteric symbols—whether found in Judaism or in a foreign religion—that you have come to understand according to its (correct or 'spiritual') inner meaning, you must not think of according to its outer meaning." If that reading is accurate, then it would imply that the inner meanings were seen to be *potentially* more "pure" or "clean" than the outer meanings—*unless* the "outer meanings" had become partially *internalized* as a person's own "inner meanings," after the "outer meanings" had become "confused with" or "confounded with" the more truly "spiritual" or "correct" "inner meanings." I think what Peter might actually be saying in his reply to the first voice is that—in his "heart of hearts," that is—he *does not believe* (or "does not have faith in," or "has not been persuaded by"—all of which are meanings that can be conveyed by the Greek word *pisteuō*, although that specific word is not used here), because he *does not understand*, what the "inner meanings" of the esoteric writings of the Old Testament are *really* saying. That is because, if he did, he would realize that he could find some of those same "inner meanings" in other, *foreign* religions as well—once "God had made them clean" for him by *revealing* the "inner meanings" to him that had been buried or concealed within the esoteric symbolism. There is also a possible suggestion to be found in this passage that it was only upon a "second [*deuteros*] reading" or "second hearing" (symbolically understood) of a symbol or writing that the "revealing" of these "inner meanings" was understood to occur, which is presumably also when the "cleansing" would occur.

With the foregoing in mind, consider Mark 7:14-23, which says, "And, having called the crowd [or the multitude: *ochlos*] to (him) again [*palin*], (Jesus) was saying to them, 'Hear [*akouō*] me, all (of you), and understand [or discern, or comprehend; more literally, 'put together': *syn-iémi*]: There is nothing from outside [***exōthen***] the man [or person: *anthrōpos*] that (merely by) going into [*eis-poreuomai*] him is able to make him unclean [or make him impure, or make him profane, or make him common: *koinoō*], but rather the (things) going forth [*ek-poreuomai*] out of the man are the (things) making the man unclean [*koinoō*].'" [Some manuscripts then have: "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."]

The same passage continues: "And when he went [*eis-erchomai*] inside [more literally, 'into house': *eis oikon*] away from the crowd, his disciples questioned him (about) the parable. And (Jesus) said to (his disciples), 'So are you also without discernment [or 'without understanding': *a-synetos*]? Do you not understand [or perceive, or apprehend: *noeō*] that all that goes into [*eis-poreuomai*] the man from the outside [***exōthen***] has not the ability to make him unclean [*koinoō*], since it does not go into his heart [*kardia*] but his belly [*koilia*], and goes out [*ek-poreuomai*] into the latrine, (thus) purifying [or making clean: *katharizō*] all (kinds of) food?' **Moreover, (Jesus) was saying**, 'That which goes forth [*ek-poreuomai*] out of the man: that (is what) makes him unclean [*koinoō*]. For (it is) from inside [***esōthen***], out of the heart [*kardia*] of men, (that) evil [*kakos*] thoughts [or considerations, or calculations, or reasonings, or schemings: ***dialogismos***, derived from the verb *dia-logizomai*] go forth: fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetous (desires) [or covetous (practices)], wicked (desires) [or wicked (practices): *ponéros*], deceit, lewdness, envy [literally, 'an eye'], evil [*ponéria*], slander, arrogance, thoughtlessness [or foolishness, or heedlessness, or selfish carelessness: *aphrosyné*]. All these evils go forth from inside [***esōthen***], and they make the man unclean [*koinoō*]." (As an aside, with regard to the portion of the passage beginning with "Moreover, Jesus was saying," compare Luke 2:35—a comparison which suggests that the archetypal "Woman" may have been understood to represent the esotericist religious system, with Jesus's virginal mother Mary representing its still "pure" or "untainted" aspect: the "new Jerusalem" hidden within "Babylon"; and the "revealing" [*apo-kalyptō*] of the evil "thoughts" [*dialogismos*] out of many "hearts" [*kardia*] would correspond to the "opening up" of that closed system using the "sword" [*rhomphaia*] of the Spirit.)

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I know and feel confident in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean [or common, or profane: *koinos*] because of itself [or himself, or herself: *heautou*], except to (a person) considering [*logizomai*] something [or someone: *tis*] to be unclean [*koinos*]: to such (a person), (it is) unclean [*koinos*].

In fact, passages such as these lead me to suspect that the author of Revelation 21:27 may have been partly ironic in his use of the word *koinos*—meaning "unclean" or "common"—when he says that "nothing at all unclean [or common: *koinos*] shall enter" the "new Jerusalem," because by eliminating the previously made distinction between "initiates" and "non-initiates," all meanings would, in one sense, be "made common":

First, it needs to be pointed out that when Jesus says "Hear and understand [or 'put together': *syn-iémi*]," that should almost certainly be read as a *signal* that whatever follows should not be taken at face value, but rather ought to be approached as a riddle in need of solving (especially since the text indicates that Jesus is speaking "again," or "for a second time": *palin*). According to one possible reading, what Jesus is saying in this passage is that it is the *complete separation* of the nutritious elements (i.e., *correct* or "spiritual" meanings) to be found in the metaphorical "food," from the "waste matter" (i.e., *incorrect* or "carnal" meanings, involving the literal "outer meanings") to be found in the metaphorical "food," that results in *all* types of "food" (i.e., esoteric symbolism, or esoteric writings, or myths, or parables, or allegories) being rendered "clean" or "pure." I think the author may have meant to convey the idea that the esoteric symbols or writings are neither good nor bad per se, *so long as* the "digestive process" (i.e., the "interpretive process") is working properly. It is the *interpretation* that a person gave to the symbols or writings that would make them good or bad *for him*; and, as a result of the way in which he chose to go about interpreting the symbols, he would also *become* good or bad as a person. According to what I think the author's understanding may have been, the interpretation of a symbol or writing may have been conceived of as equivalent to *the way in which* a person went about "separating" or "sifting" (Greek *krinō*, which can also mean "to judge") or "digesting" his "food" in his "inner parts," or "interior," or "belly." (Incidentally, the English word "digest" is derived from the Latin word *digerere*, meaning "to separate, divide, arrange.") My sense is that all evil thinking was thought to be the result of "improper digestion" or "incomplete digestion" of these symbols and writings, such that not all of the "waste matter" had yet been expelled from the "inner parts" of a person, with the result that the person was still "full of waste matter" (so to speak), at least to some extent. Since this "waste matter" could not find an exit in the normal and proper way, it would be absorbed by the person's "inner body," and thereby move from the metaphorical "belly" to the metaphorical "heart" (which may have signified the idea of certain ascribed meanings being "internalized" by the person's "soul"); and from the "heart" it would then emerge from the symbolic "mouth" in the form of evil discursive thoughts, spoken words, and actions in response to the situations of daily life. And I think the retention of this "waste matter" in the "soul" or "heart" may have been understood to relate to the need for a "purgation" or "catharsis" (in other words, a kind of "enema") of the person's "soul" or "heart," in order to relieve the person's "hardness of heart" (Greek *skléro-kardia*). As I discuss in Part II of the essay, it was this kind of "purgation" or "catharsis" that Socrates practiced; and this may have also been the function that "baptism" (regarded esoterically) was actually understood by the authors of the New Testament to serve.

It should be evident by now that I would not be sympathetic to the view that it is a reader's responsibility to "cleanse" a cryptic writing through his interpretation of it. I believe it is the *author* who ought to expect to be "judged"—and judged according to the *surface* meaning of his writing—and not the reader; and I think that for a person to believe otherwise is narcissistic and autistic. Having said that, however, notice the way in which the author has Jesus speak in this passage (Mark 7:14-23) with regard to what is "outside" or "without" (*exōthen*), as compared to what is "inside" or "within" (*esōthen*). He regards what I would call the "exoteric" side of things to be innocuous in itself—in so far as symbols and words have not yet been assigned meanings (or *alternative* meanings, to be more precise) by a person—while identifying the "esoteric" or "inner" side of things as the ultimate source of all mischief and evil, to the extent that mischief and evil exist. In addition, it is also possible that the author meant to condemn the general process by which these evil or unspiritual "alternative meanings" would then in turn be "*made* exoteric" (or made to "go out": *ek-poreuomai*), and unsettle, mislead, and debase those persons who were not *capable* of

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That is, all meanings would be shared with everyone else and so be made *commonly available*. In another sense, however, the author would *not* have been using the word ironically, because I think the author's view may have been that the meanings that had *formerly* been common (that is, the *exoteric* meanings) *were* to be left behind at a certain point[44]—so that some *new* set or collection of commonly shared meanings could replace them.

The hypothesis that I am offering—that the authors of the Bible were writing esoterically for the purpose of criticizing esotericism—is supported by additional statements made by Jesus in the Gospels that I believe can readily be construed as somewhat oblique criticisms of esotericism. Here are some examples:

"cleansing" the esoteric symbols and writings on their own. In other words, this passage might be seen to represent a condemnation of the entire esotericist arrangement. Thus it is not entirely clear that the author was necessarily arguing for the *retention* of esoteric symbolism or writing, if he believed that writings of this kind inevitably led to the creation of a division between an "inner side of things" and an "outer side of things," which *division* he may have understood to be the ultimate source of evil: In other words, it is conceivable that the author believed that while an esoteric writing *can* be "cleansed" by an individual reader (to some extent), it ought not to be the *responsibility* of any person to do so. And with a position such as that I could probably agree.

Furthermore, Mark 7:14-23 can be cross-referenced with Revelation 22:1, in which John, speaking of the "new Jerusalem," says, "Then (the angel) showed me a river of water of life, clear [or bright, or transparent: *lampros*] as crystal, going forth [*ek-poreuomai*] out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle [*mesos*] of the street of (the city); and, on this side and on that side of the river, the tree of life, producing twelve (kinds of) fruit, in accordance with month [*mén*], each yielding [or giving up, or giving back, or paying back, or restoring: *apo-didōmi*] its fruit…." (By comparing this passage with Genesis 2:8-10, it can be deduced that the "river of water of life" was understood to water the "tree of life," which apparently serves as the source of "food" in the "new Jerusalem.") Also, these passages can be compared with John 7:38-39, in which Jesus says, "He who believes in me, just as the scripture has said, 'Out of his interior [or belly: *koilia*] will flow [*rheō*] rivers of living water'"; and the text then says, "Now this he said about the Spirit [*pneuma*]…." It seems reasonable to suppose that these various passages were meant to be read in conjunction with each other. If so, then they suggest that "the throne of God and of the Lamb" was understood to signify either the "belly" or the "heart" of a person (once the person had become pure). Moreover, it seems that the authors of the New Testament were envisioning a situation in which the "digestion" of the intended meanings of the words and symbols used by others would be perfect, complete, and total, and there would no longer be any "waste matter" or "impurity" or "uncleanliness" left behind to "contaminate" or "defile" anyone, or to render them "unclean" or "impure" or "profane": I believe, in other words, that the authors were trying to depict **an ideal state of affairs in which human communication would be perfect**. All of the metaphorical "food" would be transmitted as "nutrients" from the "belly" to the "heart," and from there to the "mouth," so that it could "go forth" (or "proceed," or "flow") with complete purity, in the form of "rivers of living water" (symbolizing the Holy Spirit). And these "rivers of living water" that were emitted from the "heart" and thence the "mouth" (cf. Matthew 4:4) would in turn "water" the "tree of life," which would yield the very "food" that was capable of being "wholly digested," and that was completely free of any "waste matter" (or "husks," or "rinds") that would need to be expelled by a person through a process of esotericist interpretation—that is, through a process of "separating" or "sifting" of meanings.

In fact, it is quite possible that the only "food" that the inhabitants of the "new Jerusalem" were expected to "eat" would be a kind of "wine" made from the "fruit" of the "tree of life"; but this special kind of "wine" would be equivalent to metaphorical "water" (cf. Luke 22:18); in which case, this "new wine" might have been understood to correspond to the "ambrosia of the gods" or "nectar of the gods" found in ancient Greek myth—but also in ancient world myth more generally, in the form of "spiritual" beverages such as "mead" (or "honey"), the Indian *soma*, the Iranian *haoma*, and the "spiritual elixir" or "elixir of life" of Chinese and Western alchemy. According to the metaphorical "outer" terms of the allegory, the inhabitants of the "new Jerusalem" would, to put it in Jesus's terms, never again need to "go to the latrine." The "food" they ate would contain *nothing but nutrients*, and all of these nutrients would be used to fuel

"You are the light [*phōs*] of the world. A city sitting [or lying, or positioned, or situated: *keimai*] on top of a hill [or mountain: *oros*] cannot be hidden [*kryptō*].[45] Nor do men light a lamp and place it under a bushel, but on a lampstand, and it shines for all those in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they might see your good works and might glorify [or 'ascribe glory to': *doxazō*] your Father in the heavens." [Matthew 5:14-16.]

"Is a lamp brought in to be placed [more literally, 'does a lamp come to be placed'] under a bushel, or under a bed? Is it not so that it should be placed upon a lampstand? For nothing whatever is hidden [or secret: *kryptos*], except so that it should be

their *socially productive* speech and activity. The use of the Greek word *apo-didōmi* (which can mean "to pay off, to give back, to pay back, to restore") in connection with the "fruit" of the "tree of life" indeed seems to suggest that there was understood to be *a complete circulation of meaning and intent*, so that none of that which "went forth" from "the throne of God and of the Lamb"—located in the "inner parts" of every individual person—out into the "city" (i.e., society, or a "community of meaning") would ever be lost, or dissipated, or disregarded by others. It also suggests that inner intentions and meanings would become *fully manifested* in *outer* words and actions—as a result of which, people's intentions and meanings would thereby also become *purified*. In short, it seems to me that this whole symbolic scheme, and the ideal vision it is depicting, is once again implicitly pointing to the goal of an "elimination" of the esotericist arrangement in its entirety.

The hypothesis I am offering also receives some support from the fact that in Genesis 2:9, 2:16-17, 3:22, and Genesis chapters 2 and 3 generally, "the tree of life" is implicitly contrasted with "the tree of knowledge of good and evil [LXX: *ponéros*]"; and the "doubling" or "mixture of two elements" that one finds with "the tree of knowledge of good and evil" suggests that it, unlike the "tree of life," was understood to be the source of the kind of "food" that needed to be "separated out" in the "digestive process"—at least if a person did not want the "evil" elements of the mixture, that is, the "waste matter," to be retained in his "inner parts."

To return to Mark 7:14-23 (the passage concerning the ability of "foods" to make a person "unclean"), it is important to notice the difference between what Jesus says to "the crowd" or "the multitude" as a whole, and what he says to his "disciples" in particular. **When Jesus speaks to his "disciples" (*mathétés*) apart from the others, he offers a specifically *mental* or *psychological* interpretation of what he had previously told the crowd**, referring to "evil thoughts" and certain vicious character traits as "that which goes out of a person." The implication is thus being made that the "disciples" of Jesus were to give a *non-literal* interpretation to the *exact same* parables that "the crowd" had heard; it may have been precisely this that was deemed to *distinguish* the "disciples" from "the multitude." So it seems that a primary purpose of this passage (like others in the Gospels) was to *teach* the careful reader how to decode the language that was being used. When Jesus speaks to "the crowd" (i.e., "the vulgar") in the cited passage, I think the author's expectation was that many of them would have simply assumed that Jesus was talking about *ordinary*, *literal food* as "that which goes into a person"; and if so, they would have understood him to be referring to *ordinary*, *literal dung* as "that which goes out of a person." Moreover, if the typical member of "the crowd" was expected to understand ordinary, literal dung (and perhaps also other kinds of excrement and bodily discharges) to be that which made a person "unclean" (or "impure," or "common," or "profane") according to the "outer meaning" of this parable, and if a "disciple" was expected to understand the same parable in some *other* way, then a "disciple" would have had a *different* understanding of what "cleanliness" or "purity" *meant* than what a typical member of "the crowd" would have had. That in turn tends to imply that when Christians were told that "all foods are clean," such as in Romans 14:20, the "disciples" among the Christians would also have had a different understanding of what the word or idea of "food" was meant to have than the others did. For instance, if we were to suppose that a certain "kind of food" was understood to signify or represent "a system of esoteric symbolism transmitted by a particular religious tradition," or a particular "body of religious teachings," then to say that "all foods were clean" might have carried the "inner meaning" that religions other than Judaism should not automatically be assumed to be "unclean" unless and until their "inner meanings" had first been properly *discerned*.

manifested [*phaneroō*]; nor has anything become concealed [or hidden away, or secreted: *apo-kryphos*], except so that it should come (to be) manifest [or apparent, or clear, or known, or visible, or evident, or open: *phaneros*]." [Mark 4:21-22.]

"I have spoken these things to you in figures [or parables, or allegories: *paroimia*]; an hour [*hōra*] is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures [or parables, or allegories: *paroimia*], but instead I will proclaim to you **plainly** [or **openly**, or **forthrightly**: *parrésia*] concerning the Father."[46] [John 16:25.]

In addition, observe that both times that Jesus uses the Greek word *exōthen* in Mark 7:14-23, he does so in the course of relating the *exoteric* or "outer" version of the parable, first to the crowd, and then once again to his disciples; and both times that he uses the Greek word *esōthen*, he does so in the course of explaining, at least to some extent, the *esoteric* or "inner" meaning of that parable to his disciples (as signaled by the use of the phrase "Moreover, (Jesus) was saying"). And consider also that both times that he uses the word *esōthen*, meaning "inside" or "within," *he identifies the "inside" as the source of "evils." But he only does this when speaking to his "disciples," and __not__ when speaking to members of the "multitude" or "crowd."* In other words, I think one might infer that the Christian hostility toward religious esotericism was not meant to be widely publicized; and that in turn might suggest that the authors of the New Testament may have had some sort of "subversive" strategy in mind, according to which they would have been planning (perhaps unconsciously) to undermine or destroy esotericism "from within."

Furthermore, if being a "disciple [*mathétés*] of Jesus" had the general meaning of "someone who gives a mental (or 'spiritual') interpretation to the same parables given out to others," then that fact might be used to decode the meanings of other symbols. For example, in Matthew 10:42 Jesus says, "And whoever might give to one of these little ones only [*monon*] a cup of cold (water) [*psychros*] to drink, in the name of a disciple [*mathétés*] [or, 'a cup of cold (water) to drink, solely [*monon*] in the name of a disciple'], truly, I say to you, he shall in no way lose [or ruin, or destroy: *apollymi*] his reward." This might relate to the distinction between "water" and "wine" that I discuss later in the essay; perhaps the phrase "in the name of a disciple" was referring to a certain kind of interpretation given to the esoteric symbolism; and perhaps the understanding of the author was that this different interpretation would have the effect of "transforming" mere "water" (which would *in this particular case* be associated with *psyché*, or "soul," simply because of the pun involved) into "new wine" (which would *in this particular case* be associated with *pneuma*, or "spirit").

As another example of how this understanding of the term "disciple [*mathétés*] of Jesus" might be leveraged, consider Mark 8:34, which says, "And having invited [or summoned, or called to (him): *pros-kaleō*] the crowd [*ochlos*] (to join) his disciples [*mathétés*], he said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him disregard [or deny, or repudiate: *ap-arneomai*] himself, and let him take up his cross and follow me [or accompany me: *akoloutheō*]." Similarly, in Luke 14:27 Jesus says, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me is not able [or, 'has not the power': *ou dynatai*] to be my disciple [*mathétés*]." This suggests that a kind of "crucifixion" may have been understood to be necessary for *anyone* who would give a mental or "spiritual" interpretation to the symbols, parables, and figures of the Bible; and this "crucifixion" may have been understood to signify the notion of making a division between the "outer interpretation" and the "inner interpretation." This is an idea that I explore in more depth later in the essay.

As yet another example, Luke 14:33 says, "So therefore any one of you who does not put away [or renounce, or bid farewell to, or say adieu to; more literally, 'order off': *apo-tassō*] all those (things) that are in his own [*heautou*] possession [*hyparchō*], is not able [or, 'has not the power': *ou dynatai*] to be my disciple [*mathétés*]." This passage tends to support the hypothesis that I offer in Part II of the essay, that when the word *hyparxis* (which can mean "possessions, goods, property, wealth, substance, belongings") and the related word *hyparchō* (which can mean "to be in the possession of, to belong to") are used in Acts 2:45 and 4:32, respectively, the authors of the New Testament may have understood these words to be referring to "outer meanings" (or "fleshly meanings," or "carnal meanings," or "physical meanings"); or, alternatively, these "possessions" may have been understood to refer to *privately hoarded* "inner

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(Jesus) was teaching [*didaskō*] his disciples, and was saying to them, "The Son of Man [*anthrōpos*] is delivered [or given over, or transmitted, or betrayed: *para-didōmi*] into the hands [*cheir*] of men [*anthrōpos*], and they will kill him. And, (once) he has been killed, with the third day he will rise up [*an-istémi*]." **But they did not understand** [*a-gnoeō*] **the saying** [*rhéma*], **and they were afraid** [*phobeō*] **to ask him** [or, "fled from asking him"].[47] [Mark 9:31-32.]

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meanings." And the "proceeds" that the disciples received from "selling off" their former "possessions" may have been understood to signify the kind of "inner meanings" that were supposed to be "given to the needy," according to Acts 2:45 and Acts 4:34, as well as Matthew 19:21, in which Jesus says, "If you wish to be perfect [or complete, or fulfilled, or mature, or fully-grown (as opposed to being a 'little one'?): *teleios*], go away (and) sell [*pōleō*] all of your possessions [*hyparchonta*] and give to the poor [*ptōchos*], and you will have treasure in (the) heavens; and come, follow me [or accompany me: *akoloutheō*]."

[44] Perhaps they were understood to "go out in the latrine," as Mark 7:19 puts it.

[45] Consider that the author may have intended that this be read as a reference not only to the "new Jerusalem" (see Revelation 21:10), but also to "Babel"—especially if the "Tower of Babel" was visualized as being in the form of a pyramid or ziggurat, giving it the appearance of a "mountain," albeit an artificial one. (And a comparison of Revelation 18:21 with Matthew 21:21 and Mark 11:23 seems to support that hypothesis; as does Jeremiah 51:25, in which "Babel" or "Babylon" is described as a "corrupting mountain [LXX: *oros*].") If that reading is correct, then the sentence would probably represent a criticism of the attempt made by symbolic "Babel" to keep its teachings and meanings "hidden" (*kryptō*).

[46] Note that both the "Crucifixion" and the "fall of Babylon" are spoken of in the New Testament as taking place at a certain designated "hour" (*hōra*). See, for example, John 12:27 and Revelation 18:10.

[47] People's *fear of admitting* that they do not actually understand the meanings of the esoteric symbols (or fear that they might find out that the symbols were intended to mean something different from what they *want* them to mean) is, I think, one of the biggest reasons why esotericist religion has persisted so long; so it is interesting that the authors of the New Testament seem to have taken notice of this tendency themselves. Members of the Christian religion in particular often seem especially unwilling to admit this; and not only are they afraid to openly admit that they do not understand the meanings, they often cover up their uncertainty by adamantly insisting that they *do* understand them, and even that the meanings are "obvious." Mark 9:31-32 ought to be read to imply that the meaning of Jesus's saying in that passage is anything *but* obvious: It seems to be instructing the reader that the saying should not be taken at face value or read literally. But, since Jesus's saying in this passage basically encapsulates the standard (exoteric) narrative regarding the "death" of "Jesus"—which is at the core of the Christian religion—this means that those present-day Christians who avoid inquiring into esoteric meanings fall into the very category of "those afraid to ask." (Of course, my purpose in pointing out this fact is not to embarrass them into *starting* to ask; in certain respects, their failure to ask is a mark of their level-headedness and sensibleness; and I think the best choice for most people would simply be to get free of the whole business as quickly as possible.)

One of the inherent problems created by the nature of esoteric symbolism is that it is often very difficult (though not necessarily impossible) to convincingly prove that one of the more conventional or exoteric interpretations is *not* correct—especially when the more exaggerated an author makes one of his metaphors, the more some readers may be inclined to see it as evidence of God's power to work great miracles, in turn leading them to put even greater trust in what they perceive to be "the word of God." (And—if one assumes that the author did indeed mean to convey a metaphor to the reader in a particular instance, and was not trying to describe a miracle—this can be a very difficult logical circle to try to break someone out of; which again points to the danger created by an esotericist form of discourse.) Sometimes, a person who is sceptical of one of the more conventional interpretations might not be able to base his disagreement on anything more than his own gut feelings. There have been many times when I have said to myself regarding a particular parable, "I don't know what this parable means; all I know is that it couldn't possibly

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"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!—because you are shutting up [*kleiō*] the kingdom of heaven before men; **for you neither enter (yourselves)**, nor do you even allow those who are entering to enter (unhindered)."[48] [Matthew 23:13.]

"The wind [or spirit, or breath: *pneuma*] blows [*pneō*] where it wills [*thelō*], and you hear [*akouō*] its sound [or voice, or speech, or language: *phōné*], but without having seen [or known, or perceived: *eidō*] where it comes from and where it goes; thus (it) is (with) everyone [or everything: *pas*] that has been born of [or has proceeded out of, or issued from: *gennaō*] the Spirit [*pneuma*]." Nicodemus answered and said to (Jesus), "In what way are such persons [or 'such things': *tauta*] able [or, 'How do these persons [or things] have the power': *dynamai*] to come into being [or 'be born': *ginomai*]?" Jesus replied to him (by) saying, **"You are the teacher [*didaskalos*] of Israel, and you do not know** [or understand: **_ginōskō_**] **these things** [or 'these persons': *tauta*]**?"**[49] [John 3:8-10.]

I included the emphases in the last two passages for the purpose of indicating that the author seems to be calling attention (consciously or unconsciously) to the fact that an esotericist system of religion makes *everyone* in a society more ignorant, even—perhaps especially—the members of the religious elite who enthusiastically promote and maintain the system.

<u>An example of possible "encoded" meanings in the New Testament, and of how one might go about "decrypting" them using a process of cross-referencing</u>

The chapter of 1 Corinthians 14 pertains in general to the subject of "speaking in tongues." In the attempt to understand that chapter, I think it may be useful to think of "speaking in tongues" as referring to a type of communication that uses a heavily symbolic or metaphorical "language" not ordinarily used or understood by others.[50] Paul exhorts the members of the Corinthian church to take an interest in making sure that all of the other church members actually understand their *meanings* when they express themselves:

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have been intended to mean *that*." In many cases, this must be a person's first step toward gaining a more accurate understanding of the intended meaning of the parable or allegory.

[48] Compare the "shutting up" (*kleiō*) of the "kingdom of heaven" spoken of in this passage to the fact that in Revelation 21:25 it is said that the "gates" (*pylōn*) of the "new Jerusalem" (which, according to Revelation 21:2, was seen "coming down out of heaven from God") would never be "shut" (or "closed," or "locked": *kleiō*).

[49] Compare the Greek words used in this passage to those used in Luke 23:46 (and note in particular its use of the Greek words *phōné*, *pneuma*, and *ek-pneō*, derived from *pneō*); then compare both of these passages to Mark 9:31-32, which I quoted just above in the main text. I think there may be a connection to be made between the symbol of the "Crucifixion" and the notion of "rebirth" or "being born of the Spirit" as Jesus is speaking of it here in John 3:8-10.

[50] This might include both a private esoteric religious language and what, in the case of schizophrenics, is sometimes known as a "word salad." Paul might have also meant to refer to a string of syllables, none of which have meaning even when taken individually, except perhaps to the person using them; and even then the syllables would not betoken any "meaning" that one would associate with a clear statement or proposition, but would be more like the expression of a feeling, or of a thought that was still only semi-formed.

[I]f by means of [or "through": *dia*] the tongue [*glōssa*] you do not utter [more literally, "give": *didōmi*] meaningful [more literally, "well-marked": *eu-sémos*, related to the words *séma* and *sémeion*, both of which can mean "sign" or "mark"] speech [or discourse: *logos*], how will it be known [or understood: *ginōskō*] what is being spoken [*laleō*]? For you will be speaking [*laleō*] into the air [*aér*]. It so happens that there are a great many kinds [*genos*] of language [or speech, or "sound": *phōné*] in the world, and none is soundless [or "lacking in (mere) sound": *a-phōnos*]; therefore, **if I do not know the meaning** [more literally, "power," or "force": ***dynamis***] **of the sound** [or language, or speech: *phōné*], I will be a foreigner [more literally, "barbarian": *barbaros*] to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner [*barbaros*] to me.[51] [1 Corinthians 14:9-11.]

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[51] In other words, it is possible that one might think of Paul as essentially attempting to teach people with schizophrenic tendencies—namely, the Corinthian church members—to be "less schizophrenic," and to become more cognizant of other people's intended meanings and states of mind, and of the way in which one's words would likely be understood by others—so that genuine and effective *communication* would be able to take place. The fact that Paul even bothers to encourage the church members not to speak to each other in tongues (at least not without interpretation) indicates that a person who was "speaking in tongues" was *not* understood to be acting (or, at least, to be acting *solely*) as a passive vessel for some outside force. A person's "speaking in tongues" must have been seen to be the result of his having made a choice to follow a certain inclination: one which Paul believed ought to be resisted when in public gatherings. That is not necessarily to say that Paul did not have schizophrenic tendencies of his own; only that he apparently had at least some recognition of the problems they potentially caused, and was hoping to see the creation of a state of affairs in which people would be able to communicate their intended meanings to each other with greater success.

  I acknowledge that the suggestion that I would implicitly be making below in the main text, that Paul may have been using esoteric symbolism (whether deliberately or not) in the course of encouraging others to be "less schizophrenic," seems somewhat contradictory; but inconsistency on Paul's part would not surprise me, given that Paul has never impressed me as an especially logical or coherent thinker based on his writings (although this is certainly not to say that his writings do not contain any valuable ideas or ways of thinking). My sense is that there were strongly conflicting tendencies at work within him that he was unable to resolve.

  It should also be noted that in this particular instance, Paul may have been using the symbolic numbers without giving any *conscious* thought to what the original sources of those symbolic numbers were in his own mind, and so perhaps would not have regarded what he was saying as being especially "cryptic"; but even then, the use of these numbers might still be significant in terms of what it would reveal about certain symbolic associations that Paul may have been making solely as a result of unconscious mental processes.

  [However, as an aside, I have to wonder about the extent to which the same could be said of any person in a state of psychosis: A psychotic person is not necessarily *trying* to sound "cryptic" to others, even if that is how his utterances end up being perceived by others. In fact, the reason *why* they sound "cryptic" to others appears to be precisely that the psychotic person has proved *unable* to make his private thinking more "publicly conscious" than it is, so that others do not know why he uses the metaphors and symbols he uses, or in some cases, that he is even using them—since they are often not *conventional* metaphors and symbols, and so may be finding their source more in the person's own *individual* unconscious mind than in the society's *collective* unconscious mind, as it is reflected in the society's shared language (which may necessitate that the psychotic person do even more "making conscious" than the average member of society must do if he wishes to be understood by others). But it is difficult for someone living at the present time to know just how "conventional" *in their own time* the symbols, metaphors, and allusions were that the authors of the New Testament were using. It might be stated as general rule that the less "conventional" the use of a particular symbol or metaphor is at a particular time and place (especially when *elaborate combinations* of them are being generated), the more likely it becomes that its use ought to be regarded as "psychotic."]

Just a few verses later, Paul writes,

> I express (my) thanks [*eu-charisteō*] to God more than any of you (do) (by) speaking [*laleō*] in tongues [*glōssa*]; but in church [or a gathering of people: *ekklésia*] I choose rather to speak [*laleō*] **five** words [*logos*] with my mind [*nous*], so that I might instruct [more literally, "sound down upon": *kat-écheō*] others, than **ten thousand** [or myriad, or innumerable: *myrios*] words [*logos*] in a tongue [*glōssa*].[52] [1 Corinthians 14:18-19.]

As with all numbers in the Bible, a careful reader must at least entertain the possibility that the numbers "five" and "ten thousand" as they are used in this last passage were meant to have symbolic significance. Moreover, it is conceivable that one might be able to cross-reference this use of the (possibly) symbolic numbers "five" and "ten thousand" with uses of the same numbers in passages from the Old Testament, in an attempt to better understand the intended meanings of the symbols as they are used in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. For example, with regard to the symbolic number "ten thousand":

> I do not fear **ten thousands** of [or myriad, or innumerable, or **a multitude** of: *rebabah*; LXX: *myrias*, a variant of *myrios*] people who have set themselves against me all around. [Psalm 3:6.]

> A thousand [*eleph*; LXX: *chilias*] shall fall [*naphal*; LXX: *peseitai*, a form of *piptō*] at your side, **ten thousand** [*rebabah*; LXX: *myrias*] at your right hand; but (danger) will not come near you. [Psalm 91:7.]

One might reasonably argue that, since the word "ten thousand" seems to have been commonly used in both the ancient Hebrew and Greek cultures to generally convey the idea of "a lot," in a way similar to the way in which people of our time might say "a million," Paul's use of the word is not necessarily of great significance. But it strikes me as harder to explain why Paul would choose to refer to the number "five" in particular. It is possible that an answer to that question might be found by examining the Bible's account of the contest between David and Goliath the Philistine:

> Then (David) took his staff in his hand, and chose **five** smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a pouch, his shepherd's bag. And, sling in hand, he approached the Philistine. … And David reached his hand into his bag and took out a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; **the stone sank into his forehead** [or, "was planted in his forehead"], and he **fell** [*naphal*; LXX: *piptō*] **on his face** [LXX: *epi prosōpon autou*] to the ground [or earth: *erets*; LXX: *gé*]. [1 Samuel 17:40,49.]

The fact that "the stone sank into the forehead" of Goliath suggests the possibility that one of Paul's "five words spoken with the mind"—signifying, perhaps, new *meanings*

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[52] Notice, incidentally, that Paul is here associating the words—and hence the ideas—of "meaning" and "the mind" (*nous*); the symbol of the "tongue" (*glōssa*) considered *by itself* seems to be associated with "meaninglessness."

given to the symbolism—may have actually been understood to have "penetrated" the mind of the "giant" Goliath (who was perhaps meant to represent the prototypical "literalist" or "materialist"[53]); and, in so doing, it "killed" him: in other words, perhaps, it led him to reconceptualize his entire inner world and begin again with a new one. That such an episode or general motif may indeed have been what Paul was thinking of when he spoke of the "five words spoken with the mind" is made somewhat more likely by the fact that later in the same chapter Paul writes,

> [I]f all should prophesy [*prophéteuō*] ["prophesy," that is, *instead of* "speaking in tongues"], and an unbeliever [*a-pistos*] or an uninstructed person [or "a private person": *idiōtés*] should enter [*eis-erchomai*], he is convicted [or convinced, or rebuked: *elegchō*][54] by all, he is scrutinized [*ana-krinō*] by all [meaning, in other words, that the outsider is being led to *self*-scrutiny or *self*-examination by all], the secrets [*kryptos*] of his heart [*kardia*] become exposed [or disclosed, or manifest, or revealed: *phaneros*], and so, **having fallen** [*piptō*] **on (his) face** [*epi prosōpon*], he will worship God and declare [or proclaim, or announce: *ap-aggellō*] that God is really among [*en*] you.[55] [1 Corinthians 14:24-25.]

So the symbol or metaphor of "falling on one's face" is here again repeated, and in such a way that both passages read together suggest that the figure of speech was perhaps being used with a "technical" meaning in mind that would not have been obvious to the ordinary, uninstructed reader, but may have been recognized by readers who had already been "initiated" to some extent. What I think Paul may have been trying to suggest was that the "unbelievers" or "uninstructed persons" were to be thought of as "Philistines" who were in need of "slaying"—in other words, perhaps, in need of "being converted to a different way of thinking." Moreover, this would apparently have occurred by means of the "secrets" or "hidden things" (*kryptos*) of the "heart" (*kardia*)—which may have been understood to correspond, at least in part, to "inner meanings"—being made revealed (or made exposed, or made to emerge) from within the "outer meanings"; or, to put it another way, from within the *minds* of those persons who had been *embracing* the "outer meanings"; and these outer meanings or outer persons would have been symbolized by or associated with the "giant" (and, more specifically, the "forehead" or "face" of the "giant").[56] But if the number "five" had in fact been intended to convey this kind of

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[53] I base this suggestion on Plato's identification of "giants" with "philosophical materialists," which I discuss in Part II of the essay.

[54] Note the use of the same Greek word *elegchō*, meaning "to accuse, to rebuke, to convict, to expose," in the quotation from Ezekiel 3:35-27 (LXX) that I include in the final footnote of the next section.

[55] Compare 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 to Jeremiah 33:3 (which I quote below in the main text), focusing in particular on the use in the first passage of the Greek words *kryptos*, meaning "a secret, a hidden thing," and *ap-aggellō*, meaning "to declare, to proclaim, to announce."

[56] The English word "giant" is derived from the Greek word *gigantes*, which is probably originally derived from the word *gé-genés*, meaning "earth-born." So if the ancient Hebrews had a conception of a "giant" that was similar to that of the ancient Greeks, then consider that by Goliath's "falling on his face to the ground [or earth: *erets*; LXX: **gé**]," he was in a sense "returning" to the "earth" from which he had originally been "born." This is reminiscent of Genesis 3:19, in which the Lord tells Adam just prior to his expulsion from the Garden of Eden that he would have to "return to the ground [or earth: *adamah*; LXX: **gé**], for out of it you were taken." And if a person was able to "declare that God was really among" an assembly of Christians, as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 14:24-25, then presumably such a person had been metaphorically returned to the symbolic "Garden of Eden." (Compare Genesis 3:8-10.)

symbolic significance to at least some of the members of Paul's audience, then this would make it more likely that Paul likewise intended that the number "ten thousand" would convey some kind of symbolic significance as well, so that there would be symmetry between the two numbers. And such a possibility is made still more likely by the fact that Psalm 3:6—which, again, says, "I do not fear ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around"—is spoken in the voice of "David" (although not in the context of his slaying of Goliath).[57]

<u>"Imprisonment" or "bondage" in the Bible understood as a metaphor signifying the inability to clearly communicate one's meaning</u>

In his epistles, the apostle Paul repeatedly makes reference to "bonds," or "chains," or "fetters," or "imprisonment." I believe he likely intended words such as these to be understood by the reader as metaphors, used for the purpose of reminding the reader that what he was writing should not be taken completely at face value. Furthermore, there are striking similarities between the way of thinking that I believe is being expressed in Paul's writings and in other Biblical writings, and certain ways of thinking that have sometimes been found to exist in schizophrenic persons.

In Ephesians 6:18-20, Paul writes,

Keep vigilant with all perseverance, and (make) supplication for all of the saints, and also for me, that **utterance** [or meaning, or (the) word, or (the) message: *logos*] may be given to me in (the) **opening** [*anoixis*] of my **mouth** [*stoma*] **with forthrightness** [or plainness, or candor, or openness, or frankness, or boldness, or freedom, or confidence, or courage: *parrésia*], **to make known** [*gnōrizō*] **the mystery** [or secret doctrine, or secret teaching, or hidden meaning, or inner meaning: *mystérion*] **of the gospel** [or good message, or good news: *eu-aggelion*], for the sake of [*hyper*] which [*hou*, referring to "the mystery of the gospel"] I am an ambassador [or "I am an elder": *presbeuō*] **in chains** [or "in bonds," or "in bondage"; more literally, "in a chain": *en halysei*]; so **that in it** [that is, "in making known the mystery"] **I might speak freely** [or speak forthrightly, or speak plainly, or speak frankly, or speak candidly, or speak openly, or speak boldly, or speak confidently, or speak courageously: *parrésiazomai*, related to the noun *parrésia*], **as I ought** [*dei*] **to speak** [or communicate: *laleō*].

Notice the juxtaposition of the symbol of "chains" or "bondage," on the one hand, and the idea of speaking "freely" or "without restriction," on the other.

There are close parallels between this passage and Colossians 4:3-4, in which Paul writes,

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[57] However, even if Paul did not in fact intend that these numbers be understood as having symbolic significance in this *particular* instance, I hope the reader can see how valuable the general cross-referencing method I have illustrated might potentially prove to be in attempts to "decipher" the cryptic symbolism of the Bible. And throughout this chapter I will be presenting additional examples of the use of the method that should make its value still more apparent.

[P]ray for us also, so that God might **open** [*anoigō*] to us **a door** [*thyra*] for the **utterance** [or the meaning, or the message, or the word: *logos*], **to speak** [or communicate: *laleō*] **the mystery** [or secret doctrine, or secret teaching, or hidden meaning, or inner meaning: *mystérion*] **of Christ**—also on account of [or because of: *dia*] which [*ho*, referring to the word *mystérion*, meaning "mystery"] I have been **bound** [or imprisoned, or hindered, or restricted, or compelled, or obligated, or constrained: *deō*]—so **that I might make it** [that is, "the mystery"] **clear** [or expose it to view, or reveal it, or make it public, or make it plain, or make it apparent, or make it understood: *phaneroō*], **as I ought** [*dei*] **to speak** [or communicate: *laleō*].

The Greek word *anoixis*, meaning "opening," is the noun form of the verb *anoigō*, meaning "to open."[58] So a comparison of the two passages suggests that the "opening" of Paul's "mouth" spoken of in Ephesians 6:18-20 should be regarded as equivalent to the "opening of a door" spoken of in Colossians 4:3-4; and so the latter passage seems to indicate that whether or not Paul would be able to "open his mouth" or "speak openly" would (since the matter was "in God's hands," so to speak, while Paul's "hands were tied") depend partly upon whether or not the *opportunity* was available to him to do so— that is to say, whether or not a particular person happened to be *receptive to* the "mystery" (or "secret teaching," or "hidden meaning," or "inner meaning": *mystérion*) that Paul would have wanted to share with him.[59]

Also, a close look at the language used in Colossians 4:3-4 reveals that Paul is saying that it was because of the "mystery" or "inner meaning" (*mystérion*) contained in the gospel of Christ—and *not* necessarily because of the *actual, literal, verbal utterance* of that "mystery" or "inner meaning"—or of any meaning, for that matter—that he had been "bound" (*deō*). And that in turn suggests that the "imprisonment" or "restriction" of which he speaks was not due to external forces or factors (for example, the Roman authorities)—at least, it was not due *directly* to external forces or factors. In other words, it would have been Paul who was *restricting himself* in response to the existence of those external forces or factors. According to this interpretation, Paul would have preferred not to *have to* restrain himself from speaking freely and openly; but, so long as those external forces or factors existed, he felt that he had no real choice. (Or, perhaps, the "restriction" was internal but involuntary.)

If the interpretation that I am offering is correct, then it would cast doubt upon the correctness of the way in which Christians have traditionally read passages from the New Testament such as these in which Paul speaks of his having been "imprisoned" or "bound" or "fettered"—namely, in such a way that Paul is understood to be referring to his literal imprisonment by Roman authorities.[60] And that in turn raises the possibility

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[58] Actually, it means "I open," but again, whenever I give the definitions of Greek verbs, I am giving the Greek word in the first-person singular present active indicative form, but its English equivalent in the infinitive form.

[59] I think one might legitimately think of this "mystery" or "hidden meaning" or "inner meaning" as an essentially *psychological understanding* of some kind, one that the authors of the New Testament were assuming could be perceived only by those who had *already* had certain requisite experiences and insights *on their own*.

[60] Incidentally, the traditional Christian claim that Paul was being imprisoned by Roman authorities (and, indeed, was eventually executed by them) is actually quite ludicrous on its face. If Paul was being literally imprisoned by the Romans, it would have been because he was organizing an illegal conspiracy deemed to be subversive of the Roman Empire—which makes it extremely difficult to believe that his alleged Roman

that Christians over the centuries have misunderstood the meaning of their own scriptures at a very basic level.

The interpretation that I offer is supported by Paul's use of the Greek word *deō* in Colossians 4:3-4, which, according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, generally means "to bind, to fetter, to tie, to shackle, to imprison, to fasten"; but it also corresponds to "a Chaldean and rabbinical idiom" that has the meaning "to forbid, to prohibit, to declare to be illicit." The Greek word *deō* is the word that the translators of the ancient Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament would usually use to translate the Hebrew word *asar*, which has a similar range of meanings of "to bind, to tie, to imprison, to hold, to fasten"; and, according to the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, this Hebrew word *asar* can be "figurative of obligation of oath or vow." Similarly, according to Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, *asar* can mean "to bind a bond, or prohibition upon oneself, i.e. to bind oneself with a vow of abstinence, promising to abstain from certain things otherwise permitted." These "things" may have been understood by Paul and certain other Christian Jews to include the free and open communication of certain types of knowledge, or of certain beliefs, or ideas, or thoughts.[61]

These lexical definitions increase the likelihood that it was *self*-restraint, or *self*-censorship, or else some difficulty in successfully conveying the meaning that Paul wished to convey (causing him to be "tongue-tied"), and not *direct, external, forcible* restaint, that was the cause of Paul's *figurative* "imprisonment" or "bondage." Thus, when in the final verse of his epistle to the Colossians (Colossians 4:18), Paul concludes the epistle by writing, "Remember my fetters [or bonds, or bindings, or shackles: *desmos*, derived from *deō*, meaning 'to bind']," I think it would be reasonable to surmise that he meant for this to be read as something like, "Do not forget that I am still unable to speak completely freely and openly and clearly"—for whatever reason—"so that my true meaning, or full meaning, must continue to be partially veiled for the time being."[62]

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jailors would have permitted him to continue organizing that very conspiracy from his prison by receiving visitors and by writing epistles to the various Christian churches (such as his epistle to the Philippian church).

[61] Note, incidentally, that to the extent that Paul considered himself to be a "prisoner," he may have considered himself to be—at least to some extent—still a "child of Hagar," according to the analogy that Paul sets forth in Galatians 4:22-31 (especially verse 25), in which being a metaphorical "child of Hagar" is there compared to "being in bondage" or "being enslaved" (Greek *douleuō*, which is probably derived from *deō*, which again means "to bind, to fetter, to tie").

Moreover, it is possible that all of the other apostles saw themselves in the same way, since in Matthew 25:35-36 Jesus speaks of the six conditions of "hunger," "thirst," "estrangement," "nakedness," "weakness" (or "sickness": *astheneō*), and "imprisonment" as accompanying one another, while in 1 Corinthians 4:9-13 Paul speaks of the apostles as suffering the five conditions of "hunger," "thirst," "homelessness," "nakedness," and "weakness" (or "sickness": *asthenés*). So the suffering of *figurative* "imprisonment" (or "enslavement," or "bondage") by the apostles may have been understood to accompany the five other hardships.

[62] Also consider the use in Acts 26:24-29 of the Greek word *desmos*, which again means "bond, binding, fetter, shackle."

An interpretation of the "bondage" symbolism such as the one that I offer in the main text is also supported by Bible passages such as the Greek Septuagint translation of Ezekiel 3:24-27—which contains imagery that is highly reminiscent of the two passages from Paul's epistles that I quoted in the main text: "And (the) Spirit [*pneuma*] (of the Lord) came [*erchomai*] upon me and set [*histémi*] me on my feet, and spoke [*laleō*] to me, and said [or uttered: *legō*, from which is derived the word *logos*, meaning 'utterance, meaning, message, word'] to me, 'Go in [*eis-erchomai*], and be shut up [or shut in, or confined within, or locked up, or closed in: *eg-kleiō*, derived from *kleiō*, meaning "to shut, to close, to lock"] in the inner parts

The equivalence of "Babel" and "Babylon" as symbols representing religious esotericism regarded as a type of system (as indicated by the association between "Babel" and the idea of a "confusing of language")

The famous story of the "Tower of Babel" related in Genesis 11:1-9 is actually, I believe, a mythical account of the origins of the esotericist religious system:[63]

[or center, or midst, or middle: *mesos*] of your house [*oikos*]. And you, son of man, behold [or perceive; or, more figuratively, "understand": *idou*], **bonds** [or fetters, or bindings: *desmos*, derived from **_deō_**] have been put [*didōmi*] upon you, and they will **bind** [**_deō_**; Hebrew: *asar*] you in them, and by no means shall you go out [*ex-erchomai*] from within [or "the midst of," or "the center of": *mesos*] them. And I will **tie together** [*syn-deō*, derived from **_deō_**] your tongue [*glōssa*] with your throat [*larygx*; the Hebrew Masoretic text instead has "mouth," *chek*], and you will become **mute** [**_apo-kōphoomai_**], and you will not be to them as a man who rebukes [or convicts, or exposes, or condemns, or reprimands, or accuses: *elegchō*], for it is a rebellious [or contumacious, or provoking, or embittering, or exasperating: *para-pikrainō*] house [*oikos*]. And in my speaking [*laleō*] to you, I will **open** [*anoigō*] your **mouth** [*stoma*], and you will say [*ereō*] to them, "Thus says [or utters: *legō*, from which is derived the word *logos*, meaning "utterance, meaning, message, word"] (the) Lord, (the) Lord." The one who hears [*akouō*], let him hear [*akouō*], and the one who disobeys [*apeitheō*], let him disobey [*apeitheō*]—for it is a rebellious house.'"

First, notice that the "bonds" (or "fetters," or "bindings": *desmos*) spoken of in this passage pertain either to the content of the prophet's *speech*, or to the way in which others *interpret* that speech—and *not* to any *physical* "bonds." This increases the likelihood that when Paul was speaking of his "bondage," he *also* did not intend to refer to *physical* "bonds."

Second, notice that the "bonds" (or "fetters," or "bindings": *desmos*) are being *identified with* the "house" in which the prophet has been "confined" or "locked up" (*eg-kleiō*), and from which he is not allowed to "go out" (*ex-erchomai*). The primary conceptual distinction seems to be one between the "inner parts" of that "house," and the "outer parts" of that same "house." The prophet is in a position in which he must try to find some way to *get his message out* while still being trapped *inside* (or "in the center of," or "in the middle of": *mesos*) the "house." It is quite possible that this was the same "existential position" that Paul felt himself to be in. It is also the same "existential position" that schizophrenic persons are sometimes described as being in.

Third, consider how Ezekiel 3:24-27 seems to encapsulate the entire rationale for esoteric communication, which is that the failure to understand the intended meaning of an esotericist's deliberately cryptic, ambiguous, heavily metaphorical, and obscurely allusive discourse is the *moral fault* of the person who fails to understand; the esotericist does not consider himself to be morally culpable for being misleading or confusing (at least, not wholly so). The conception seems to be that for persons who do not *want* to understand what the esotericist is "really" saying, his speech will be "bound" or "closed" or "shut" or "locked"; but for persons who are open to the possibility of *self*-rebuke or *self*-condemnation, his speech will be "opened up" or "loosened" or "released" or "unlocked." And when the esotericist finally encounters someone who is receptive to what he is "really" saying, or what he is "really" getting at, it is as if he were escaping from his "imprisonment" or "house arrest"—even if only briefly.

This way of understanding Ezekiel 3:24-27 is very similar to the way in which the communication patterns of schizophrenics are characterized by Gregory Bateson, Don D. Jackson, Jay Haley, and John Weakland, in their paper, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," from which I quote a bit more extensively in Chapter 5 of the essay. Consider in particular the following excerpts from that paper: "The peculiarity of the schizophrenic is not that he uses metaphors, but that he uses *unlabeled* metaphors. … **The convenient thing about a metaphor is that it leaves it up to the therapist (or mother) to see an accusation in the statement if he chooses, or to ignore it if he chooses**." (The second emphasis is mine.)

With this passage in mind, again consider Ezekiel 3:26-27 (LXX), in which the Spirit says to the prophet, "[Y]ou will become mute, and you will not be to them as a man who rebukes [or convicts, or exposes, or

And all [*kol*] the earth [or land: *erets*; LXX: *gé*] was of a single [or united: *echad*; LXX: *hen*, a form of *heis*] language [more literally, "lip" or "edge": *saphah*; LXX: *cheilos*, in the singular number][64] and of a single [or united: *echad*; LXX: *mia*, a form of *heis*] speech [or, "a single discourse," or "a single account," or "a single message," or "words (that were) single": *dabarim*, the plural of *dabar*, which can mean "word"; LXX: *phōné*].[65] And it came about in their moving from [some translations have "to" instead of "from"] the east [or "early times," or "ancient times": *qedem*; LXX: *anatolé*, derived from *ana-tellō*, which means "to rise up" (as with the sun)] that they found [or discovered, or happened upon: *matsa*; LXX: *heuriskō*] a valley [or a plain; more literally, "a split," or "a cleaving," or "a division," or "an opening," or "a

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condemns, or reprimands, or **accuses**: *elegchō*], for it is a rebellious [or contumacious, or provoking, or embittering, or exasperating (or perhaps, in more modern lingo, 'crazy-making'?): *para-pikrainō*] house. And in my speaking to you, I will open [*anoigō*] your mouth [*stoma*], and you will say to them, 'Thus says (the) Lord, (the) Lord.' **The one who hears, let him hear, and the one who disobeys, let him disobey**— for it is a rebellious house."

It may be that a similar sentiment is also being expressed in Revelation 22:10-11: "And (the angel) said to me, 'Do not seal [*sphragizō*] the words [*logos*] of the prophecy [*prophéteia*] of this book, for the time is near [or at hand: *eggys* (or *engys*)]. The one who is unrighteous, let him still be unrighteous, and the one who is filthy, let him still be filthy; and the one who (is) righteous, let him still practice righteousness, and the one who is holy, let him still be holy.'"

It follows from what I wrote above that with regard to both the "opening of the prophet's mouth" of Ezekiel 3:24-27 (LXX), and the "not sealing of the words of prophecy" of Revelation 22:10-11, the idea of "openness" in either case should be understood as being only *relative* in nature. The metaphorical "opening of mouths" or "opening of words" still does not constitute any kind of *full* "opening"; it apparently just signifies that a listener has learned how to "hear" in the "language" of esoteric communication, which uses the supposedly "weighty words"—i.e., "meaningful words" or "portentous words"—of cryptic "prophecy," as opposed to the (relatively) "meaningless words" of (relatively) incomprehensible "tongues." (Cf. 1 Corinthians 14:4.) We still have not yet arrived at what people would ordinarily regard as completely plain and forthright speech.

I think it would be reasonable to suppose that Paul may have been thinking along lines similar to those of these other esotericist authors when, in Ephesians 6:18-20 and Colossians 4:3-4 (the passages quoted in the main text), he speaks of "the opening of his mouth." It may at first seem difficult to reconcile such a suggestion with the ideas that Paul expresses in those passages, namely, that of "speaking forthrightly" (or "speaking frankly," or "speaking openly," or "speaking plainly": *parrésiazomai*), and that of "making something clear" (or "making something plain," or "making something understood": *phaneroō*). I think the best way to reconcile the apparent discrepancy would be to suppose that Paul—like the other authors— probably expected the recipient of his allegedly "open" or "plain" or "clear" communication to "meet him halfway," so to speak, so that even when Paul *thought of* himself as "speaking openly" or "speaking plainly" or "speaking clearly," the speech would still not have been "open" or "plain" or "clear" to *all* (or even to most) recipients of that communication—and, moreover, Paul, just like the other esotericist authors, would have been well aware of that fact.

Fourth and finally, in connection with Ezekiel 3:24-27, again consider what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14:19: "[I]n church [or, in a gathering of people: *ekklésia*] I choose rather to speak five words with my mind, so that I might instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue [*glōssa*]." As I mentioned in an earlier footnote, the symbol of the "tongue" (*glōssa*) taken by itself seems to have signified the idea of "meaninglessness" for Paul. The symbolic image found in Ezekiel 3:24-27 (LXX) of the "tying of the tongue (*glōssa*) together with the throat (or with 'the mouth,' in the Hebrew Masoretic version)," which results in the speaker "becoming mute" (or "becoming deaf": **apo-kōphoomai**), may have been understood to have more or less the same significance: namely, making the speaker's communication effectively *meaningless* to "the herd" (or, and even more likely I think, meaningless to *everybody* else, whether or not they were perceived to be members of "the herd"—that is, until the communication became "opened" to the relatively select few). Thus the symbolic idea of "muteness" might perhaps have been associated with the more conceptual idea of "meaninglessness" as a general matter. If correct, that might in turn shed light on

breach": *biqah*, derived from *baqa*, meaning "to split, to break open"; LXX: *pedion*] in the land [*erets*; LXX: *gé*] of Shinar; and they dwelt [or settled, or "sat": *yashab*; LXX: *kat-oikeō*] there. And they said, (each) man [*ish*; LXX: *anthrōpos*] to his neighbor [or companion, or 'one who is near': *rea*; LXX: *plésion*], "Come, let us make bricks [more literally, 'make white (things),' or 'make white (things) whiter,' or 'whiten white (things)': *laban* and *lebenah*], and burn [or bake, or scorch: *saraph*; LXX: *optaō*] them thoroughly [LXX: *pyri*, meaning 'in fire']." And brick [or "the white (thing)": *lebenah*; LXX: *plinthos*] was to them for stone [*eben*; LXX: *lithos*], and asphalt [or tar, or bitumen: *chemar*; LXX: *asphaltos*][66] was to them for mortar [or cement, or clay: *chomer*; LXX: *pélos*]. And they said, "Come, let us build [*banah*;

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what was meant to be signified by the descriptions found in the Gospels of Jesus's healings of "deaf" and "mute" persons (***kōphos***, from which the verb ***apo-kōphoomai*** is derived; *kōphos* more literally means "blunt" or "dull"—as opposed to "sharp," or "distinct," or "incisive," or "cutting"); see, for example, Mark 7:32-37. [But consider that what an esotericist would have considered to be "incisive" or "cutting" speech might well have still been *cryptic* speech, in which case the perceived problem with "bluntness" or "dullness" in a person's communication would *not* have been "lack of distinctness," in the sense of "lack of clarity" or "lack of forthrightness" (except according to a more unconscious or indirect manner of thinking). In fact, I get the sense that esotericists sometimes regard "blunt speech" (or "plain speech," or "prosaic speech") with something verging on contempt, viewing it as indicative of a lack of "wit" and "cleverness," and as committing what some of them seem to perceive to be the ultimate sin of "dullness."]

   In support of my suggestion that the idea of "muteness" may have been associated with the idea of "meaninglessness" in the minds of the authors of the New Testament, consider that the Greek word ***kōphos*** —which, again, can mean "mute" (or "dumb," in either sense of that word) as well as "blunt, dull"—can, according to the Liddell-Scott-Jones lexicon, also have the more figurative meanings of "unmeaning," as well as "senseless, obscure."

   But the idea of "unmeaning" is an ambiguous one, since there is one sense in which cryptic or "poetic" speech can be regarded as being *more* meaningful than "prosaic" speech, since there is a greater variety of *potential* meanings to be found in it (with such "*potential* meanings" being related to the idea of "*private* meanings"); and there is another sense in which it can be regarded as being *less* meaningful, because it is more difficult to determine the author's *intended* meanings (with these being related to "*public* meanings"—at least ideally and when esotericist deception is not being practiced). [Note that it seems to follow from this that the more clear an author is *in his own mind* about what he intends to say, the more difficult it becomes for readers to extract a wide variety of "potential meanings" or "personal meanings" or "private meanings" from his writings. A *dispersal* or *dispersion* of received meaning is thus partly the result of *unfocused intention* in the mind of an author—by which I do not mean to suggest that this is always and necessarily something bad when found outside the context of *authoritative* religious writings.]

   I think it is due to this *second* sense of "unmeaning" or "lacking meaning" that the word *kōphos* would have *sometimes* conveyed the meaning of "senseless, obscure" to Greek-speakers; but that is *not necessarily* the meaning that would have come to the minds of the authors of the New Testament when they gave thought to the idea of communication that was "unmeaning" or "lacking meaning"—at least, not at a more conscious level of their thinking. The fact that the lexicon says that *kōphos* can also have the meaning of "obtuse, dumb" is, I think, indicative of the *first* sense of the idea of "unmeaning" or "lacking meaning," that is to say, the sense of "lacking weight" in one's speech or one's ability to apprehend meaning in the speech of others; and I think it is likely that this was—at least in part—the sense in which the word *kōphos* was understood by the authors of the New Testament when they used it and saw it being used.

[63] One reason to think that the account given in Genesis 11:1-9 of the building of "Babel" and the "confusing of language [Hebrew *saphah*]" was meant to be read as describing the birth of *an esotericist form* of language and religion, and not necessarily the splitting up of a single ordinary or conventional language into a multiplicity of ordinary or conventional languages, is that Genesis 10:5, 10:20, and 10:31 *already* tell of various "families" or "clans" (*mishpachah*) spreading out into their nations "according to language [more literally, 'tongue': *lashon*; LXX: *glōssa*]." Genesis 10:32 describes these "clans" as "the families of the sons of Noah," and says that "by these the nations were divided up upon the earth after the

LXX: *oiko-domeō*] for ourselves a city [*iyr*; LXX: *polis*], and a tower [or castle, or fortified structure: *migdal*; LXX: *pyrgos*] (with its) top [or head: *rosh*; LXX: *kephalé*] in the heavens; and let us make [*asah*; LXX: *poieō*] for ourselves a name [*shem*; LXX: *onoma*], lest we be scattered [or dispersed: *puwts*; LXX: *dia-speirō*] over the face [*paneh*; LXX: *prosōpon*] of the whole [*kol*; LXX: *pas*] earth [*erets*; LXX: *gé*]. And the Lord [*yahweh*] came down [*yarad*; LXX: *kata-bainō*] to see the city [*iyr*; LXX: *polis*] and the tower [*migdal*; LXX: *pyrgos*] that the sons of men [or of man, or of mankind, or of "the Adam": *ha adam*] had built [*banah*; LXX: *oiko-domeō*]. And the Lord said, "Behold, the people [*am*; LXX: *genos*] (are) one [or single, or united: *echad*; LXX: *hen*], and (there is) one [or a single, or a united: *echad*; LXX: *hen*] language [*saphah*; LXX: *cheilos*] for all (people) [or the whole: *kol*; LXX: *pas*]; and, beginning [*chalal*, which can also mean 'to pierce, to penetrate, to bore a hole'; LXX: *archomai*][67] by doing this, now nothing will be hidden [or impossible, or inaccessible, or impenetrable, or walled off, or fenced off, or withheld, or held back, or secure:

Flood." The very next verse, Genesis 11:1, then says, "And all the earth was of a single language [*saphah*; LXX: *cheilos*] and a single speech [*dabar*; LXX: *phōné*]." So, unless we choose to assume the author or editor was allowing the text to be glaringly and even ludicrously contradictory, what I think this really means is, "And all the earth was of a single language and a single speech *within each of its nations*." And that would be another way of saying that the esotericist system or phenomenon had not yet come into being at that point; and also that it was from "Babel" (whether "Babel" here be thought of as symbolic in nature or as an actual place) that that *type of system* subsequently spread throughout the world. Alternatively, one might hypothesize that the "single language and single speech" for "all the earth" came into being *sometime after* the various "families" were distributed throughout the world as "nations"; but, because of the "single speech" (which I think may have signified "commonly shared meanings") first having been lost due to the type of system introduced at "Babel," the "single language" (by which I here have in mind a single worldwide *conventional* language) was eventually lost as well.

It is true that the name "Babel" is mentioned in Genesis 10:10, which might arguably suggest that the events of Genesis 11:1-9 were actually understood to have taken place *before* the "spreading out" or "dividing up" or "dispersing" (Hebrew *parad*; Greek *dia-speirō*) of the various nations that is spoken of in Genesis 10:32, and that the events were not necessarily being related in chronological order. But it strikes me as far more plausible to suppose either that what Genesis 10:10 calls "Babel" was meant to be understood as referring to the place that *eventually became known as* "Babel," or, that when Genesis 11:9 says that "the Lord" gave the name of "Babel" (Hebrew *babel*) to that land because a "confusing" (Hebrew *balal*) had occurred there, the author was simply noting the similarity between the two Hebrew words and ascribing more significance to it than perhaps he should have, because of his wanting to insinuate that a quality of "confusion" was so intrinsic to the very nature of "Babel" that it was revealed even by its name.

[64] The fact that the Hebrew word *saphah* and the Greek word *cheilos*—as well as the Greek word *stoma*, generally meaning "mouth"—can all refer either to the idea of an "edge" or that of "language" or "speech," is probably important for understanding the significance of Biblical (and non-Biblical) esoteric symbolism that involves "swords" (and their "blades" or "edges," and whether they be "sharp" or "dull").

[65] Consider the suggested translation of the Hebrew words *echad* and *dabarim* as "words (that were) single" in connection with Revelation 18:6, which speaks of "the (things that are) double" (*ta dipla*).

[66] Compare the use, in the LXX version of this passage, of the Greek word *asphaltos*, meaning "asphalt, bitumen," with the use in Matthew 27:64 of the related Greek verb *asphalizō*, meaning "to make secure, to make firm, to make sure, to make certain," in reference to the "securing" (as well as the "sealing," *sphragizō*) of Jesus's tomb.

[67] The use of the Greek word *archomai*, which can mean "to begin, to commence" as well as "to rule," gives rise to the possible suggestion that the "Tower of Babel" was associated with the idea of *arché*, a word which can mean "beginning, origin" as well as "rule, ruler, rulership"—but not of *telos*, meaning "end, goal, completion, fulfillment." Cf. Revelation 21:6. Also consider the use in Colossians 2:10 of the words *arché* and *kephalé*, meaning "head," possibly suggesting that only when Christ was made the "head" of the "rulers" (or "beginners," or "initiators") could the "work" that they "began" finally be completed.

batsar; LXX: *ek-leipō*, which means 'omit, leave out, leave off, fail,' and is the source of the English word 'eclipse'] (from them),[68] and everything [*kol*; LXX: *panta*] that they propose [or imagine, or intend: *zamam*; LXX: *epi-tithémi*, meaning 'attempt' or 'apply oneself to'], they will do [or make, or accomplish: *asah*; LXX: *poieō*].[69] Let us go down [*yarad*; LXX: *kata-bainō*][70] there and confuse [or mix together, or confound, or mingle, or pour together: *balal*; LXX: *syg-cheō*] their language [*saphah*; LXX: *glōssan*, a singular form of *glōssa*, which more literally means 'tongue'], so that one man may not understand [or listen to, or hear: *shama* (related to *shem*, meaning 'name'); LXX: *akouō*] the language [or speech: *saphah*; LXX: *phōné*, which can also mean 'voice'] of his neighbor [or companion, or 'one

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[68] If one translates the Hebrew word *batsar* as "secure," and the Hebrew word *migdal* as "fortified structure" or "castle" (in addition to "tower"), then this text might be read as having the Lord say something like, "In the course of trying to make themselves more secure, what they actually did was to surrender all of their security." (Note that the Hebrew word *batsar* as it is used in the Old Testament is usually translated as "fortified.")

[69] Compare this to Matthew 17:20, in which Jesus says that for those who have "faith" (or "confidence," or "trust"; or "*trustworthiness*," or "*honesty*": *pistis*) (which persons would presumably be those inhabiting the "new Jerusalem"), "nothing will be impossible [*a-dynateō*] for you"—*unlike* for the builders of the city of "Babel." (See Job 42:2 (LXX), where the Septuagint translates the Hebrew word *batsar* by using the Greek word *a-dynateō*, meaning "to be impossible.") This may suggest that people's ability to metaphorically "remove mountains" (which I think probably ought to be thought of as "very large stones") was understood by the authors of the New Testament to be the result of all people sharing a single "language" (that is, sharing or exchanging the same meanings with one other—i.e., practicing honesty). Also, it is conceivable that the "Tower of Babel" was thought of as a kind of "mountain," especially if it was visualized as being in the shape of a pyramid or ziggurat.

[70] Compare the use in this passage of the Greek word *kata-baino*, meaning "to go down, to come down, to descend," with its use in Revelation 21:2-3, which describes—once "Babylon" or "Babel" has fallen—the "new Jerusalem" "coming down [*kata-bainō*] out of heaven from God" so that God can "dwell" (*skénoō*) with men. There seems to be an antithesis implicitly being drawn between God "coming down" for the purpose of "confusing men's language," and God "coming down" so that he can dwell with men—which seems to suggest that it is not possible for God to "dwell with men" so long as their language is still "confused."

   Also, there is reason to think that the idea of a "name" (Hebrew *shem*; Greek *onoma*) may be in some way related to this distinction. Compare Genesis 11:4, which speaks of "the sons of mankind" (or "the sons of the Adam") as "making a name (*shem*; LXX: *onoma*) for themselves," with Revelation 22:4, which says that in the "new Jerusalem," one would find "the name [*onoma*] of (God and of the Lamb) upon the foreheads of (men)." Furthermore, comparing these two verses with Genesis 2:19-20 gives rise to a possible suggestion that Adam ("the Man") had been encouraged by the Lord to "assign (*qara*) a name (*shem*)" to every creature (whatever exactly that expression might be held to signify)—*except himself*. And this is perhaps because there would have been no *need* for him to have a name for himself, so long as he remained alone—*and single, and unified*. It is only when a *split* or *division* is made *within* the human species, by the coming into being of self-conscious and more or less egotistical *individuals*, that various human "names" are required. And the only way in which the recognition of individuality within the human species will not inevitably lead to a "breaking up" or "disintegrating" or "scattering" of the species is if it be required that *honesty* be maintained between individuals: this is the only way in which it can be *made tolerable* for various individuals to "have names for themselves." And perhaps "the name of Jesus" was thought by Christians to be the "name" *given by God* that would be able to *incorporate* all individual human "names" *within itself*, and so *make it possible* for various individuals to all "have names for themselves," but without becoming "scattered" as a result. (And even though Revelation 22:4 emphasizes the importance of people sharing the *same* "name" in the "new Jerusalem," Revelation 2:17 and 20:15 might be read to indicate the importance of maintaining *individual* "names" at the same time as this.) And by thinking of the matter in this way, it would seem that *the practice of honesty* would be very closely related to taking "the name of God and of the Lamb" as one's own: this is what would make the "new

who is near': *rea*; LXX: *plésion*]."[71] And the Lord scattered [or dispersed: *puwts*; LXX: *dia-speirō*] them from there over the face of the whole earth; and they left off [or were made to stop, or failed at: *chadal*; LXX: *pauō*] building [*banah*; LXX: *oiko-domeō*] the city.[72] Therefore its name [*shem*; LXX: *onoma*] was called [*qara*; LXX: *kaleō*] Babel [*babel*; LXX: *sygchysis*, meaning "Confusion"],[73] because there the Lord confused [*balal*; LXX: *syg-cheō*, which more literally means "to pour together"][74] the language [*saphah*; LXX: *cheilé*, a plural form of *cheilos*] of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered [or dispersed: *puwts*; LXX: *dia-speirō*] them over the face of the whole earth.[75] [Genesis 11:1-9.]

Jerusalem" a *single* city, and a *whole* city (an idea which is indicated by the very name "Jerusalem").

   In connection with this, it should be noted that the use in Genesis 11:4 and 11:6 of the Hebrew word *asah* and the Greek word *poieō*, both meaning "to make, to do," strongly suggests that it was the builders' attempt to "make a name *for themselves*," and not their attempt to "reach into the heavens" *per se*, that led to the Lord creating a "confusing of language" in order to prevent either one from happening (or perhaps, to put it another way, it was the builders' attempt that was deemed to make a "confusing of language" *inevitable* according to certain natural laws—a fact which the author would have been poetically expressing by depicting "the Lord" as "coming down" to interfere with the efforts of the builders). This also suggests the possibility that when Jesus says in Matthew 17:20 that "nothing will be impossible for you," this would only be because those who had "faith" (or "honesty": *pistis*) would have been expected to have abandoned any desire to "*make* a name for themselves"—but again, it is not entirely clear to me what that expression was understood to mean. (One possibility is that it would be a name that was *different from* the "name" that "Adam" is said in Genesis 2:19-20 to have given to each of the various creatures: in other words, the builders of "Babel" would have been *departing from conventional usage* regarding the meanings of words.) It may be that the "name" that the "builders" wanted to "make for themselves" was understood to be one that was not "given by God," but was still shared among all human beings; alternatively, that "name" may have been understood to be one that was possessed by the "builders" alone, and not shared with any of the human beings who were *not* involved in their "building" project. In other words, it is conceivable that the *sharing* of the *same* "name" (perhaps signifying "character"? or "qualities," or lack thereof?) among *all* human beings—that is, not *keeping it secret* from some of them, thus resulting in a loss of one's *authenticity*—may have been understood to be *equivalent to* men having "the name of God and of the Lamb upon their foreheads." And it is conceivable that "the name of Jesus" may have been understood to be the kind of "name" that all human beings would be able to *share*, which may in turn have been (consciously or unconsciously) understood to signify, at least in part, the sharing of the same *meanings for words*. Meanings for words would in that case be *naturally* generated by the entire human species through the *common* use of its languages, and not *unnaturally* created for the exclusive use of any one person, or any one restricted group of people—which is what actually happens when lies are told. And there is a sense in which such shared meanings might be thought of as the meanings that have been given "by God," or at least, that have "God's approval" (since, by not involving lying or willful self-contradiction, they do not constitute an act of aggression against "being" itself); but, at the same time, those meanings would of course also have been given "by man"—and this might relate to the significance of "Jesus" having been regarded as both "God" and "man."

   By the way, I wish to call attention to Genesis 11:6, in which the Lord says, "Behold, the people [*am*; LXX: *genos*] (are) one [or single, or united: *echad*], and (there is) one [or a single, or a united: *echad*] language [*saphah*; LXX: *cheilos*] for all (people) [*kol*]." This at first appears to suggest that the builders of "Babel" were *not* in fact guilty of dishonesty, and were already doing everything that they would ideally be doing in the "new Jerusalem." But this verse needs to be compared to Genesis 11:1, which says, "And all [*kol*] the earth [or land: *erets*] was of a single [or united: *echad*] language [*saphah*; LXX: *cheilos*] **and of a single** [or united: *echad*] **speech** [or, "a single discourse," or "a single account," or "a single message," or "words (that were) single": *dabarim*, the plural of *dabar*, meaning "word"; LXX: *phōné*]." So the text seems implicitly to be telling us that *the situation had changed* somewhere between Genesis 11:1 and Genesis 11:6; and it would be reasonable to infer that what had formerly been a "single speech," or a collection of "words (that were) single," *no longer existed*. Presumably, these "words" had been made

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As confirmation that the translation of the Hebrew word *batsar* as "hidden" in the preceding passage is correct (translators often choose the word "impossible"—which I do not argue is necessarily *incorrect*), compare Jeremiah 33:3, in which the Lord says,

Call to me and I will answer, and will make manifest [or show, or make understood, or tell plainly, or make conspicuous, or openly announce: *nagad*; LXX: *ap-aggellō*] to you great and hidden [or inaccessible: *batsar*] (things) that you did not know [*yada*; LXX: *ginōskō*].

"double," or made "twofold": in other words, I surmise, they had been given "secret meanings," so that a *second* esoteric "discourse" or "message" (**dabar**; LXX: **phōné**) could in theory be delivered in secret by using the same *single* exoteric "language" (**saphah**; LXX: **cheilos**) that *all people* were still using and sharing, even as most of those people may have continued to innocently assume that it was only capable of communicating a single meaning.

   Notice that this analysis also tends to imply that there would have been at least two kinds of "speech" or "voice" (Greek **phōné**) created by this split in meaning. I think it is conceivable that these two kinds of "speech" may have been referred to esoterically as a "great speech" or "large speech" or "large voice" or "loud voice" (**phōné megalé**), and a "small speech" or "small voice" or "soft voice" or "whisper"—or what 1 Kings 19:12 (LXX) calls the "voice of a light breeze" (**phōné auras leptés**) (but which is more famously translated as "still, small voice"). The "small speech" or "soft voice" or "whisper" might have been understood to be the voice that would be responsible for "telling in the dark," and from which one would "hear in the ear," as Jesus puts it in Matthew 10:27 and Luke 12:3. Also, I think the "large voice" might also have been thought of as a "first voice," and the "small voice" or "whisper" as a "second voice." And I think this "second voice" might have also been associated with the "word of God." However, it is also conceivable that what I elsewhere call the "word of man"—rather than the "large voice"—may have been associated with the "first voice." (The "word of man" would have been *another kind* of "inner voice" or "inner meaning," while the "large voice" would have been associated more directly with the idea of an "outer meaning." But I think that—*at first, anyway*—the "word of man" would have been the "inner meaning" understood to be more closely associated with the "outer meaning" or "outer language," so these two ideas of the "word of man" and the "large voice" are not necessarily neatly distinguishable.)

   I believe the goal in the minds of the authors of the New Testament was to *integrate* the two kinds of "voice" or "speech," so that there would no longer be any distinction to be made between them: what was at first a "whisper," in other words, would eventually come to speak in a "loud voice." Furthermore, I believe the understanding of the authors of the New Testament may have been that it was the "great speech" or "large speech" or "loud voice" (**phōné megalé**) in which one would need to "cry out" or "call out" or "proclaim publicly" or "make proclamation as a herald" (**phōneō** or **kéryssō**) in order for "Babel" or "Babylon" to be made to fall—a suggestion which I make partly because Babylon is regularly referred to in the Book of Revelation as "the great city" or "the large city" (**hé polis hé megalé**). (Also consider Jonah 3:1-5 (LXX) and its use of the phrase **polis megalé** along with the word **kéryssō**; I believe the "Ninevah" spoken of in that passage was likely understood to be equivalent to "Babylon," since Revelation 11:8 indicates that identifications of that kind would be made by the authors of the New Testament.) And this is one of the reasons why I think the symbol of the "Crucifixion" and "death of Jesus" was meant to be associated with the "fall of Babylon"—a theory I develop at greater length below in the main text. (See, for example, Matthew 27:50, and compare this verse to passages such as Matthew 10:27, Revelation 16:17, Revelation 21:3, John 11:43, and Revelation 18:2 and 18:4. Also see Revelation 1:10, Revelation 4:1, and Matthew 24:31, and compare their use of the Greek word *salpigx*, meaning "trumpet" or "bugle," to the way in which Paul uses the same word in 1 Corinthians 14:6-11.)

   [By the way, for whatever it may be worth, note that in Isaiah 40:27, the Hebrew verb *amar*, meaning "to utter, to say, to speak," is used in connection with the figure of "Jacob," while the Hebrew verb *dabar*, which also generally means "to speak, to say, to utter," is used in connection with the figure of "Israel" (who is the "alter ego" of "Jacob"). That suggests to me (although it would be dangerous to read too much into this one instance) that the verb *dabar*—as well as the corresponding Hebrew noun *dabar*, meaning

I believe that the "Babel" spoken of in Genesis 11:1-9 was actually understood by the authors of both the Old and New Testaments to be equivalent to the idea of "Babylon"—the same "mystery Babylon" (or "symbolic Babylon," or "secret Babylon," or "inner Babylon": *mystérion babylōn***) that is spoken of in Revelation 17:5.** It does not require any great creative insight to reach this conclusion: The Hebrew word/name that English translations of the Old Testament ordinarily translate as "Babylon" is actually *babel*; the English word/name "Babylon" is of Greek derivation. So the authors of the Old Testament were making it quite evident that they regarded the "Babel" of the "Tower of Babel" story as being the same conceptual entity as "Babylon" whenever they denounced the latter.[76]

"word, discourse, utterance, saying, message, account, speech"—as well as the figure of "Israel"—may have often been associated with the idea of an "inner meaning." The figure of "Jacob," on the other hand, may have often been associated more with either the idea of an "outer meaning"; or, the idea of *the use of* an "outer meaning" *in conjunction with* an "inner meaning"; or, the idea of some *other* "inner meaning" that was less "holy" or "godly" than some "inner meaning" associated with "Israel."]

[71] Notice that the text's speaking in Genesis 11:7 of a "pouring together" or "mixing together" (or "confusing," or "confounding," or "mingling": Hebrew *balal*; Greek *syg-cheō*) of the builders' "language" (more literally, "lip," or "edge": Hebrew *saphah*; LXX: either *glōssa*, which means "tongue," or, in Genesis 11:9, *cheilos*, which means "lip") raises the question of what *the specific elements* were that were "poured together" or "mixed together" even while, as the text states in Genesis 11:6, there continued to be "one language [*saphar*; LXX: *cheilos*] for all." I propose that it was the "discourses" (or "speeches" or "messages": Hebrew *dabar*; LXX: *phōné*) that had become "mixed together" or "confounded" as a result of their prior *separation* by the builders of "Babel." In other words, it would have become impossible to know whether a person was *using the common language* to express one "discourse" (or set of meanings) or another "discourse" (or set of meanings) from one moment to another, or to know whether the person was secretly inventing new sets of meanings to be applied to the words of the existing common language.

[72] Compare the use in Genesis 11:7-9 of the Greek words *glōssa*, meaning "tongue," *pauō*, meaning "to stop, to bring to an end," and *syg-cheō*, meaning "to confuse, to pour together," with Paul's use of the word *pauō* in 1 Corinthians 13:8 in connection with "tongues" (*glōssa*); and also consider how in 1 Corinthians 14:33 Paul implicitly associates speaking in "tongues" (*glōssa*)—at least, when it is done without "interpretation"—with "confusion" (or "anarchy," or "disturbance," or "disorder": *a-katastasia*), as opposed to "peace" (or "wholeness," or "concord," or "harmony": *eiréné*).

[73] Compare this to Revelation 3:12, in which Jesus speaks of writing "the name [*onoma*] of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem," upon "the one who overcomes"—which might suggest that prior to their "overcoming," it was the name of "Babel" that had been "written" (*graphō*) upon them.

[74] Contrast the "pouring together" (Greek *syg-cheō*) referred to here with the "pouring out" (Greek *ek-cheō*) of seven bowls done by seven angels in Revelation chapter 16. According to Revelation 16:19, the "pouring out" of the seventh and final bowl culminates in the destruction of the "great city" of Babylon. It may be that the "pouring out" was thought of as a kind of progressive "draining" of the "confusion" associated with Babel or Babylon.

[75] Related to what I wrote in a previous footnote, it strikes me as conceivable that the builders of the "Tower of Babel" were understood to be responsible for having created a system of "double meanings" or "multiple meanings" in the first place, while "the Lord" may have been understood to be responsible for having "confused" or "mixed" together those meanings, or "levels" of meaning, so that much of the expected effectiveness of the esotericist arrangement—considered, that is, as a system of oppression of "outsiders" by "insiders"—would have been lost. (But, as I already mentioned in another footnote, I think that the invoking of the figure of "the Lord" may have really just been functioning as a "poetic" way of saying that the "mixing" or "confusing" of meanings was the *inevitable* negative outcome of allowing the creation of "double meanings" or "multiple meanings" in the first place, such that the "confusing of language" would have been attributed by the author at least as much to "Babel" or the "Babylonians" as to "the Lord.")

[76] It appears to me that the likely reason why the English translations of the Old Testament use the name "Babel" in Genesis 11:9, instead of the hellenized "Babylon" (Greek *babylōn*), is that in the ancient Greek

In fact, the verse I just quoted, Jeremiah 33:3—speaking of the "making manifest" of "hidden things"—occurs in the context of describing the ongoing struggle against the "Chaldeans" (i.e., "Babylonians"). It must be understood that the "Babylonian captivity," which supposedly ended with the conquest of Babylon by the Persians and Medes and the return of the Judahite exiles to build the Second Temple in Jerusalem, *is a figurative notion*, and so *never really took place*—or *ended*—in the historical past.[77] My sense is that the understanding of the New Testament authors was that "those who were devoted to truth" were thought to be "imprisoned" or "held captive" within "Babylon"—another name for the "present Jerusalem," or the *merely* "earthly Jerusalem" (as opposed to the "new Jerusalem," which, at least in its manifested form, I think was understood to be both "earthly" and "heavenly" at once).[78] And this "imprisonment" or "captivity" meant that these "devotees of truth" (in their own minds, anyway) felt compelled to continue to speak in a cryptically symbolic form of speech—with the result being the misleading and confusing of others—for the time being. The "devotees of truth" may have been collectively represented by the symbol of "Israel," since in John 1:47 Jesus implicitly defines a "true Israelite" as a person "in whom there is no deceit [or guile, or subtilty, or trickery: *dolos*]." A distinction similar to the one made between "apparent Israelites" and

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Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *babel* was translated as *sygchysis*, meaning "confusion" in Greek, in order to preserve in the Greek translation the association that had been made in the original Hebrew text between the Hebrew words *babel* and *balal* (which is a Hebrew word meaning "to confuse"; this is translated in the Septuagint as *syg-cheō*, which has more or less the same meaning). As a result, later translators of the Old Testament into English apparently did not—in this one particular instance —feel bound by custom to use the Greek version of the Hebrew word *babel* (namely, *babylōn*, or "Babylon"), thus making it seem more appropriate for a person translating the text into English to go straight to the original Hebrew version of the word. The Greek word *babylōn*, or "Babylon," is used everywhere else in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew *babel*, even in Genesis 10:10, which speaks of a "Babel" located "in the land of Shinar"—which is where the Tower of Babel is said in Genesis 11:2 to have been located. And the same connection between "Shinar" and "Babylon" or "Babel" (Hebrew *babel*; Greek *babylōn*) can be found in Daniel 1:1-2.

[77] It may have *corresponded to* an historical exile and return of some kind, and the authors may have *gotten the idea* from an historical exile and return; but I doubt that the question of whether it did or did not so correspond would have been of great concern to the authors of the Bible. I suspect that the view of those authors was that if they could draw on actual historical events as sources for their symbolism, then "so much the better"; but they would not have insisted that such events be reported with any accuracy, since I do not think they thought of themselves as doing anything like the work of modern-day historians. If the telling of one of their allegorical stories required that certain historical events be invented, erased, or changed so that some desired "inner meaning" could in their estimation be better conveyed, my sense is that they would not have found there to be very much objectionable in that.

Also, the reader ought to consider that ordinary notions of historical time cannot be applied in understanding these allegories, which makes them especially confusing and difficult to decipher. It seems that there are various "alternative timelines" operating simultaneously in the Bible; so an event that is described as having occurred in the past may well have been intended to prefigure *future* events in highly symbolic terms. This is indicated by the fact that those Judahites or Jews who had been exiled to Babylon are depicted as "coming out of Babylon" in the Books of Ezra-Nehemiah, and the events described in these books seem to have taken place "before" the events described in the Book of Revelation. But if that is the case, why does the latter then *predict* the "coming out of Babylon"? According to the "outer" version of the narrative, *hadn't that already been accomplished*?

[78] The identification of "Babylon" with "the present Jerusalem" is indicated, for example, by Revelation 11:8, which speaks of "the great city [referring to Babylon], which is figuratively [or spiritually: *pneumatikōs*] called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was also crucified."

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"true Israelites" may have been made between "apparent Judahites" and "true Judahites," based, for example, on what Paul writes in Romans 2:28-29:

> For a (true) Jew [or Judahite: *ioudaios*] is not the (one that is) apparent [or visible, or outward: *en tō phanerō*]; neither is (true) circumcision the (one that is) apparent [*en tō phanerō*], in the flesh [*sarx*]. But a (true) Jew is the (one that is) in secret [or hidden: *en tō kryptō*], and (whose) circumcision is of the heart [*kardia*]: in spirit [*pneuma*], not in letter [*gramma*]; of whom the praise [or approval, or commendation: *epainos*] (comes) not from men [*anthrōpos*], but from God.

According to this theoretical model, "Judahites," like all other "Israelites," would be "exiles" from the truth (with "truth" perhaps understood to be symbolized by the "holy land" or the "promised land"); but those "Judahites" and "Israelites" inhabiting the symbolic "present Jerusalem" or "Babylon" may have been viewing themselves (partly unconsciously) as "insiders" working within a worldwide (and largely unconscious) system of oppression bound together by the power of the Lie. I think the understanding of the authors of the New Testament may have been that the symbolic "walls"—thus forming a kind of "spiritual body"—of the "heavenly Jerusalem," of which the "true Israelites" and "true Judahites" would have been inhabitants, or "members," may have been deemed to have existed *within* the symbolic "walls"—or the "fleshly body"—of "Babylon," i.e., the "present Jerusalem." Thus, the "Jerusalem above" (or the "new Jerusalem," or "heavenly Jerusalem," or "spiritual Jerusalem") would have corresponded to the idea of an "inner body," while "Babylon" (or the "present Jerusalem") would have corresponded to the idea of an "outer body."

According to such a theoretical model, at the end of the then-current "world-age" both the "Judahite Israelites" and the "non-Judahite Israelites" would have been "called upon" by angels (which might be a "poetic" way of saying that numerous persons would have made the same decision at the same time), to "come out of (Babylon)," as Revelation 18:4 puts it.[79] Since the "walls" or "body" of the "heavenly Jerusalem" would have been located, so to speak, *within* the "walls" or "body" of "Babylon" or the "present Jerusalem," this "call" would actually have been representing a call for "true Israelites" and "true Judahites" to "*come out of hiding*," so to speak.[80] One can find a number of passages from the Old Testament that suggest this, such as the following:

> Come out [*yatsa*; LXX: *ex-erchomai*] from Babylon [Hebrew *babel*], flee [*barach*; LXX: *pheugō*] from the Chaldeans [i.e., Babylonians], with a shouting [or singing, or joyful: *rinnah*; LXX: *euphrosyné*, meaning "joy, gladness"] voice [*qol*; LXX: *phōné*][81] declare [or proclaim, or tell plainly, or expose, or disclose, or make public,

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[79] It is actually unclear to me whether the New Testament authors would have made any distinction between "Israelites" and "Judahites" for the purposes of this *particular* metaphor or allegory; they may have thought of them as interchangeable concepts in this context.

[80] But, so long as they had *not* "come out of hiding," these "Judahites" and "Israelites" would continue to be employing the same kind of verbal deception and trickery employed by the "Babylonians," so it is difficult to determine how the former would have been distinguishable from the latter, other than in their own minds.

[81] Compare this to Luke 23:46, in which Jesus on the Cross is said to have called out with a "loud voice" (or "great voice": *phōné megalé*). It may seem odd to associate the "loud voice" of Jesus on the Cross with a voice of "joy" or "gladness" (Greek *euphrosyné*), as the Septuagint translation would in that case be

or make conspicuous, or make manifest, or make apparent, or make known: *nagad*; LXX: *an-aggellō* or *an-angellō*] this, make (it) heard [*shama*; LXX: *akoustos*], send (it) forth [or go forth: *yatsa*; LXX: *ap-aggellō* or *ap-angellō*] to the end [*qatseh*; LXX: *eschatos*] of the earth; say, "The Lord has redeemed [or rescued: *gaal*; LXX: *rhyomai*] his servant Jacob!"[82] [Isaiah 48:20.]

Flee [or move (yourselves), or remove (yourselves): *nud*; LXX: *ap-allotrioō*, meaning "become alienated"] from the midst [or middle, or center: *tavek*; LXX: *mesos*] of Babylon [Hebrew *babel*], and come out [*yatsa*; LXX: *ex-erchomai*] of the land of the Chaldeans [i.e., Babylonians], and become as he-goats [*attud*; LXX: *drakontes*, meaning "dragons"] before a flock (of sheep). For behold, I am raising and making go up against Babylon [Hebrew *babel*] a company of great nations, from the north; and from there, they will set out to take her. Their arrows [more literally, "piercers," or "cutters," or "dividers": *chets*] will be as from a man of great skill [or "a man of great wisdom": *gibbor* and *sakal*]; none will return empty-handed.[83] [Jeremiah 50:8-9.]

The voice [or speech: *qol*; LXX: *phōné*] of those who flee [*nus*; LXX: *pheugō*] and have escaped [*paliyt*; LXX: *ana-sōzō*] from the land of Babylon [Hebrew *babel*] (is) to declare [or to openly proclaim, or to make publicly known: *nagad*; LXX: *an-aggellō* or *an-angellō*] in Zion the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of [or for] his temple. [Jeremiah 50:28.]

Also, from the New Testament:

And I heard [*akouō*] another [or a different: *allos*] voice [or speech, or language: *phōné*] (coming) out of heaven, saying, "Come out [*ex-erchomai*] from (Babylon), my people [*laos*], that you might not partake of [or participate in, or share in, or be joined together with: *syg-koinōneō*][84] her sins, and that you might not receive

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doing; but, as I discuss in a later footnote, one should also consider the use in Luke 15:11-32 of the Greek verb *euphrainō*, which corresponds to the Greek noun *euphrosyné*, in Jesus's telling of the Parable of the Prodigal Son—a story which involves a "son" "returning" to his "father." In Luke 23:46 Jesus says that he "entrusts" (or "commits," or "puts at the disposal (of another)": *para-tithémi*) his "spirit" into the hands of his "father"; and in Luke 15:17-24, the "younger son" of the Parable effectively does the same thing. Also notice how in Luke 15:17-24 the "killing (in sacrifice)" (*thyō*) of the "fattened calf [or young bull: *moschos*]"—which I think may have been meant to serve as a figure for the Crucifixion—is associated with "rejoicing" (or "celebrating," or "making merry," or "being glad": *euphrainō*). Furthermore, the "return" of the "son" to the "father" is compared to a kind of "death and resurrection" in Luke 15:23 and again in 15:32.

[82] The "redeeming" of Jacob may have been meant to refer to his becoming "(true) Israel." Cf. John 1:47.

[83] Consider that the Hebrew word for "sin" is *chet*, derived from the verb *chata*, which literally means "to miss the target" (as in archery). The apparently related Hebrew noun *chets*, meaning "arrow," is derived from the verb *chatsats*, which can mean "to divide," "to cut," "to cut up," "to cut in pieces," "to chop," and can also have the more figurative meaning of "to distinguish."

[84] The words *syg-koinōneō* and *koinōneō* (from which *syg-koinōneō* is derived), meaning "to join," "to join together," or "to share in common," can both also refer to sexual intercourse—a connotation that I think was probably intended by the author, and intended at a conscious level of awareness. (I note in passing that the Greek word *koinōneō* also carries connotations related to Platonic philosophy and the ways in which the Platonic Forms were thought to interrelate—but the use of the word in that context likewise carries

[*lambanō*] her afflictions [or plagues: *plégé*]; for her sins have been piled up [or joined together: *kollaō*][85] as high as heaven, and God has remembered her evil deeds [*a-dikéma*]. Render [or give back, or pay back, or restore, or sell: *apo-didōmi*] to her just as she has rendered [*apo-didōmi*]—**and make double** [*diploō*] **the (things that are) double** [*ta dipla*], **in keeping with her (own) works** [or deeds: *ergon*].[86] In the cup [*potérion*] that she has mixed [*keraō* or *kerannymi*], mix [*keraō* or *kerannymi*] double [or 'a double (portion)': *diplous* or *diploos*] for her." [Revelation 18:4-6.]

In the last passage, the phrase "and make double the things that are double, in keeping with her own works" was likely meant to be read as an allusion to the distinction that symbolic or mystery "Babylon" (representing, I believe, the entire esotericist religious system) would accustom its "initiates" to make between the "inner meaning" and the "outer meaning" of a symbol or parable—in other words, an allusion to the systematic *duplicity* (literally understood) of symbolic "Babylon." "The things that are double" might be a reference to the *ambiguity* found in the esoteric symbolism; if so, the "making double" of those "double things" might have been meant (consciously or unconsciously) to refer to the elimination of any inherent ambiguity by means of *analysis*—that is, by "shining the light of day" upon the ambiguity of meaning that symbolic "Babylon" had worked so hard to maintain and use to its advantage by concealing it and attempting to divert attention from it by outsiders. In other words, the author may have meant to indicate that those who were opposed to the works of symbolic "Babylon" would need to learn how to make the very same sorts of *semantic distinctions* within individual words and other verbal symbols that her "initiates" were already in the habit of making—but now for the purpose of *ending* "Babylonian" esotericism once and for all.[87] (At the same

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connotations related to sexual intercourse and "marriage.")

[85] 1 Corinthians 6:16 indicates that the word *kollaō*, meaning "to join, unite, glue, cement, stick together," can also have a sexual connotation. In fact, I believe that Paul meant for that passage to have a double meaning, so that in it he is actually speaking about the symbolic "harlot [*porné*] of Babylon"—and hence symbolic "Babylon" itself—and not only about an ordinary prostitute (*porné*). I think that, at least in part, Paul was exhorting the persons whom he was addressing to be "joined into" the "body of Christ" rather than into the "body" of the "harlot of Babylon"—the difference between them being that the first was a "spiritual body" (and hence, an "inner body"), while the second was a "fleshly body" (and hence, an "outer body").

[86] Also compare this passage to Luke 20:19-26, in which Jesus says that one should "render [*apo-didōmi*] the things of Caesar [*ta kaisaros*] to Caesar, and the things of God [*ta tou theou*] to God." This may have been thought to involve a kind of "dividing," and thus a "making double" (*diploō*) of "the things that were double" (*ta dipla*). If so, this might correspond to the suggested distinction that I offer in the footnote below, according to which "language" (Hebrew *saphah*) became divided at "Babel" into two different kinds of "words" or "discourses" (Hebrew plural *dabarim*): the "word of man," and the "word of God." The "things of Caesar" would thus correspond to the "word of man," while the "things of God" would correspond to the "word of God."

[87] In other words, the author of Revelation 18:4-6 would be (consciously or unconsciously) exhorting the reader to *make explicit* the already-existing lack of unity or singleness in the meanings that are given to the words used in the esoteric writings of the Bible. In fact, in Genesis 11:1 (the first verse from the "Tower of Babel" passage that I quote in the main text), the Hebrew word that is used there to mean "word" (or "speech," or "message," or "utterance," or "discourse")—*dabarim*, in the plural—may have been meant by the author to refer to *two* "words" in particular: the "word of man," and the "word of God" (each of which would constitute a certain kind of "inner meaning"). If that is correct, then Genesis 11:1 would effectively be saying something like, "In those days, the 'word of God' and the 'word of man' were still one and the same." And, since Jesus is referred to in John 1:1 as the "word" (Greek *logos*), the symbol of "Jesus"

time, the authors of the New Testament may have been trying to inject *new* "inner meanings" into the esoteric symbolism that they disseminated and that had already been disseminated before them: meanings which would be *partially* hostile to esotericism.) In addition to this, consider that the Greek word *keraō* (or *kerannymi*) that is used in this passage has a range of meanings very similar to that of the Hebrew word *balal* (the word found in Genesis 11:7,9, in the telling of the "Tower of Babel" story), as both of these words can have the meanings "to pour together, to commingle, to mix, to confuse, to confound." Moreover, the reference to the "piling up" or "joining together" of "Babylon's sins" "as high as heaven" may have been intended to serve as an allusion to the piling up or joining together of the "bricks" (see Genesis 11:3) used to erect the

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might have been understood to signify the *joining together* of these two different kinds of "word," so that the "word of God" could again *become* the "word of man"—and when that happened, there would also be a joining together, or a sort of "monogamous marriage," of outer "language" and inner "meaning" or "message," since everyone would associate the same words and expressions (in a given context) with the same meanings. In that case, the expression "make double the things that are double" found in Revelation 18:4-6 may have been meant to indicate the *pointing out* of the fact that there was a difference between these two kinds of "words," so that people would no longer, in their ignorance, accept the "word of man" as a *substitute for* the "word of God"; and this would allow the "word of God" to then *triumph over* and *displace* the former "word of man," and become the *new* "word of man"—which would be the one and only *meaning* conveyed by the use of the shared spoken "language" (Hebrew *saphah*). The author would have been saying to the "builders of Babel," in effect, "You are the ones who initially wanted the separation between the two inner meanings in the first place (even if you try to deceive others and even yourselves into believing that it does not actually exist); *so now that we have one*, you will not be permitted to deny that it actually exists. You wanted a separate 'word of man,' so that you could avoid the 'word of God'; now we will make them *even more separate*—so that people will *reject* your 'word of man.'"

  Furthermore, if one uses the Greek word *logos* to translate the Hebrew word *dabar* (as the translators of the Septuagint often did), then John 1:1 might be read as identifying the sense of *unified* meaning with the presence and being of God himself.

  The hypothesis I am offering would also relate to the symbol of the "seed" (Greek *sporos* or *sperma*) that is found in the New Testament. In Luke 8:11 Jesus says, "The seed [*sporos*] is the word [*logos*] of God." It may have been thought that the "word of man" was the kind of "seed" that would be "scattered" or "dispersed" (Greek *dia-speirō*)—which is the fate of the builders of "Babel" according to Genesis 11:1-9— while the "word of God" was the kind of "seed" that would remain "sown" where the sower chose. Compare Matthew 13:31-32 with Revelation 18:2 and Daniel 4:10-12, especially in reference to the "birds of the air" that would dwell in the branches of the "tree"—a possible suggestion being that one ought to envision two kinds of "trees" (also corresponding to two kinds of "towers"): one corresponding to the "new Jerusalem," and another one corresponding to "Babel" or "Babylon." Also note that in Matthew 13:31-32 Jesus describes the "seed" that signifies the "kingdom of the heavens" as being "smaller" (*mikroteron*) than the other seeds—which may indicate that it was meant to be seen as corresponding to what I elsewhere call a "small voice" or "small speech"; and since it is said that this tree would grow to become "greater" (or "larger": *meizon*, a form of *megas*) than any of the other "garden plants," the author may have meant to indicate that this particular "small voice" was destined to grow into a "loud voice" or "great voice" (*phōné megalé*)—one that would be capable of "outshouting" all other "voices." One can find the term *phōné megalé* associated in the Gospels with the driving out of "unclean spirits"; and so this might relate to the "unclean spirits" referred to in Revelation 18:2. (I am hypothesizing that a "small voice" would correspond to an "inner meaning," while a "large voice" or "loud voice" would correspond to an "outer meaning." The "word of man" and the "word of God" would both be *kinds* of "small voices," and would both be *kinds* of "seeds"; but the "word of God" would *start out* being even "smaller"—that is, more "inner," and more "potential"—than the "word of man." In addition, with these ideas in mind, carefully compare Matthew 2:6 with Matthew 4:4 and Revelation 18:4, knowing that "Bethlehem" is a Hebrew word that literally means "house of bread"; focus in particular on the use of the Greek words *ex-erchomai*, meaning "to go out, to come out," and *elachistos*, meaning "least, smallest." This comparison suggests that the "word of man" might have been understood to correspond generally to the symbol of

Tower of Babel, "with its top in the heavens" (see Genesis 11:4). It is thus conceivable that the author of Revelation 18:4-6 conceived of every inhabitant of "Babylon" as constituting a single "brick" in the "Tower of Babel,"[88] so that when *all* people finally "fled" or "came out" from "Babylon," the "Tower of Babel" would effectively "collapse."[89] When all of this evidence is put together, it leads to the probable conclusion that **the author of Revelation 18:4-6 was symbolically depicting the "confusing of language" or "mixing of language," said to have originally occurred at "Babel" or "Babylon," as being undone**.[90]

One can find numerous passages in the Bible that refer to a "trap" or a "snare" contained within the Biblical religion (with this same "trap" or "snare" being found

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"bread"—in which case, whether or not "leaven" was used, and the kind of "leaven" that was used, would help determine what kind of "bread" would end up getting made. See, for example, Matthew 16:5-12. The authors of the New Testament may have meant to compare the "spirit" of Jesus—and possibly also that of Christianity as a whole—to the "pure kind" of "leaven," the kind that would result in the making of the "bread from heaven.")

[88] The Hebrew word meaning "brick" is *lebenah*, which can also mean "a white (thing)," and is closely related to the Hebrew verb *laban*, meaning either "to make brick" or "to make white." With this in mind, consider Revelation 2:17, in which Jesus says, "To the one who overcomes [or conquers, or prevails, or is victorious: *nikaō*], I will give to him from the hidden [*kryptō*] manna [*manna*], and I will give to him a white [or clear, or transparent, or bright, or light: *leukos*] stone [or pebble: *pséphos*], and upon the stone a new name written [or engraved: *graphō*] which no one has known except the one receiving (it) [*lambanō*]." The Septuagint frequently uses the Greek word *leukos* to translate the Hebrew adjective *laban*, both of which can mean "white." Also, speaking in reference to the builders of the "Tower of Babel," Genesis 11:3 says that "brick [*lebenah*; LXX: *plinthos*] was to them for stone [*eben*; LXX: *lithos*]."

[89] Compare 1 Peter 2:5, in which the author analogizes the members of the Christian churches to "living stones [*lithos*] being built up [*oiko-domeō*] into a spiritual [or figurative: *pneumatikos*] house [or building, or structure: *oikos*]"; this work of "building up" may have been thought of as being the more "spiritual" or "heavenly" counterpart to the "building" (LXX: *oiko-domeō*) of the "city" and "tower" of "Babel" spoken of in Genesis 11:4.

Related to this, Genesis 11:1-9 speaks of a "tower" (Hebrew *migdal*) with its "top" or "head" (Hebrew *rosh*; Greek *kephalé*) in the heavens. I wonder if the New Testament authors might have conceived of Mary Magdalene (a name that is possibly derived from the Hebrew word *migdal* or *migdalah*) as the "tower," and Jesus Christ as the "head" of that "tower" (but which in the case of "Babel" was absent); they may have believed that it was only because of the presence of Christ as its "head" that any figurative "tower" or "building" would be able to *successfully* "reach into the heavens." This would correspond to language that Paul uses in Ephesians 5:22-31 regarding the relationship between husbands and wives, and between Christ and the church—which would in turn suggest that the figurative "tower" or "building" or "structure" of which Christ *did* constitute the "head" or "top" would have been understood to correspond to "the church." Also compare the use in Genesis 11:4 of the Hebrew word *rosh* and the Greek word *kephalé*, both meaning "head," with the use of those words in Psalm 118:22: "The stone [*eben*; LXX: *lithos*] the builders [*banah*; LXX: *oiko-domeō*] rejected has become the head [or top: *rosh*; LXX: *kephalé*] of the corner [or pinnacle, or peak (probably because of the idea of a sharp angle), or tower: *pinnah*; LXX: *gōnia*]." And verses such as 1 Peter 2:7 make clear that Christians understood this "head" to refer to Christ. Consider that the term "builders" in Psalm 118:22 may have been understood by the authors of the New Testament to refer to the "builders" of the "Tower of Babel" (see Genesis 11:4-5); and those authors may have believed that it was the failure of these "builders" to make Christ the "head" (whatever precisely they would have understood that to mean) that was responsible for the ultimate failure of their "building" project, and the coming into being of a "confusion of language" instead.

Based on the foregoing, it strikes me as possible that there were two figurative "women" envisioned as forming the structure of two different "towers" or "buildings": the "harlot," representing "Babylon" or "Babel" (and corresponding to Mary Magdalene and Hagar), and the "virgin" (or "bride"), representing the "new Jerusalem" (and corresponding to the virgin Mary and Sarah). So it is conceivable that the Christians saw themselves as engaged in a process in which they would first remove the "bricks" from the "Tower of

within other esotericist religions, I suspect). I offer the hypothesis that it was the understanding (conscious or unconscious) of those who used this metaphor, or at least their hope, that the esotericist form of religion would be allowed to develop and ripen; and then, when the time was right (however that would be determined), and relatively suddenly, "the trap would be sprung" (or, to put it another way, it would "spring" of its own accord once it had reached some kind of ripeness or maturity), and the age-old system of "Babylonian" esotericism would come to an end in one fell swoop. Certain Biblical passages suggest that this process may have been understood to involve one type of person (and perhaps also some set of meanings associated with that type of person) "getting caught" in the trap, as the result of which another type of

Babel," one by one; then restore them to their former "whiteness" or "clearness" or "brilliance" or "transparency" or "purity" (which may have been thought to be lost because of the symbolic "asphalt" or "tar" that was used as "mortar," or for some other reason); and then use those now-cleansed "bricks" or "stones" in the "building up" of another "building" or "tower": namely, "the church." And this "transferal" of "bricks" or "stones" from one "tower" or "building" to the other may have been what was thought to accomplish the "purification" of the symbolic "harlot," and her transformation into the symbolic "virgin" or "bride"; and this is also what would have resulted in the creation or manifestation of the "new Jerusalem."

[90] As I have already indicated in the main text, the *means* by which the "confusing of language" was expected to be undone was apparently through the "mixing in" of some additional ingredient into "Babylon's" *own* "mixture"—perhaps based on the expectation that there would be a subsequent *division* of those "ingredients." In other words, it tends to suggest that the Christians may have been trying to "beat Babylon at its own game." That idea is also suggested by the fact that the phrase "mix a double (portion) [*diploos* or *diplous*] for her" in Revelation 18:6 can also be translated more figuratively as "mix a duplicitous (portion) for her" or "mix a treacherous (portion) for her"; and the word *diplous* can in fact be found in Matthew 23:15 used with this pejorative sense. This would seem to support the hypothesis that I offer elsewhere, that the Christians may have been trying to use esotericism to defeat esotericism. (I again state my own position that this would not have been a logically coherent or a rationally or morally justifiable plan.) Such a notion brings to mind some language that that I quote later in the essay from the paper by Gregory Bateson et al.: "The psychotic patient may make astute, pithy, often metaphorical remarks that reveal an insight into the forces binding him. *Contrariwise, he may become rather expert in setting double bind situations himself*." (The emphasis is mine.)

   In addition, it is possible that the "double portion" that was mixed in the "cup" mentioned in Revelation 18:6 may have been understood to consist of metaphorical "wine" and "water"—the same "mixture" found in the "body of Jesus," according to John 19:34. In fact, the ancient Greeks usually drank their wine mixed with water (unless they wished to get drunk), so the author may have expected that even the uninstructed reader would have understood the figurative "cup" to contain a mixture of "wine" and "water" (whether before or after the Christians did their own "mixing"). Given that Revelation 17:6 speaks of the "harlot of Babylon" as being "drunk with blood" (symbolically equivalent to "wine"), and Revelation 18:3 speaks of "the wine of the wrath of the fornication of (the harlot of Babylon)," one might surmise that the Christians' contribution to the "mixture" in the "cup" would have been symbolic "water" (or perhaps "living water"). But it is still not clear to me what symbolic "ingredients" each of the two "mixtures" would have been understood to contain, and whether, when the voice commands the Christians to "mix double," this meant that they were to add some *additional* "ingredient," or add more of the *same* "ingredients" in the same proportions (perhaps for the purpose of temporarily exaggerating the "doubleness" of Babylon's "mixture").

   Also, it is possible that it was the understanding of the authors of the New Testament that the contents of this "cup" (*potérion*) would be "divided" into its component parts with the occurrence of (or at the time of, or as a result of) the "Crucifixion." This possibility is suggested by Luke 22:17-18, which describes the Last Supper: "And having received (the) cup [*potérion*], and having given grace [or having expressed thanks: *eucharisteō*], (Jesus) said, 'Take [or receive, or lay hold of, or apprehend, or grasp, or understand, or learn: *lambanō*] this, and divide it [*dia-merizō*] into its parts [more literally, "their own selves": *heautou*]. For I say to you that I shall not drink from the produce of the vine from now until the kingdom

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meanings would at the same time "escape" from this same trap; and I think both of these "types of persons" might conceivably have been understood to co-exist *within a single individual*. The complete unfolding of this process would apparently leave in a state of dismay the inhabitants of symbolic "Jerusalem"—that is, the symbolic "*earthly* or *present* Jerusalem," i.e., "*Babylon*," which would have been understood to include *within it*, in its "interior," the "*heavenly* Jerusalem." Their dismay would be the result of their having grown too comfortable with the deception that was intrinsic to a mythical/esotericist system (although they would not have fully recognized at the time that this is what had happened). By the end of the process, the people would come to see that the esotericist mystification promulgated by their religion had been viewed by its own prophets—consciously or unconsciously—merely as a temporary but (allegedly) necessary evil. They would come to see that the mystification was not expected to last forever; and that it did *not* in fact constitute some inherently "superior" or "more profound" way of knowing about God or ultimate reality (which is how religious mystification is usually justified). Here are some of the passages that that give support to such an hypothesis:

> I laid a snare [or set a trap: *yaqosh*] for you [LXX: "They will set out against you" or "They will make an attempt on you": *epi-tithémi*][91] and you are taken [or caught, or captured: *lakad*; LXX: *aliskomai*, which was also used as a legal term meaning "to be convicted"], O Babylon [Hebrew: *babel*], and you do not see it [or perceive it, or understand it, or know it: *yada*; LXX: *ginōskō*]. You are found [or discovered, or

of God shall have come.'" This might in turn shed light on Matthew 10:42, in which Jesus says, "And whoever might give to one of these little ones a cup [*potérion*] of only [*monon*] cold (water) [*psychros*] to drink, in the name of a disciple [or, 'a cup of cold (water) to drink, solely [*monon*] in the name of a disciple'], truly, I say to you, he shall in no way lose [or ruin, or destroy: *apollymi*] his reward." As the material later in the essay should make somewhat more clear, the author may have intended that a play on words be noticed by the reader that would involve the word *psychros* (generally meaning "cold" or "something cold"), and the word *psyché* (meaning "soul" or "a person's life-force"). The intended meaning may have been that, after the basic "division" in meaning was made, the "water" or "cold water" (in this particular case, signifying "spirit" or "the Holy Spirit") would come to replace "wine" (in this particular case, signifying "red blood" or "earthy blood") as a person's animating "soul" or "life-force." (Note that I offer a different interpretation of this same verse in another footnote.)

   As an aside, with respect to the quoted passage, I offer the suggestion that the specific "produce of the vine" that Jesus had in mind may have been the "fruit of the tree of life" found in the "new Jerusalem"; see Revelation 22:1-2.

   As another aside, I suspect that the word *eucharisteō*, meaning "to give grace" or "to give thanks" or "to express thanks," may have been meant to be understood as an esotericist term of art, having something to do with the discerning of meanings within esoteric symbols. I make this suggestion for reasons related to the fact that the English word "thank" is related to the English word "think." To "give grace" or "give thanks" by discerning the meanings of esoteric symbols may have been thought to be effectively equivalent or comparable to "returning God's own thought to him," or "returning God's grace to him." (When I offer this hypothesis, I partly have in mind the way the word *eucharisteō* is used in 1 Corinthians 14:18. In the particular instance of Luke 22:17-18, however, the author may have also meant that Jesus was bestowing his *own* grace upon his disciples so that they would have the ability to discern or "divide" the meanings of the symbols contained in the figurative "cup," which in that case would have also represented the "body of Christ.")

[91] Compare the use here of the Greek word *epi-tithémi*, literally meaning "to set upon," to the use of the same word in Genesis 11:6 (LXX), when the Lord expresses concern that the builders of "Babel" will be able to accomplish whatever they "attempt" or "set out to do" (*epi-tithémi*)—suggesting a possible reversal of the prior situation.

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investigated, or explored: *matsa*; LXX: *heuriskō*][92] and also caught [or grasped, or taken hold of: *taphas*; LXX: *lambanō*], because you strive against [or resist, or oppose: *garah*; LXX: *ant-histémi*] the Lord. [Jeremiah 50:24 (LXX: Jeremiah 27:24).]

Let their own table [*shulchan*: a skin or leather mat spread out on the ground; LXX: *trapeza*] before them become a snare [or trap: *pach*: often used to refer to a fowler's net that would be spread out on the ground; LXX: *pagis*]; and (let) their contentedness [or complacency, or satisfaction, or self-satisfaction; more literally, "soundness," or "completeness," or "wholeness," or "peace": *shalom*] (become) a trap [or snare: *moqesh*, derived from the verb *yaqosh*; LXX: *skandalon*, which, in addition to its original meaning of "snare," can also mean "stumbling-block," or "temptation," or "offense"].[93] [Psalm 69:22 (LXX: Psalm 68:22). Paul quotes this verse in Romans 11:9.]

Our soul [*nephesh*; LXX: *psyché*] has escaped [or slipped through: *malat*; LXX: *rhyomai*, meaning "to be rescued"] like a bird [*tsippor*; LXX: *strouthion*, meaning "sparrow"][94] from the snare [*pach*; LXX: *pagis*] of the ensnarer [or fowler: *yaqosh*; LXX: *théreuō*, meaning "to hunt"]; the snare [*pach*; LXX: *pagis*] is torn [or broken apart, or broken in pieces, or disintegrated: *shabar*; LXX: *syn-tribō*],[95] and we have escaped [or gotten loose, or slipped through: *malat*; LXX: *rhyomai*, meaning "to be rescued"]. [Psalm 124:7 (LXX: Psalm 123:7).]

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[92] The reader may recall that Genesis 11:2 says that the city and tower of "Babel" were built only after its builders "found" or "discovered" (Hebrew *matsa*) a "plain" or "valley"—but more literally, a "split" or "cleaving" or "division" (Hebrew *biqah*)—in the "land" or "earth" (Hebrew *erets*). So the author of Jeremiah 50:24 may have ironically meant to suggest some comparable sort of "finding" or "discovering" (*matsa*) that would lead to a reversal or "turning around" or "overturning" of that original "splitting" or "cleaving."

[93] Note that this seems to imply that one state of "wholeness" would precede some kind of *division* of that wholeness—which division would presumably precede some new state of "wholeness," but one of a kind that was different from the previous one.

   Also consider the similarity between the idea being conveyed in the verse quoted in the main text (Psalm 69:22) and the idea that is conveyed in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, in which Paul, speaking of "the day of the Lord," writes, "When they say, 'Peace [or wholeness: *eiréné*] and security [*asphaleia*],' then sudden [*aiphnidios*] destruction [*olethros*] comes upon [*ep-histémi*] them, even as the labor pains [*ōdin*] (come) to her who has (a child) in (the) womb [*gastér*], and they shall by no means escape [*ek-pheugō*]."

[94] Compare the use in the Septuagint of the Greek word *strouthion*, meaning "sparrow," to its use in Matthew 10:29, in which Jesus says, "Are not **two** [*dyo*] sparrows [*strouthion*] sold for a penny [*assarion*]? And **one** [*hen*] of them will not fall [*piptō*] upon the ground [or earth: *gé*] without your Father." A possible suggestion to be found in this is that one of the two symbolic "sparrows" was expected to "fall to the earth," while the other was expected to "fly away into the heavens," that is, to "escape" (or, to put it another way, to "rise": Greek *an-istémi* or *egeirō*).

[95] While the Septuagint translates the Hebrew word *shabar* using the Greek word *syn-tribō* (which in this context literally means something like "to grind up"), the possibility should still be considered that the authors of the New Testament understood this "breaking apart" to correspond to the "breaking apart" or "tearing down" or "pulling apart" (*kata-lyō*) of the "temple" of which Jesus speaks in the Gospels. If so, then the symbolic "temple" (or "outer temple," or "outer tabernacle," or "outer tent") would have been understood to be equivalent to a kind of "trap" or "snare." (Cf. Revelation 21:22, in which it is said that "no temple" could be "*seen*" (*horaō*) in John's vision of the "new Jerusalem.")

And (the Lord) will become a sanctuary [more literally, "will be set apart": *miqdawsh* (perhaps in the sense of being "inaccessible"); LXX: *hagiasma*], and a stone [*eben*; LXX: *lithos*] for tripping [*negeph*; LXX: *proskomma*], and a rock [*tsur*; LXX: *petra*] for stumbling [or falling: *mikshol*; LXX: *ptōma*] to both houses [*bayith*; LXX: *oikos*] of Israel, a snare [*pach*; LXX: *pagis*] and a trap [*moqesh*; LXX: *koilōma*, meaning "pit" or "hollow place" or "cavity" or "hiding place," and *eg-kathémai*, meaning "lying in ambush"] for the inhabitants [*yashab*] of Jerusalem. [Isaiah 8:14.]

Observe that when read together Psalm 69:22 and Psalm 124:7 seem to be envisioning a *single* snare or trap in which *everyone* had initially been caught—but, as I just indicated, the authors of these passages may have believed that at some point everyone would eventually be able to "get loose" from it. In other words, I think it may have been believed that *everyone* would "escape" from the "trap," or else *no one* would. According to such an hypothesis, the entirety of persons affiliated with an esotericist religion (which would have effectively included all human beings) would have corresponded to the symbolic "inhabitants of Jerusalem" referred to in Isaiah 8:14; but once those inhabitants had become able to "get loose from" or "slip through" the "outer covering" of "Jerusalem"—signified by the symbol of "Babylon"—they may have been understood to become inhabitants of "the heavenly Jerusalem" or "the Jerusalem above," but without needing to "leave the city," so to speak. Some persons, such as the authors of the Psalms, and the Christians whom Paul was addressing in Galatians 4:22-31 (which I quote just below), would presumably have come to *identify in advance* with this "inner Jerusalem" or "heavenly Jerusalem"; but the "inner Jerusalem" could not be openly *revealed* until the time at which *all* people had "escaped" from "Babylon." And the "trap" or "snare" from which they would be escaping would, I believe, most likely have been meant to refer to the *generally* disseminated repository of esoteric symbols (or, to put it another way, the esotericist mode of discourse), such that it would be the *differences* between the *meanings* that could be assigned to the *same symbols* at different times that would account for the fact that, although people might at first be "held captive" by the symbols when those symbols were given one set of meanings, people would still be able to "get loose from" or "slip through" what had previously been confining them—once those same symbols were assigned a different set of meanings. (And those who were able to see such a possible outcome in advance would already have had an *unconscious* understanding of what the symbols were *potentially* capable of meaning; but the fact that they remained esotericists—i.e., "prophets"—would indicate that this understanding must never have risen to the level of conscious awareness.)

   One of the most unexpectedly remarkable and compelling passages to be found in the entire Bible is Revelation 18:11-13. Once one is willing to entertain the hypothesis that the symbol of "mystery Babylon" may have actually been intended (consciously or unconsciously) to represent the entire phenomenon of esotericist religion, understood as a type of societal arrangement, it becomes possible to recognize the bitter irony with which, I believe, the author may have been condemning the oppressive system of world control made possible by the deliberate obscuration of the meanings of word-symbols. He forces the reader to endure a tedious litany of what I think must be regarded as cryptic esoteric word-symbols, none of which he supplies with definitions:

And the merchants [or traders: *emporos*] of the earth weep and mourn over (Babylon), since no one buys their merchandise any longer: merchandise of gold, and of silver, and of precious (gem)stone, and of pearls, and of fine linen, and of purple (fabric), and of silk, and of crimson (fabric), and every (kind of) citron wood, and every (kind of) article of ivory, and every (kind of) article of precious wood, and of bronze, and of iron, and of marble; and cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and myrrh, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and of horses, and of chariots, and of bodies; and souls [*psyché*] of men [or human beings: *anthrōpos*].

But even without definitions, the way in which the sentence is structured is revealing. By ending the sentence with "bodies" and "souls of men," the suggestion is being subtly offered that the "trafficking" in esoteric word-symbols such as the ones being enumerated has resulted in the *enslavement* (both figurative and literal) of human beings.[96] This serves to remind the reader of the deadly seriousness of the problem of esotericism and the true enormity of the evil caused by it: partly by showing how easy it is for some human beings to transform other human beings into mere ciphers or symbols in their minds (even including, I would point out, as evil "Babylonians," or "Egyptians," or "Canaanites," or "Hamites," or "traders"); but mostly by showing how the ideas of freedom and meaning are inextricably bound together: Those who do not understand the intended meanings of the words and the language that other people use or have used will always be at the mercy of those who *claim* to understand it, and who are happy to do everyone else's interpreting for them (as well as their translating, which is a kind of interpreting).

This contrast between freedom and slavery that is suggested by Revelation 18:11-13 can in turn be related to the conceptual distinction that Paul makes in Galatians 4:22-31 between Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac:

For it is written that Abraham had two [*dyo* or *duo*] sons, one from the slave woman and one from the free (woman). But the (son) of the slave woman has been born [or engendered: *gennaō*] in conformity with [or "in accordance with," or "corresponding to": *kata*] flesh [*sarx*], and the (son) of the free (woman) through the promise [or the offer: *ep-aggelia* or *ep-angelia*]—**which (figures) are (serving as) allegories** [*allégoreō*]. For these (women) are two covenants, one from Mount Sinai, bringing forth [*gennaō*] children unto slavery: this is Hagar. Now Hagar—Mount Sinai—is in Arabia, but corresponds to the present [*nyn*] Jerusalem, for she is enslaved with her children. But the Jerusalem above [*anō*] is free, (and she) is our mother [*métér*]. For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one, one not bringing forth [*tiktō*]; break out [or burst forth: *rhégnymi*] and shout [*boaō*], (you) not in childbirth [or suffering labor pains: *ōdinō*]; because many more (are) the children of the desolate one [*erémos*] than of the one having the husband [or man: *anér*]."[97] Now you, brothers, corresponding to [or

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[96] I think the author may have also meant to imply that those who had gained access to the "spirit" (*pneuma*) could not be "enslaved" like those who were only familiar with matters of the "soul" (*psyché*). If so, it would illustrate the connection that I believe existed in the minds of the New Testament authors between the idea of "spirit" (*pneuma*) and the notion of some particular *interpretive approach* to the esoteric symbolism.

[97] Paul is quoting or paraphrasing Isaiah 54:1.

"in accordance with," or "after the fashion of": *kata*] Isaac, are children of promise [*ep-aggelia* or *ep-angelia*]. But, just as at that time the one having been born [*gennaō*] in conformity with [*kata*] flesh [*sarx*] persecuted [*diōkō*] the one (having been born) in conformity with [*kata*] spirit [*pneuma*], so too is it now [*nyn*]. But what does the scripture [*graphé*] say? "Cast out [*ek-ballō*] the slave and her son; for by no means will the son of the slave woman inherit [*kléronomeō*] with the son of the free (woman)."[98] So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free (woman).

As I discuss a bit further below, it is likely that the ideas of "being born in conformity with the flesh" and "being a son of the slave woman" were understood to refer to a person's having a knowledge solely of the more "outer meanings" of the scriptures, while those of "being born in conformity with the Spirit," "being a son of the free woman," and "being a child of promise" were understood to refer to having a knowledge of the more "inner meanings" of the scriptures as well.

1 Peter 5:13 is another verse that might tell us something about what the symbol of "Babylon" meant to the authors of the New Testament. At the end of the epistle, the author writes,

She (who is) in Babylon, chosen (along with you) [*syn-eklektos*], sends greetings….

This should strike the reader, and especially the ordinary Christian reader, as an exceedingly odd thing to say—at least after he or she has become willing to entertain the notion that the authors of the New Testament, even including the authors of the epistles, may have been using esoteric techniques in their writings. It is difficult to believe that the author of 1 Peter would have been referring to a geographic location when he spoke of "Babylon," if for no other reason than the fact that the symbol of "Babylon" had the great significance among early Christians that it did. If the author mentioned "Babylon" at all, one would reasonably expect that he would at least have provided the qualification that he had the geographic Babylon in mind rather than "mystery Babylon," to avoid any possible confusion about the matter among his audience. The verse becomes even more suspicious when one considers the author's very conspicuous choice not to associate "her" with any personal name.

The "She" spoken of in 1 Peter 5:13 may have been an allusion to Abraham's slave-concubine Hagar, who, as Paul states in Galatians 4:25 (quoted just above), "corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is enslaved with her children"; and, as I have already explained, I think the "present Jerusalem" was understood by the authors of the New Testament to be equivalent to "Babylon."[99] Or, alternatively (or in addition), "She" may have been meant to be read as a reference to the figure of the "harlot of Babylon"—which

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[98] Paul is quoting or paraphrasing Genesis 21:10-12.

[99] Another possibility is that the term "She" refers to "Sarah," who symbolizes "the Jerusalem above" or "the heavenly Jerusalem," at least if "the Jerusalem above" was seen as being "hidden within" the "earthly or present Jerusalem"—that is, "Babylon." Or, the term "She" may have been meant to be read as a reference to the generic archetypal "Woman," corresponding to "Eve" (and to "Jerusalem" generally), with "the Jerusalem above" signifying the "chosen" (*eklektos*) aspect, or the "chosenness," of this archetypal "Woman." In that case, "Babylon" might perhaps have been thought of as a "state of being" within which "Jerusalem"—again, corresponding to the archetypal "Woman"—currently found herself "trapped" or "held captive."

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symbol might itself have been alluding to another famous biblical harlot, "Rahab," who is described in chapter 2 of the Book of Joshua as "hiding" the Israelite messengers sent to spy out the city of Jericho prior to its destruction by the Israelites. Such an association would be made more likely if one saw the leveling of the walls of "Jericho" (see Joshua chapter 6) as a kind of symbolic "prefiguring" of the leveling of the walls of "Babylon" or "Babel" that is figuratively described in, for example, Jeremiah 51:58—which I believe may in turn have been intended to serve as a figurative prediction of the very real and *non-figurative* leveling of the *figurative* "walls" of "mystery Babylon."[100] Additional support for such a connection can be found in Jeremiah 52:8: "[T]he army of the Chaldeans [i.e., Babylonians] pursued the king [of Judah] and overtook Zedekiah [the king of Judah] in the desert-plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him." The idea meant to be conveyed here was, perhaps, that the former victory by the "Israelites" against "Jericho" had in essence been reversed, and that the "Judahites" were once again under the control of the system of oppressive esotericism from which— according to the *fictionally "historic"* terms of the Biblical narrative, that is—they had previously departed by leaving "Egypt," and had extirpated from their midst in "Canaan" (with this having been visually dramatized most memorably by their bringing down the "walls of Jericho").[101]

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[100] In fact, Joshua 6:10 and 6:20 might be read as illustrating a general theme that I describe elsewhere in this essay, namely that of a desire which I think can be found among schizophrenic esotericists (especially those authoring the Bible) to remain "hidden" or "unseen" or "unheard" by the public (i.e., "the multitude"), meanwhile holding out the hope that, when they felt the time was right (perhaps corresponding to the certain designated "hour," Greek *hōra*, spoken of in the New Testament), they would be able to "speak openly" and "speak loudly"—as a result of which all of the symbolic "walls" or "barriers" that had been built up might suddenly be felled. Joshua 6:10 says: "And Joshua commanded [*tsavah*; LXX: *entellomai*, related to the word *entolé*, meaning 'commandment'] the people [*am*; LXX: *laos*], saying, 'You shall not shout out [or cry out, or give a blast of noise; more literally, "break (the ears with sound)": *rua*; LXX: *boaō*] or make your voice [*qol*; LXX: ***phōné***] heard [*shama*; LXX: *akouō*], neither shall any word [*dabar*; LXX: *logos*] go forth [*yatsa*; LXX: *di-erchomai*] from your mouth [*peh*; LXX: *stoma*] until the day [*yom*; LXX: ***hémera***] I tell you to shout [*rua*; LXX: *ana-boaō*]. Then, you shall shout [*rua*; LXX: *ana-boaō*].'" Then, after there have been seven days of "trumpeting" by the priests around the walls of Jericho, Joshua tells the people it is time to "shout." And Joshua 6:20 says, "So the people [*am*; LXX: *laos*] shouted [or raised a (war) cry: *rua*; LXX: *alalazō*] when the trumpets [or horns: *shophar*; LXX: ***salpigx***] were blown [or blasted: *taqa*; LXX: *salpizō*]. And it came to pass that when the people [*am*; LXX: *laos*] heard [*shama*; LXX: ***akouō***] the sound [or 'voice': *qol*; LXX: ***phōné***] of the trumpet [or horn: *shophar*; LXX: ***salpigx***], the people [*am*; LXX: *laos*] shouted [*rua*; LXX: *alalazō*] a great [or loud: *gadol*; LXX: ***megas***] [the LXX also has 'and powerful': *ischys*] shout [*teruah*; LXX: *alalagmos*], and the wall [*chomah*; LXX: *teichos*] fell [*naphal*; LXX: *piptō*] down [or below: *tachath*; the LXX instead has *kyklō*, meaning 'round about'], and the people [*am*; LXX: *laos*] went up [or ascended: *alah*; LXX: *ana-bainō*] into the city [*iyr*; LXX: *polis*], every man [*ish*] straight ahead [*neged*] [the LXX has "each at (what was) over against him," or "each out of his opposite": *ekastos ex enantias autou*], and they captured [*lakad*; LXX: *kata-lambanō*] the city [*iyr*; LXX: *polis*]."

  Compare these two verses in the Book of Joshua to Mark 15:37, focusing on the latter's use of the Greek term ***phōné megalé***, meaning "loud voice" or "great shout." Also compare Revelation 1:10, in which the author, speaking of the voice of Jesus, says, "In spirit [*pneuma*] I was in the day [***hémera***] of the Lord, and I heard [***akouō***] behind me a loud voice [or great shout: ***phōnén megalén***], like that of a trumpet [or bugle: ***salpigx***]." That may suggest that the "day of the Lord" was understood to be equivalent to that time at which the symbolic "walls" of the symbolic "great city" would be made to fall.

  Also compare Joshua 6:10,20 to Ephesians 2:11-22, and especially verses 14-16 (which I quote below in the main text), focusing on the symbol of the "wall."

[101] Observe that with all of the "prefigurings" presented in the form of "fictional histories," the Bible ends up never seeming to record any actual *progress* toward greater honesty and meaning in human

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An interesting connection appears between two of the passages quoted above. Again, Jeremiah 52:8—the passage I just quoted—says,

[T]he army [*chayil*; LXX: ***dynamis***] of the Chaldeans [i.e., Babylonians] pursued [or chased after; more figuratively, "persecuted" or "harassed": ***radaph***; LXX: ***kata-diōkō***] the king [of Judah] and overtook [*nasag*; LXX: *kata-lambanō*] Zedekiah [the king of Judah] in the desert-plains [*arabah*; LXX: *peran*, meaning "far side"] of Jericho, and all his army [or force, or power, or resources, or wealth, or substance: *chayil*: LXX: ***dynamis***] was scattered [or dispersed: *puwts*; LXX: *dia-speirō*] from him.[102]

In Galatians 4:29, Paul writes,

But, just as at that time the one having been born in conformity with flesh persecuted [or harassed; more literally, "pursued" or "chased after": ***diōkō***] the one (having been born) in conformity with spirit, so too is it now [*nyn*].

The Hebrew word ***radaph*** and the Greek word ***diōkō*** appear to have a more or less equivalent range of meanings: "to pursue, chase after, follow after, persecute, harass." In fact, according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, the word *diōkō* is a Greek word commonly used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word *radaph* (a 3rd century B.C. Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible that seems to have influenced the authors of the New Testament).[103] This correspondence between words suggests an association between the symbolic "Babylon" referred to in Jeremiah 52:8 and "the son of the slave woman" referred to in Galatians 4:29; and also an association between the symbolic "Jerusalem" (signified by "Judah") referred to in Jeremiah 52:8 and "the son of the free woman" referred to in Galatians 4:29. But since in Galatians 4:25 Paul writes that "Hagar and her children" (represented by "the son of the slave woman," i.e., "Ishmael") were "enslaved" in the "present [*nyn*] Jerusalem," that would imply that the "present Jerusalem" (as opposed to "the Jerusalem above [*anō*]") was—as the result of both "Jerusalem" and "Judah" having been previously "captured" or "overtaken" by "Babylon"—understood to be functionally *equivalent to* the symbolic "Babylon." And that finding gives additional support to the theoretical model that I have been laying out throughout this section.

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communication. This seems to indicate that the claim that is sometimes made, that the Biblical religion introduced a "linear" view of history into the world, replacing the "cyclical" view of history prevailing in non-Biblical religions, might really just be a myth born of wishful thinking.

[102] Note the fact that in 1 Corinthians 14:11, quoted above in the main text, the Greek word ***dynamis***, literally meaning "force, power, strength," is used by Paul in the sense of "meaning."

[103] The Greek word used to translate ***radaph*** in Jeremiah 52:8 in particular is ***kata-diōkō***, a derivative of ***diōkō*** with a meaning similar to ***diōkō***, only more intensified; and Thayer's Lexicon says that, like ***diōkō***, the Greek word ***kata-diōkō*** is commonly used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word ***radaph***.

<u>The "body" or "flesh" considered as a symbol generally representing the "outer meaning" of the esoteric symbolism of the Bible; and the "spirit" considered as a symbol generally representing the "inner meaning" of that same symbolism</u>

    I believe it is likely that the authors of the New Testament intended that the symbol of the "body" (*sōma*) or "flesh" (*sarx*) be understood to signify or correspond to the "outer meanings" or "literal meanings" of Biblical symbols (and words, and parables, and figures, and allegories), while they intended that the "spirit" (*pneuma*) be understood to signify or correspond to the "inner meanings" or "figurative meanings" of those same symbols.[104] For one thing, such an interpretation is indicated by the fact that the New Testament Greek word *pneumatikōs*, which literally means "spiritually," can also have the senses of "allegorically, symbolically, mystically, metaphorically, figuratively," as illustrated in Revelation 11:8.[105] For another thing, the New Testament in several instances contrasts the "spirit" (*pneuma*) with the "letter" or "written letter" (*gramma*)— which, since the "spirit" is elsewhere in the New Testament also contrasted with the "body" or "flesh," suggests that the "body" or "flesh" was understood to be equivalent to, or at least closely related to, the "written letter"—which I posit was understood to signify

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[104] In the present context, the "body" or "flesh" should be understood to refer to the *existing* "body" or "flesh," not some future, regenerated—"spiritual"—"body" or "flesh."

    Also, I do not claim that the symbol of the "body" (Greek *sōma*) is *invariably* used in this sense in the New Testament; I am only suggesting that this may be *one* of its meanings. However, even when the word is used in other senses, it still might be possible to establish conceptual relations between the various senses. For example, as I explain below in the main text, I think the word "body" (*sōma*) is possibly being associated by Paul in Romans 7:7-25 with a conceptual split between an "outer self" (or "outer man," or "outer person") and an "inner self" (or "inner man," or "inner person": *esō anthropōs*). But any such split would not necessarily be unrelated to the conceptual split between an "outer meaning" and an "inner meaning"; in fact, I believe the making of both types of conceptual distinctions might share a common origin in social practice.

[105] Revelation 11:8 speaks of "the great city which is figuratively [or spiritually: *pneumatikōs*] called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified."

the "literal meaning," or "outer meaning," or "outer teaching."[106] For example, in 2 Corinthians 3:6 Paul writes,

> (God) has qualified [or enabled: *hikanoō*] us (to be) ministers of a new [*kainos*] covenant [*diathéké*]—not of written letter [*gramma*], but of spirit [*pneuma*]. For the written letter [*gramma*] kills [or puts to death: *apokteinō*], but (the) spirit [*pneuma*] makes alive [*zōo-poieō*].[107]

Compare this to what Jesus says in John 6:63:

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[106] The notion that Jesus's outer "body" (*sōma*) or "flesh" (*sarx*) may have been understood to correspond to a certain type of "meaning" or "teaching" or "doctrine" is made more plausible if one considers two passages in conjunction with one another. First, Hebrew 13:9 says, "Do not be carried away [*para-pherō*] by various and strange teachings [or doctrines: **didaché**]; for (it is) good for the heart [*kardia*] to be established [*bebaioō*] by grace [*charis*], not by foods [**brōma**] in which those following [or discoursing, or living; more literally, 'walking about': **peri-pateō**] were not benefited [*ōpheleō*]." The use of the word **peri-pateō**, which can mean "to walk about; to follow, devote oneself to; to discourse; to dispute, argue; to live (a way of life)," might be understood to imply that the word "foods" (**brōma**) was meant to refer to the phrase "various and strange teachings" in the sentence; and if so, the language of the passage would seem to imply that this metaphor or symbol of "food" (**brōma**) would already have been *generally understood* to refer to the idea of "teachings" (**didaché**) among those members of the church community reading the epistle or hearing it read. (And the "naturalness" or "appropriateness" of such a metaphor is indicated by the expression that we have in the English language, "food for thought.")

Second, in John 6:54-55 Jesus says, "Whoever eats from my flesh [**sarx**] and drinks from my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up [**an-istémi**] in the last day. For my flesh [**sarx**] is true food [**brōsis**], and my blood is true drink." If the symbol of "food" (**brōma** or **brōsis**) was intended to signify the idea of "teachings" in this context as in the previous one, then so too would Jesus's "flesh" (**sarx**) have signified the idea of a certain kind of "teaching." Also, notice the seeming implication that the "food" and "drink" that Jesus was providing would not have led to a person's being "raised up" (**an-istémi**) **until** the "last day"—so the person would only have *potentially* been given "eternal life" by "consuming" the "food" and "drink." And perhaps the "day" in which the person was "raised up" would also have been the same "day" in which the "food" and "drink" *became* "true" to that person. If so, it would suggest that some sort of "inversion" or "overturning" of the meanings that had been given in the teachings was intended to take place in the future.

This hypothesis also receives support from Luke 3:11, in which John the Baptist says, "He who has two [*dyo*] tunics [*chitōn*], let him share with [or impart to: *meta-didōmi*] him who has none; and he who has food [**brōma**], let him do likewise." An argument can be made on independent grounds, some of which are offered elsewhere in this essay, that the symbol of the "two garments" was intended to signify the duality of "inner" and "outer" meanings (although my sense is that *usually* the symbol of a "tunic" [*chitōn*] would have been meant to refer only to the "inner meaning"); so finding an association in Luke 3:11 between the symbol of the "two garments" and that of "food" (**brōma**) makes the hypothesized meaning of "teachings" somewhat more likely to be correct in the case of both of these symbols.

Incidentally, if correct, this understanding of the word "food" (**brōma**) would open the door to all sorts of re-readings of passages in which Paul discusses "food"; more specifically, it might help to explain how a person could be "destroyed" (or "ruined," or "lost": *apollymi*) by means of "food" (**brōma**), an idea which Paul discusses in Romans 14:13-23.

[107] The same Greek word *apokteinō*, meaning "to kill, to put to death," can be found used in the Gospels in reference to Jesus in several passages. For example, in Luke 9:22 Jesus says of himself, "It is necessary that the Son of Man suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders [*presbyteros*] and chief priests and scribes [*grammateus*], and be killed [or be put to death: *apokteinō*], and on the third day be raised [or roused, or woken: *egeirō*]."

It is the spirit [*pneuma*] that makes alive [*zōo-poieō*]; the flesh [*sarx*] is of no benefit at all. The words [or sayings: *rhéma*] that I speak to you are spirit [*pneuma*], and they are life [*zōé*].

A comparison of these two passages tends to imply that the "the written letter" (*gramma*) was understood to correspond to "the flesh" (*sarx*); it furthermore seems to imply that "the written letter" (*gramma*) was meant to be contrasted with "the words (*rhéma*) that Jesus speaks"—which would suggest a dichotomy in the New Testament authors' minds between "the written letter" (again, probably understood to correspond to something like the "outer meaning" or "outer teaching"), and "the words that Jesus speaks"—probably understood to correspond to something like the "inner meaning" or "inner teaching." And it seems reasonable to suppose that the *perceiving* of this "inner meaning" may have been understood to correspond to the "making" of the "new covenant." Such an interpretation would help to explain the meaning of Galatians 4:23-24 (which I already quoted above):

[T]he (son) of the slave woman has been born in conformity with flesh [*sarx*], and the (son) of the free (woman) (has been born) through the offer [and he is also said to have been born "in conformity with the spirit [*pneuma*]," according to Galatians 4:29] —which (figures) are (serving as) allegories. For these (women) are **two covenants** [*diathéké*]….[108]

Read in conjunction with one another, these passages suggest that the Christian apostles considered themselves to be ministers of the "covenant of Sarah," that is, the "new convenant," which was also the "covenant of the spirit"—in other words, I believe, the "covenant (*diathéké*) of the inner meaning." The *other* covenant, the "old covenant," would have been the "covenant of Hagar," which would also have been the "covenant of the flesh," as well as the "covenant of the written letter"—that is, what I would call the "covenant (*diathéké*) of the outer meaning." This "covenant of the outer meaning" would correspond to what Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:7 calls "the ministry of death [*thanatos*]," presenting itself "in written letters [*gramma*] engraved [*en-typoō*] upon stones [*lithos*]."[109]
An association between the idea of "the flesh" and that of "death" can also be found in Romans 8:5-6:

For those who are in conformity with flesh [*sarx*] direct their minds [*phroneō*] to the (things) [or the (matters)] of the flesh, but those (who are) in conformity with spirit [*pneuma*] (direct their minds to) the things of the spirit. For the mind [*phronéma*] of the flesh [*sarx*] (is) death [*thanatos*], but the mind [*phronéma*] of the spirit [*pneuma*] (is) life [*zōé*] and peace [*eiréné*].

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[108] Since it seems that "the offer" (or "the promise": *epaggelia*) is implicitly being compared to "spirit" in this sentence (by its being contrasted with the idea of "flesh"), it is conceivable that "the offer" or "the promise" was understood to refer specifically to the offer or promise that spirit (or some *new* type of spirit —namely, the "Holy Spirit" or "life-giving spirit") might be joined to that same "flesh" or "body," thereby creating a new type of "son" upon a person's acceptance of that new "offer."

[109] Incidentally, this tends to suggest that "death" (*thanatos*) was understood to be associated with the symbol of the "stone" (*lithos*).

And one finds the same association in Romans 7:6:

> But now we have been discharged [or "put away," or "eliminated": ***katargeō***] from the law, having died [*apo-thnéskō*] in [*en*] that by which we were being restrained [or being held; more literally, "being held down": *kat-echō*], so that we give service [*douleuō*, a word that can also mean "to be enslaved"] in newness [or freshness: *kainotés*] of spirit [*pneuma*], and not in oldness [*palaiotés*] of written letter [*gramma*].

The hypothesis that I am offering, that the symbols of the "flesh" and the "body"—more specifically, the "outer body"—were understood to be associated with the idea of the "outer meaning," while the symbol of the "spirit" (or "spiritual body," or "inner body") was associated with the idea of the "inner meaning," might help to explain *why* Paul would have associated the "flesh" and the "body" with the idea of "death," as well as with that of "bondage" (or "restraint," or "captivity," or "imprisonment," or "slavery"). The "(outer) body" (*sōma*) and the "flesh" (*sarx*) would have been functioning ultimately as symbols of *meaninglessness*, inasmuch as they would have signified a state of affairs in which people had been *deprived of free access to*, or had been *cut off from*, either knowledge of the "inner meaning" of the outer symbolism, or the ability to put that knowledge into practice—thus creating *splits* between meanings within symbols, which would give rise to *uncertainty* about the meanings of symbols; which would in turn give rise to a sense of social and individual meaninglessness and mental instability and disorder among *all* people in society. It would also give rise to pervasive deception and self-deception in society, since, under such a state of affairs, a continual changing or shifting of the meanings that were assigned to words and other verbal symbols would not generally be seen as anything particularly shocking, objectionable, or intolerable.[110]

As an additional illustration of the apparent association being made between the symbols of the "body" and the "flesh," the idea of "death," and the idea of "bondage" (or "restraint," or "captivity," or "slavery")—that is, *compelled* service, as opposed to *freely given* service—consider Romans 6:6, in which Paul writes,

> [O]ur old self [literally, "our old man": *palaios hémōn anthrōpos*] was crucified [*sy-stauroō*; in other words, it was "put to death"] together with (Christ) so that the **body of sin** [*sōma tés hamartias*] might be done away with [***katargeō***], no longer to **enslave us** [or, "to make us serve": *douleuō*] **by** [or in, or with] **sin**.

As a first comment, I suspect that the symbol of the "old self" or "old man" may have been understood to correspond to the "old covenant." As a second comment, notice that

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[110] In connection with this topic of "splits in meaning," consider what Jesus says in Mark 3:24-25: "If a kingdom [*basileia*] is divided [*merizō*] against itself, that kingdom cannot stand [*histémi*]. And if a house [*oikia*] is divided [*merizō*] against itself, that house will not be able to stand [*histémi*]." Also, consider that in Luke 11:17 Jesus says, "Every kingdom [*basileia*] that has been divided [*dia-merizō*] against itself is laid waste [or made desolate: *erémoō*]…."; and in Revelation 18:17 and 18:19, the "wealth" of Babylon is also described as having been "laid waste" (*erémoō*). That suggests that symbolic "Babylon" was understood to be characterized by an inner division, making it the ideal-typical "kingdom divided against itself"—unlike the ideal (or "heavenly") "Jerusalem," whose very name is in part derived from the Hebrew word *shalem*, which means "at peace, whole, sound, complete." Given the identity between the names "Babel" and "Babylon," it would not be unreasonable to suppose that this "inner division" was actually understood by the authors of the New Testament to be one involving *meaning*.

this verse seems to be suggesting that the "old self" or "old man"—as well, perhaps, as the "old covenant"—*along with* the "body of sin," was understood to be the *particular thing* that was "crucified" (or "put to death"; or "eliminated" or "done away") when "Christ" or "Jesus" was crucified.[111] In other words, it introduces the possibility that the authors of the New Testament made a conceptual distinction between two "parts" or "components" of "Jesus": a "body of sin" and a "spirit of truth" (*pneuma tés alétheias*: see, e.g., John 15:26); and I offer the suggestion that these would have been understood to correspond to the symbols of an "outer body" and an "inner body," respectively. As a third comment, compare the use in this passage of the Greek word **katargeō**, meaning "to do away with, to annul, to eliminate," with Paul's use of it in Romans 7:6, which I quoted just above. If Paul conceived of a kind of symmetry existing between those persons who were "in Christ," on the one hand, and "the law" or the "body of sin," on the other—so that as either "the law" or "body of sin" was "done away with" or "put to death" (*katargeō*), so too would the person who was "in Christ" have been "done away with" or "put to death" (*katargeō*) **with respect to** "the law" or the "body of sin"—then that would suggest that Paul understood some *aspect* of each person who was "in Christ" to be equivalent to "the law" (in the more "exterior" sense of the term "the law"), as well as to the "body of sin." In other words, each person who was "in Christ" would have had his own individual symbolic "body of sin." And I think the symbolic figure of "Christ" may have functioned as a conceptual *composite* of all of these individual Christians— *including* their individual symbolic "bodies of sin."

Thus, according to the theory I am offering, the symbolic "body of sin" would not have been understood to belong solely to those who were "in Christ": **it would have been understood to belong also to the figure of Christ himself**. Just as each Christian was understood to have two conceptually distinguishable "parts," so too would the figure of Jesus been understood to have two conceptually distinguishable "parts." And so not all of "Jesus" would have been considered by the authors of the New Testament to have been "put to death" (in the sense of "permanently destroyed") with his Crucifixion: only Jesus's "outer body" would have been "put to death"; and I think this "outer body" would have been understood to correspond to the ideas of the "old man," the "old covenant," the "outer law," the "outer meaning," the "outer man," and the "body of sin." Moreover, if one were to conceptually oppose a "body of sin" to a "spirit of truth," the possibility is raised that the "body of sin" might also have been conceived of as a "**body of lies**," which would have been envisioned as holding the "spirit of truth" as a kind of "captive" within itself.[112] I believe the "Crucifixion" may have been understood to symbolize *the*

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[111] Consider that since in Romans 6:6 the "old man [*anthrōpos*]" is being presented as equivalent to the "body of sin [*hamartia*]," it would be reasonable to think of what is being "done away" or "eliminated" (*katargeō*) was understood to be equivalent to the "Man of Lawlessness" (*ho anthrōpos tés anomias*)—but which a number of manuscripts instead identify as the "Man of Sin" (*ho anthrōpos tés hamartias*)—of which Paul speaks in 2 Thessalonians 2:3; and it is this same "Man of Lawlessness" or "Man of Sin" that Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 would be "done away" or "eliminated" (*katargeō*) by "the Lord Jesus." But notice that if this equation between the "old man" and the "body of sin," and the "Man of Sin," is correctly made, it would imply that the "doing away" or "eliminating" of the "Man of Sin" or "Man of Lawlessness" was understood to be *equivalent to* the "Crucifixion"—but also that the "Crucifixion" has not yet occurred, at least not on a collective scale. (I discuss this whole subject matter at greater length in Part II.)

[112] Cf. Ephesians 4:21-24 and Colossians 3:9-10, both of which specifically associate "lying" with the "old man."

effecting of a separation between the "body of lies" and the "spirit of truth"; and, in so doing, it would also have been deemed to achieve a kind of "liberation" of the "spirit of truth" that had up until then been "held prisoner," or "enslaved"—or "hidden," or "veiled"—within or beneath the "body of lies."

Therefore, there is reason to believe that the "body of sin" or "body of lies" may have been understood to be symbolically represented by the same "(outer) body of Jesus" that was described as having been "crucified" or "pierced." Such a theory would help to explain Gospel passages in which it is insisted that it was *necessary* that the Crucifixion take place (see, e.g., Luke 24:25-26): necessary, that is, that Jesus "put off" the "old body"—the "body of lies"—so that he might "put on" a new, *spiritual body*; and in doing this he would have been serving as the archetype for all members of the Christian churches, who, according to many passages in the New Testament epistles, were expected to do the same.[113]

This interpretation also seems to receive at least some support from Revelation 22:6, which describes "the Lord" as "the God of the spirits [*pneumatōn*, a plural form of *pneuma*] of the prophets." It may be significant that in this verse "the Lord" is being described only as the God of the "spirits" of the prophets—and not of the "bodies" or "souls" of the prophets (and by "the prophets," I think what the author really meant was "the prophetical writings"). Similarly, Revelation 19:10 says that "the testimony [*martyria*] of Jesus is the **spirit** [*pneuma*] of prophecy." The implication seems to be that the "body" of prophecy did not represent the "testimony of Jesus," but rather some other kind of meaning—one, I suggest, that was not deemed to be *essential*, and also one that was not deemed to be "clear" or "pure" (attributes which the Bible associates with "the Spirit").[114]

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[113] For all of the criticisms that I would expect Christians to direct against a theory that the symbolic "outer body of Jesus" was intended by the New Testament authors to be understood as a "body of lies," it at least has the advantage—if one assumes that the image of the "Crucifixion" was meant to be seen as a prefiguring of *future* events, which is what I claim below in the main text—of supplying some logical nexus or *causative relation* between the event of "the Crucifixion of Christ" and the achievement of "salvation" for human beings: a causative relation which the traditional theological explanations of Christ's "vicarious atonement" on the Cross are unable to provide.

[114] One can find a possible clue in support of this theory by comparing Mark 1:26 with, for example, Mark 15:37. The first of the two passages, describing the exorcism of a demon from a man that was conducted by Jesus, says, "And the unclean spirit [*to pneuma to akatharton*] convulsed him [or 'shook him,' or 'tore him in pieces,' or 'pulled him apart': *sparassō*], and, crying out [or 'calling out': *phōneō*] with a loud voice [or 'great voice,' or 'loud speech,' or 'loud language': *phōné megalé*], came out [*ex-erchomai*] of him."

The next passage, Mark 15:37, describing the Crucifixion, says, "And Jesus let out [or 'yielded up': *aphiémi*] a loud cry [or 'loud speech,' or 'loud language': *phōné megalé*] and expired [or, 'breathed out his spirit,' or 'expelled his spirit': *ek-pneō*]." The same event is described in Luke 23:46: "And Jesus, calling out [or crying out, or summoning, or speaking (loudly), or speaking (clearly), or giving utterance: *phōneō*] with a loud voice [*phōné megalé*], said, 'Father, into your hands I commit [or deposit, or entrust: *para-tithémi*] my spirit [*pneuma*]!' And, having said this, he expired [or, 'breathed out his spirit,' or 'expelled his spirit': *ek-pneō*]."

A comparison of the two passages suggests that the "spirit" (*pneuma*) of Jesus may have been understood to correspond to the "unclean spirit" (*pneuma akathartos*) that had been in the demon-possessed man; and that the first passage, Mark 1:26, may have been meant to prefigure the Crucifixion passages—so that, perhaps, the "spirit" of Jesus was understood to have temporarily "taken on the role" of the "unclean spirit," so to speak, or to have been temporarily "working undercover" *under the guise* of the "unclean spirit" (with the "unclean spirit" understood, at least in one sense, as a spirit of "mixed meanings," as opposed to one of "pure meanings" or "single meanings"). In other words, according to such a

Furthermore, this theory would also suggest that the figure of "Jesus" may have been understood to symbolize *both* covenants in himself, and that the symbolic "Crucifixion" was understood to signify a "putting off" or "shedding" of the "old covenant" so that the "new covenant" could be "revealed." Moreover, this would indicate that Paul believed that there was an intrinsic connection between this "putting off" of the "old covenant" and the "putting off" of a person's "old self"—which, based on my reading of Romans 7:15-25, seems to have been associated in his mind with lies and self-deception.

As another example of the association between the symbols of "the body," "death," and "bondage," in Romans 7:22-24 Paul writes,

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conceptualization, the "spirit" of Jesus would have been made to serve as a *substitute* for the "unclean spirit" so that it could eventually *displace* it at the time of the occurrence of the symbolic "Crucifixion" and "Resurrection"; and if that is correct, then "the spirit of Jesus" would have been understood to function as something analogous to a "brood parasite" such as the cuckoo bird. (Again, however, I stress that much of this thinking, if it in fact existed at all, may have been taking place at an unconscious level.) The Crucifixion might thus have been understood to have achieved a kind of large-scale "exorcism"—that is, the driving out of the "unclean spirit" or "impure spirit"—and, with that, the bringing into being of "purity of speech" or "purity of language." (I discuss this identification between "uncleanness of spirit" and "impurity of language" later in the essay at somewhat greater length.) In other words, the "Crucifixion" would have been symbolizing the driving out of that "unclean spirit" which was the motive force behind religious esotericism as a whole and in general (as well as schizophrenia, i.e., "lunacy" or "demon-possession," as a whole and in general).

Such an interpretation might also help to explain what Paul meant in 2 Corinthians 5:21, when he wrote, "For our sake, (God) made (to be) sin [*hamartia*] the one not having known [*ginōskō*] sin, so that in him we might become (the) righteousness [***dikaiosyné***] of God." My general sense is that the attitude of the authors of the New Testament was that no matter how much the figure of Jesus, or they themselves, *acted* in a sinful manner, he and they were somehow *incapable* of ever losing their "inner" purity, since they had never really "known" (*ginōskō*) sin. (Cf. Luke 1:34.) (In this respect, the figure of Jesus and the authors of the New Testament would have been regarded similarly, since I believe that, in practice, the apostles and authors of the New Testament probably thought of "Christ," at least to some extent, as a figurative depiction of themselves and their own self-appointed mission.) They seemed to think that so long as they could continue to think of themselves as "meaning well," this would be sufficient to automatically bring about the forgiveness of any deceptive methods that they might employ, since these methods would supposedly have only been identified with their "outer" selves—which they expected to someday "slough off" at the appropriate time.

Evidence for such an interpretation can be found in Romans 3:4-8, in which Paul himself *acknowledges* that non-Christians (or, more likely, *ex*-Christians) accused the Christians of having an "ends justifies the means" attitude: "Let God become [*ginomai*] true [*aléthés*], but (let) every man [*anthrōpos*] (become) a liar [*pseustés*]: As it is written [*graphō*], 'You shall be made righteous [*dikaioō*] in your words [*logos*], and will overcome [or be victorious: *nikaō*] in your being judged [or, "in your being separated": *krinō*].' And if our unrighteousness [*a-dikia*] brings about [or puts into effect, or establishes; more literally, 'sets together': *syn-istémi*] God's righteousness [*dikaiosyné*; notice that in 2 Corinthians 5:21, quoted just above in this footnote, Paul identifies ***himself and other Christians*** as the anticipated 'righteousness [*dikaiosyné*] of God'], what will we say? (Is) not God unrighteous [*a-dikos*] (to be) inflicting [*epi-pherō*] the wrath [*orgé*]? —I am speaking according to man [*anthrōpos*]. May it [or he] never come to be (so) [*ginomai*]! Since otherwise how will God judge [or condemn, or separate: *krinō*] the world [*kosmos*]? And if the truth [*alétheia*] of God abounded [or, 'made a net profit,' or 'came out ahead': *perisseuō*] in my lie [or fraud, or fabrication, or untruthfulness: *pseusmati*] unto his glory [*doxa*], why am I also still judged [*krinō*] to be a sinner [*hamartōlos*], and not (judged to be) just what [*kathōs*] we are accused [*blasphémeō*] (of being), and (why am I not judged to speak) just as [*kathōs*] some suppose [*phémi*] us to speak: 'We shall do [or create: *poieō*] the evil things [*ta kaka*] so that [*hina*] the good things [*ta agatha*] might come [*erchomai*]'? Their judgment [or assessment: *krima*, related to *krinō*, meaning 'to judge, to separate'] ['of us, the Christian apostles'?] is just [or fair, or legitimate: *endikon*]."

For I feel full satisfaction in the law [*nomos*] of God, according to the inner man [*esō anthrōpos*]. But I perceive another law [*nomos*] in my members, warring against the law [*nomos*] of my mind [*nous*] and <u>making me captive</u> to the law [*nomos*] of sin [*hamartia*] that is in my members. A suffering man [*anthrōpos*] I am. Who will rescue me from [or "pull me out of," or "snatch me out of," or "pluck me out of," or "deliver me from": *rhyomai*][115] this <u>body of death</u> [or "the body of this death"]?

This passage suggests that the reason *why* Paul was "a suffering man" was that a *split* existed within him between his "inner man" and some other, "outer man"—both of these being contained within a *single* "man" (*anthrōpos*), Paul—so that he, Paul, was

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Consider that in Romans 3:4-8, Paul seems to be setting up an opposition between two (human) "judgments" or "assessments" (*krima*) made *of Paul*: the assessment of Paul as having been a "sinner," and the assessment of Paul (and other Christians) as having held the belief "We shall do the evil things so that the good things might come." And Paul seems to be saying that, *unlike* the first judgment, the *second* judgment is "just," or "fair," or "legitimate" (*endikon*). In other words, Paul seems to be saying that the "judgment" or "assessment" (*krima*) made by those who supposed Paul and the other apostles to be saying "We shall do the evil things so that the good things might come" was indeed an *accurate* one—thus Paul would have been *embracing* the charge—since in Paul's mind, presumably, the motive for *his* lying would have distinguished him from the mere "sinner" who would not have had Paul's supposedly "righteous ends" in view whenever he did *his* more unworthy kind of lying. Paul would have effectively been saying, "It's not fair to mention the 'evil things' that we do without, at the same time, mentioning the fact that *we* do them so that even greater 'good things' can come out of them." I realize that this reading of the passage might initially be hard to accept for those familiar with the popular existing translations of this passage, but if one is able to accept: 1) that Paul practiced esotericism; and 2) that all esotericism necessarily involves deception—then one must at least entertain the possibility that Paul had felt compelled to give thought to this very matter, and so may have felt the need to find some way to morally justify in his own mind the enterprise in which he was engaged.

[By the way, it should be noted that it is conceivable that when Paul speaks of a "judgment" (or a "condemnation": *krima*), this was meant as a reference not to the "judgment" or "assessment" that "some persons" made regarding the Christian apostles, but rather to the "judgment" by God of "the Jews" of whom Paul speaks in Romans 3:1-3, which are the verses immediately preceding the quoted passage. (And this is generally the reading that the popular existing translations implicitly give to Romans 3:1-8.) But even if that reading is correct, my sense is that there is projection and conflation present here, so that it is not at all certain which words were referring to what, even in Paul's own mind. Notice how easily the pronouns that Paul uses shift, so that while he is at first speaking of "the Jews" in Romans 3:1-3, he suddenly jumps to "every man," then to "our" and "we," then to "my lie" and "I," and then back to "we" and "us." So it is admittedly conceivable that Paul's thinking had come full circle by the end of the quoted passage, and he intended the term "their judgment" to refer—in part, anyway—to the "judgment" of "the Jews" by God. Incidentally, note that Paul's sudden and repeated shifts in reference may be evidence of "loosening of association" or "thought slippage," which could be indicative of schizophrenia. (I believe it can be categorically asserted that if a person does not recognize that there is significant disorder in Paul's thinking process as it is being exhibited here, the translation of the passage that the person must accept as valid will be a forced and inaccurate one.) Also, it is conceivable that Paul is speaking "in the voice" of one of the Jews whom he accuses in Romans 3:3 of having been "unfaithful"; but it is not at all obvious that this is what he was doing; and even if it was, it raises the possibility that Paul was shifting back and forth in his mind between the role of "Paul as a Jew" and that of "Paul as a Christian"—so that Paul's "dual-identity" may have helped to *make possible* any thought disorder found illustrated in the quoted passage.]

Observe also that in the quoted passage (Romans 3:4-8) Paul speaks initially of *God* "becoming true"—and then, in support of his argument, he points to a Bible passage that speaks of *human beings*—not God—"being made righteous." The implication seems to be that when Paul spoke of "God," what he actually had in mind was a certain type of human being, or a certain aspect of human nature; and this was understood to **co-exist with** "*every man* [*anthrōpos*] (becoming) a liar"—including Paul and the other

"conflicted" or "torn between" the two. His "outer man" was apparently thought to correspond to the notion of a "body of death"; and the "body of death" seems to have been visualized as a kind of "container" or "prison" or "cage" that was "holding in" the "inner man," and was preventing it from expressing itself in *outer action*, and in *open and honest speech*: thus preventing the "law of Paul's mind" (i.e., the "law of his inner self") from becoming, so to speak, the "law of his body" (i.e., the "law of his outer self"). And I postulate that the authors of the New Testament understood this *same* notion of "two men contained within one man" to have been symbolized by the figure of "Jesus" as we find him described in the Gospels *prior to* the Crucifixion and Resurrection.[116]

Christians in their "human" aspects. It seems that Paul saw himself and other Christians as a kind of *composite being* made up partly of "God," and partly of "man," and any "unrighteousness" and "lying" that these individuals committed was apparently thought of as having been committed by the "merely human" part; but it was apparently thought that other people were obligated to forgive such acts, since the acts were committed *so that* the "divine" part of these individuals could reign supreme—at which point, perhaps, it was believed that a "separation" would be brought about, and their "merely human" parts (corresponding to the "husk" or "outer body"?) could be tossed aside and they could enjoy the "net profit" that they would have realized by having gone through the whole process. But this reading also tends to suggest that any *perceived* "unrighteousness" associated with "the inflicting of God's wrath" would have been the Christians' *own* "unrighteousness"—which means that the "inflicting of wrath" would have been understood to come *from the Christians* (in their "divine" aspect, that is, which "merely human" persons would not have been able to appreciate, which is why those persons would have *perceived* the "inflicting of wrath" as "unrighteousness"). Notice in addition that the perceived "unrighteousness" and "inflicting of wrath" seems to be what was believed to *bring about* the "judging" or "separating" (*krinō*) of the "world"; but it is this very "judging" or "separating" (*krinō*) that was believed to make possible the final "overcoming" (*nikaō*) and "being made righteous" (*dikaioō*) of the Christians. So when Paul asks rhetorically, "Is not God unrighteous to be inflicting the wrath?", apparently with the expectation of an answer of "No"—and if we assume that "God" was actually understood (albeit somewhat unconsciously) to refer to the "divine" part of the Christians—then the correct answer would seem to be, "*Yes*, 'God' is unrighteous, since 'God' has not yet 'overcome' and 'been *made* righteous.'"

    In other words, there is an illogical vicious circle involved, according to which Paul appears to think that he and others can "pick themselves up by their bootstraps," so to speak, and somehow make themselves righteous *by means of being unrighteous*; and I believe that any such belief would have been fundamentally based on Paul's assumption that it is possible to *divide* an individual self into separate parts—one "human," and one "divine"—and that, at the end of the process which he envisioned, the infinitely corrupt and worthless "human" part could simply be jettisoned, after having been made to serve as the hated "scapegoat" for all of the misdeeds of the *whole* person. And this interpretation might help to explain why the imagery pertaining to Christ's Crucifixion, both in the Gospels and in artistic depictions created since then, has been so consistently *violent*: It is expressing the furious anger directed by a person against his "human" part—this done supposedly *so that* the "divine" inner part of the person might be "revealed." But I think the real reason is simply that the person feels a compelling need to express the hatred and contempt that he has learned to feel *for himself as a whole* in the course of desperately trying to *approach* his final "overcoming" and "being made righteous" (i.e., "being made divine")—but which, for reasons that should be obvious, can never be brought about. The *self-hatred* and *self-contempt* he feels is the inevitable price to be paid for trying to achieve "righteousness" by means of *self-deception*, along with the deception of others. [Note, by the way, that if when in the quoted passage Paul writes, "I am speaking according to man," he at least to some extent meant, "I am speaking as a Jew," then this analysis would tend to indicate that he associated his "human" identity with his "Jewish" identity, and his "divine" identity with his "Christian" identity—and in that case, in practice, it would have been his "outer Jewish" identity that he saw as needing to be "sloughed off."]

    [As another but related way to reconcile this reading of Romans 3:4-8 with the reference to "the Jews" in Romans 3:1-3, consider the possibility that an unwillingness or inability on the part of Paul to honestly and clearly think through the moral logic of his activities all the way to the end—but at the same time, a desire

Moreover, I believe that this sense of self-alienation, of an "inner man" being *opposed to* an "outer man," can ultimately be traced to human society's collective decision to allow splits to be made between "inner meanings" and "outer meanings" in the words and other verbal symbols it uses. And when Paul refers to "sin," especially in the context of the quoted passage (Romans 7:22-24), I believe that what was foremost in his mind was *pervasive and systematic deception and self-deception*, since this would best explain why Paul did not feel that he was in control of his own decisions and actions. (This would be so *whether or not* that is how Paul himself would have chosen to explain his writings, since, in any event, I think one might regard an emphasis on this particular conception of "sin" as *implicit* in the mental scheme he was presenting to the reader.) If one were to adopt this interpretation, the "body of sin" of which he speaks might be thought of as representing the *system* of symbols, and interpretations of those symbols, that would hold together and gives permanence to tendencies of deception and self-deception in society. The "body of sin" would, again, thus have also been a "body of lies"—and this symbol would have been serving in part (albeit somewhat unconsciously,

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to *confess* and then *justify* what he was doing out of a sense of guilt—may be what *caused* a "loosening of association," which in practice would have made it easier to project his own feelings of guilt onto "the Jews," even while retaining the moral *justification* for those *same* sorts of activities for himself and the other Christian apostles. The Jews' "unfaithfulness" (*apistia*) of which he speaks in Romans 3:3 apparently led him to think of the "liars" (*pseustés*) of which he speaks in Romans 3:4; and the subject of "liars" may have led him to think about himself and the activities in which he and the other Christians were involved (although this second association would have taken place at an unconscious level of awareness), spurring him to offer a self-justification. So there may have been two lines of thought, one involving the Jews, and another involving the Christian apostles; and the second line of thought may have taken a temporary "detour" from the first before returning to it. But this would not have been the kind of "tangent" that many writers often take, in which both the writer and the reader *clearly know* that the writer is going off on a tangent—and, the fact that many readers do indeed have trouble following Paul's thinking in this passage is evidenced by the fact that there is disagreement among commentators and translators (compare, e.g., the NASB translation with the ESV translation) about whether in Romans 3:9 Paul is referring to Jews or non-Jews when he asks rhetorically, "What then [*oun*], are we better [or superior: *pro-echō*]?" (or possibly, if it is read in the passive voice, "What then, are we surpassed?"—but in either case, the reference that Paul intended to be made by the pronoun "we" is debatable, possibly referring either to Jews or Christians; or, in some strange way, to both at once). Romans 3:9 might be read to serve as an example of what I think may be Paul's tendency to first realize *that* the expression of his thinking is or has become disordered, and then to try to "get back on track" by sloppily "summing up" his thinking with the use of the term "so then" (or "therefore," or "then," or "so": Greek *oun* or *hōste*) in a way that only further confuses the reader. (One finds the same sort of thing happening, for example, in Romans 7:12.) It seems to me to be an attempt by Paul to give his thinking an appearance of being more "logical" than it actually is—reminiscent of some of the characters in Lewis Carroll's "Wonderland."]

[115] Note that the Greek word *rhyomai*, meaning "to rescue," is the same word used in the Septuagint translation of Psalm 124:7, in the context of the "trap" or "snare" that the Old Testament elsewhere associates with symbolic "Babel" or "Babylon": "Our soul [*psyché*] was rescued [*rhyomai*] like a little sparrow [*strouthion*] from the snare [*pagis*] of the hunters [*théreuō*]; the snare [*pagis*] was broken apart [or broken in pieces, or disintegrated: *syn-tribō*], and we were rescued [*rhyomai*]."

[116] Notice that when Paul says, "Who will rescue <u>me</u> from this body of death?" he is implicitly identifying the "real Paul" (the "me") with the "inner man" within "Paul," while the "body of death"—the "outer body" or "outer man"—is being identified as some entity that is essentially foreign to and distinct from the "real Paul." In like manner, the authors of the New Testament may have regarded the "real Jesus" or the "Lord Jesus" as the "inner man" or "inner body" within the figure called by the name "Jesus." This would help to account for certain ambiguities and inconsistencies in the conceptual scheme presented in the New Testament regarding what exactly the figure called by the name "Jesus" was understood to represent at various times.

perhaps) as a symbol of the esotericist religious system considered as a general phenomenon and societal arrangement.[117]

    As I suggested above, I think it would make sense to think of the "body"—whether a "body of sin" or a "body of lies"—as an "*outer* body." According to the hypothesis I am offering, the "inner body" would have been the "body" that was animated by the Holy Spirit, which would have been understood to be a spirit of *unity*. Once it had come into manifestation, this "inner body" would have been equivalent to the resurrected "body of life" or "spiritual body" or "life-giving spirit." A person's "inner body" would have been "built up" to the extent that the person was animated by the Holy Spirit. The "outer body," on the other hand, would have been the "body" animated by a spirit of *discord*; and it would have been this discord, or disharmony, or internal hostility that *made* it a "body of death." Alternatively, one might think of the "inner body"/"outer body" dichotomy in the following way: it would have been the fact that a "body" was joined to the "Holy Spirit"—i.e., a spirit of *unity*—that *made* this particular "body" an "inner body" or a "spiritual body"; and it would have been the fact that this *same* "body" was joined to a "spirit of discord" or an "unclean spirit" that *made* it an "outer body." An "inner body" or "spiritual body" would have been intrinsically a *unified* body; and an "outer body" or "fleshly body" would have been intrinsically a *divided* body.[118] Furthermore, I believe that this distinction made between an "outer body" and an "inner body" would probably have been understood to correspond to the intended significance of the distinction that the New Testament authors made between the symbol of "outer garments" and that of an "inner garment" (for example in John 19:23), which appear to have been likewise distinguished from each other according to whether the garment was "united" or "divided."[119]

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[117] A connection between the idea of "deception" and the ideas of "death" and "sin" can be found explicitly made in Romans 7:10-11, in which Paul says, "And I found the commandment that (was supposed to lead) unto life [*zōé*] (did in fact lead) unto death [*thanatos*]. For sin [*hamartia*], having seized an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me thoroughly [or swindled me, or cheated me, or beguiled me, or seduced me: *ex-apataō*], and through it, killed [*apokteinō*] me." If "death" is thought of as equivalent to "meaninglessness" or "pointlessness," then Paul would have been saying that he chose to scrupulously observe the outer commandments on the understanding that by doing so his life would be made meaningful; but he instead found that doing so deprived his life of meaning. Unfortunately, Paul may have thought that blame for this "deception" ought to be leveled solely against the "outer meaning" (or "outer body," or "outer man"), while "truth" was to be found by apprehending (and then apparently sharing—at least on a selective basis) the "inner meaning" (or "inner body," or "inner man"); which would indicate that Paul had not *fully* perceived (although I think he did *partially* perceive) that it was in the *making* of an initial split between "inner" and "outer" meanings that the "deception" (and, I think also, the loss of meaning) by which he felt victimized had found its origin; and so he would not have perceived that trying to ascertain the "inner meanings" of what had theretofore been to him meaningless commandments would *not* in fact succeed in introducing more meaning into the world—which I believe may have been his hope.
[118] Thus, in that sense, as long as any "outer body" whatsoever still existed, the "inner self" would have had to have been thought of as a kind of "potential self"—which might explain why the Christians were looking to the future for the *realization* or *manifestation* of that "potential self" in the form of the "spiritual body," in a *single* event.
[119] This hypothesis receives some confirmation by closely examining the text of John 19:23, which describes the crucified Jesus's "outer garments" (*himation*) as having been divided by the Roman soldiers involved in the Crucifixion, but describes his "tunic" or "inner garment" (*chitōn*) as being "seamless, woven from the top [or '*from above*'; or, more figuratively, 'from heaven': *anōthen*] throughout the whole [*holos*]." The fact that *anōthen* can mean "from above" and "from heaven" suggests that the idea of the "inner garment" (and also, I believe, that of the "inner body" or "spiritual body") was meant to be

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When I refer to the "discord" (along with words such as "disharmony," "hostility," "division," or "alienation") that I think may have been understood to characterize the "outer body," I am referring to discord both within oneself and with respect to other individuals. My sense is that the authors of the New Testament believed (consciously or unconsciously) that, whether inner division was found within a single person, or within a single people, or within the entire human species, these were mere variations on a single basic principle. Thus, from one point of view, *self-alienation* may have been seen as the ultimate source of hostility both between individuals and between peoples: the source, that is, of mutual hostility among "the nations." At the same time, the internal division created *in society* by esotericist institutions—between some social group of "initiated" or

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associated with what Paul in Galatians 4:26 calls "the Jerusalem above [*anō*]": which, once manifested, would become the "new Jerusalem," the city foreseen "coming down [*kata-bainō*] out of heaven from God" in Revelation 21:2. Both ideas involve the notion of an intimate "interweaving" or interpenetration—or "marriage"—of "heaven" and "earth," of "inner" and "outer," creating something that was a "whole" (*holos*).

   That this was the intended meaning of John 19:23 is made more likely by what the following verse, John 19:24, says: "Therefore (the Roman soldiers) [speaking of this tunic or inner garment] said to one another, 'Let us not tear [*schizō*] it, but rather let us cast lots for it [or "determine by lot": *lagchanō*] (to see) whose it will be,' in order that [*hina*] the scripture [*graphé*] should be fulfilled [or completed, or made full: *pléroō*], which said, 'They divided up [*dia-merizō*] my garments [or outer garments: *himation*] among them, and for my clothing [*himatismos*] they cast lots [lot: *kléros*].' Therefore [or so: *oun*] the soldiers did these things." (Note, by the way, that the use in the final sentence of the word *oun*, meaning "therefore," strongly suggests that the authors of the Gospels did not think of themselves as relating historical events, but were instead deliberately arranging the allegory in such a way that it would *incorporate* Old Testament prophecy *into* it, presumably based on a belief that their *new* allegorical creation would somehow help to *bring about* the "fulfillment" of the Old Testament prophecy in a way that the prophetical writings could not themselves do.)

   This verse should be compared with Revelation 21:7, in which Jesus says, "The one who overcomes [or conquers, or prevails, or is victorious: *nikaō*] will inherit [or 'will receive his allotted portion of,' or 'will be allotted by inheritance': *kléronomeō*] these (things); and I will be God to him, and he will be son to me." (The term "these things" is a reference to the term "all things" in Revelation 21:5.) The Greek word *kléronomeō*, meaning "to inherit" or "to receive as an allotted portion," is derived from *kléros*, meaning "lot." So a comparison between John 19:23, John 19:24, and Revelation 21:7 suggests that while the "outer garment" or "outer body" was understood to be characteristically "partial" or "divided" in nature, Jesus's "tunic" or "inner garment," being "whole," was understood to represent "all (things)"—so that it was the *entirety* or the *whole* that would have been the "allotted portion" of whomever was "victorious" at "casting lots" for this "inner garment" or "inner body." The reason why the similarity between John 19:23-24 and Revelation 21:7 is particularly significant is that the latter verse appears at around that point in the text where the "new Jerusalem"—in other words, "the Jerusalem above [*anō*]," as Paul describes it in Galatians 4:26—is described as "coming down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:2). That suggests that it was at this point in the narrative—just as the "seam" that had previously *divided* "heaven" from "earth" was disappearing as a result of the passing away of the "first [*prōtos*] heaven" and the "first [*prōtos*] earth" (Revelation 21:1)—that the "inner garment" was being "woven from above [*anōthen*] throughout the whole." (And this would once again suggest that the *actual* "Crucifixion"—at least when it occurred on a large scale—was understood to take place *at the time* of the falling or passing away of "Babylon," and the manifesting of the "new Jerusalem.")

   Such an interpretation of John 19:23-24 would be consistent with other passages, since when Jesus says in Revelation 21:5, "I am making all (things) new," the author would, according to the hypothesis, seem to be associating "newness" with the "inner body" (and therefore "oldness" with the "outer body")—which is precisely what, for example, Paul implicitly does in Romans 7:6, when he writes, "[N]ow we have been discharged [*katargeō*] from the law [*nomos*], having died [*apo-thnéskō*] (with respect to) what was holding us back [or holding us down, or restraining us: *kat-echō*], so that we give service [*douleuō*] in newness [or freshness: *kainotés*] of spirit [*pneuma*], and not in oldness [*palaiotés*] of written letter [*gramma*]." The

"sacred" persons, and some other social group of "profane," or "vulgar," or "unclean" persons, with the result that both social classes would always be at odds with each other, and would thus need to feel constantly wary of one another—would *inevitably* be reflected, to a greater or less extent, in the mind of every individual *person* living in such a society; so that, from another point of view, a certain kind of *class division within society* may have been seen to be the ultimate source of self-alienation and loss of individual mental integration (and moral integrity). That is because the fundamental reason for both the societal discord and the individual psychic division is the *deception* that is necessarily involved in the esotericist social arrangement, which normalizes deception in society and helps to desensitize people to its presence—*especially* among the society's elites, who serve as a society's "role models"—so that it ends up spreading everywhere. For that reason, it becomes possible to see that when Paul extols the "unity" or "oneness" of the Spirit and of God (see, e.g., Ephesians 4:3), as well as when he extols the "peace [or wholeness: *eiréné*] of God" (Philippians 4:7), he is really also implicitly condemning—consciously or unconsciously—the use of esotericist deception (along with deception of any other kind). Thus, for either Christians or the figure of "Christ" to "put off" or "lay aside" the "outer body" may have been understood to represent the achieving of the "putting off" or "laying aside" of "the spirit of discord"—which, from the perspective of the single individual, would also be to do away with self-alienation and self-deception. At the same time, from the perspective of society, it would be to put aside *social* alienation and *social* deception—especially including the esotericist deception promoted by traditional forms of religion.

The possible symbolic significance of "blood" and "water" in the New Testament

Both the symbols of "blood" and "water" appear to play important roles in the symbolic scheme presented by the authors of the New Testament. There is some

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image here is of the restraining or binding or constricting "outer body"—that is, the "old body" or "old man" (associated with "the written letter")—having been "sloughed off," so that the "inner body"—the "new body" or "new man" (associated with "spirit")—would be able to move about freely, like a "reigning king" (cf. Revelation 22:5), and not like a mere "bond-servant." According to Revelation 22:3, however, "the one who overcame" would still, in a certain sense at least, still be a "bond-servant" [*doulos*] with respect to God—but he would be giving a new kind of "service," freely given instead of coerced or imposed. And, in fact, Paul seems to have been referring to that very notion in the passage just quoted (Romans 7:6).

   Finally, the image of the "inner garment" remaining whole and seamless may have been meant to be contrasted with the image found, for example, in Mark 15:38, which says that at the moment of Christ's death, "[T]he veil [*kata-petasma*] of the temple was torn [*schizō*] into two [*eis dyo*], from top [or 'from above,' or 'from heaven': *anōthen*] to bottom [or 'downward,' or 'below': *katō*]." This may suggest that the "veil of the temple" was meant to be associated more with the symbol of the "outer garment" than with that of the "inner garment" (or, perhaps, it was meant to signify the *joining together* of the "inner garment" with the "outer garment"—a joining together which, it may have been believed, needed to brought to an end so that the "inner garment" could find expression on its own, and so that the two garments would not continue to be joined together in such a way that their joining served the function of "veiling" a person's truly intended meanings). And it may also suggest that the **first** (*prōtos*) "heaven" and "earth," which had previously been joined together in the "outer garment," were to be "disentangled," "dis-integrated," "dissolved," "separated," or "divorced"—perhaps making way for a "new heaven" and "new earth" to be joined together (as well as *a new way of joining* them together) at the "sacred marriage of heaven and earth" that is apparently being depicted in Chapter 21 of the Book of Revelation.

scriptural support for the notion that there was understood to be an association between the symbol of "flesh" or "(outer) body," and that of "blood." This is indicated partly by the fact that "flesh and blood" (*sarx kai haima*) are in several instances in the New Testament spoken of as a coupled pair (for example, in Matthew 16:17). Assuming this association is correct, both "flesh" and "blood" appear to have in turn been associated with *psyché* (meaning "soul," or a person's individual "life" or "life-force" in his body), as well as with the idea of "man" (or "human things," or "human affairs"), along with the idea of "earth" (or "earthly things"). And all of these ideas were generally contrasted with *pneuma* (meaning "spirit"), which was associated with the ideas of "God," "the divine," and "heaven."[120] Thus, "draining" a "body" of its "soul" (*psyché*), which might be thought of as its symbolic "blood," and then replacing it with "spirit" (*pneuma*), symbolized by "water" (more specifically, "living water," or "life-giving water")—which would function as the body's "new blood," so to speak—would be what would transform an "outer body" into an "inner body" or "spiritual body."[121]

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[120] An association between "blood" (*haima*) and "soul" (*psyché*) is indicated partly by the fact that in Matthew 20:28 Jesus describes his "life" or "soul" (*psyché*) as the "ransom" or "ransom-money" (*lytron*) being paid to achieve the liberation of the many; and, in 1 Peter 1:18-19, the author writes, "[Y]ou were ransomed [*lytroō*] from your pointless way of life (that you) inherited from (your) forefathers ['inherited from (your) forefathers': *patro-paradotos*], not by corruptible silver or gold, but by the precious [or costly: *timios*] blood [*haima*] of Christ…."

Also, an identification of "blood" (*haima*) and "soul" (*psyché*) is made in Deuteronomy 12:23, which says, "Only be sure that you not eat the blood, for the blood [*dam*; LXX: *haima*] is the life [or soul: *nephesh*; LXX: *psyché*], and you do not eat the life [or soul: *nephesh*; LXX: *psyché*] with the flesh [LXX: *kreas*]."

An association between "man" (or "human things," or "human affairs") and "flesh"—and hence, I am assuming, with "blood" and *psyché* as well—can be found, for example, in 1 Peter 4:6: "[E]ven to the dead the good news [or gospel] was announced, so that though they might be judged [or separated: *krinō*] in [or by] the flesh [*sarx*] after the manner of men [*anthrōpos*], they might live in [or by] the spirit [*pneuma*] after the manner of God."

A perceived "inferiority" of *psyché* as compared to *pneuma* is indicated by the fact that the Greek word *psychikos*, literally meaning "psychic," "soulish," or "pertaining to the soul," can also have the sense of "earthly," "natural," or "unspiritual," as indicated in James 3:14-15: "[D]o not boast and lie [*pseudomai*] against the truth [*alétheia*]. This is not the wisdom [*sophia*] coming down [*kat-erchomai*] from above [*anōthen*], but (is) earthly [or '(found) upon (the) earth': *epi-geios*], unspiritual [*psychikos*], demonic." Similarly, Jude 1:18-19 says, "These (mockers following after their own passions of irreverence) are those creating divisions [*apo-di-orizō*]—natural [or worldly-minded, or earthly: *psychikos*], not having spirit [*pneuma*]."

The conceptual dichotomy that the New Testament authors made between the "psychic" dimension and "pneumatic" dimension of things can also be found illustrated in 1 Corinthians 15:43-47, in which Paul writes, "(The body) is sown [*speirō*] in disgrace [or worthlessness: *a-timia*]; it rises in glory [*doxa*]. It is sown in weakness [or sickness: *astheneia*]; it rises [*egeirō*] in power [or strength: *dynamis*]. It is sown a natural [*psychikos*] body [*sōma*]; it rises a spiritual [*pneumatikos*] body [*sōma*]. If there is a natural [*psychikos*] body [*sōma*], there is also a spiritual [*pneumatikos*] (body). So also it is written, 'The first man Adam came into being a living [*zaō*] soul [*psyché*].' The last Adam comes into being a life-giving [*zōo-poieō*] spirit [*pneuma*]. But the spiritual [*pneumatikos*] (is) not first, but rather the natural [*psychikos*], (and) after that (comes) the spiritual [*pneumatikos*]. The first man (is) from the earth [*gé*], made of dust [or of dirt, or of soil: *choikos*]; the second man (is) from heaven [*ouranos*]."

[121] The use of "water" as a symbol for "spirit" is indicated by John 7:38, in which Jesus says, "Whoever believes unto [or into, or with respect to: *eis*] me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his interior [or inner parts, or heart; more literally, "belly": *koilia*] will flow [*rheō*] rivers of living water.'" (Jesus is probably referring to Isaiah 44:3, which seems to be equating "waters" with "spirit" [*ruach*; LXX: *pneuma*].) The next verse, John 7:39, then says, "Now (Jesus) said this about the Spirit [*pneuma*], which those who

The idea of the "outer body" may have been understood by the authors of the New Testament to involve the idea of "confusion" or "mixture"—related to the "Babel"/"Babylon" symbolism—since I suspect that the "redness" of the "blood" found in the "outer body" may have been conceptualized, for esotericist purposes, as the result of symbolic "water" (which would in this case signify "spirit") having been "mixed" with symbolic "red earth." (I make that suggestion partly because of certain apparent etymological relations in the Hebrew language: the Hebrew word for "red" is *adom*, while the Hebrew word for "blood" is *dam*, and the Hebrew word for "earth" or "ground" is *adamah*.)[122] The "new blood" (i.e., "spirit" or "living water") of the "inner body" or "spiritual body" might then have been thought to involve the ideas of "purity," "unity," or

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believed unto [or into, or with respect to: *eis*] him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet (being received), because Jesus was not yet glorified [or 'given honor,' or 'made apparent': *doxazō*]." Such an identification of "water" with "spirit" is also suggested in John 4:10-14, which likewise speaks of "living water"; and it seems that the author of John 4:23-24 is presenting this same "living water" as equivalent to "spirit [*pneuma*] and truth [*alétheia*]."

  However, it is possible that if the New Testament authors understood the symbol of "blood" to correspond to "life," then "living water" may have been understood to signify a merging of "life" and "spirit"—of "blood" and "water"—rather than "spirit" alone. (On the other hand, the idea of "living water" may have been meant to suggest that the "life-givingness" or "vitalizing" that had previously come from the "blood" could now be obtained from the clear "water" or "living water.") If so, this may be what the author of John 19:34 had in mind when he wrote that after Jesus's side had been pierced with a spear while his body was on the Cross, "immediately blood and water [both of them *together* being 'living water'?] came out [*ex-erchomai*] (of his interior)." If so, this would indicate, based on John 7:39, that the "receiving (and thus also the giving) of the Spirit" was associated both with the Crucifixion and with the "glorifying" (*doxazō*) of Christ; and also that the "glorifying" of Christ was understood to occur *immediately after* or *as soon as* the "outer body" had been "pierced." At the same time, in 2 Thessalonians 3:1 Paul writes, "Furthermore, brothers, pray for us, so that the word [*logos*] of the Lord might spread rapidly [more literally, 'run': *trechō*] and might be glorified [*doxazō*], just as (it has been) with you." This seems to imply that "the word (*logos*) of the Lord"—i.e., Jesus Christ, based on John 1:1—had not been universally "glorified" as of the time that the New Testament was written, which could only mean that at that same period of time the *symbolic* "outer body" had not yet been *universally* "pierced." This leads me to believe that, according to the conception of the authors of the New Testament, the "glorifying" of Christ would have occurred for a person only if "Jesus" had been "crucified" *in the mind of that person*—that is, only if he had been willing and able to "pierce" or "penetrate" the "outer meaning" of the esoteric symbolism. And this "event" would have been understood to happen at different times for different persons.
[122] The idea of "mixture" is also perhaps found in the symbol of the "red [*adom*] stew" that Jacob serves to Esau in Genesis 25:29-32 in exchange for Esau surrendering his "birthright" to him. The reason that Esau gives for why he is willing to "sell his birthright" is that "I am going to die." Thus, the redness of the "red stew" may have been meant to be associated with the idea of "mortality," and so too with the idea of "being earth-bound": again, the Hebrew word *adamah*, meaning "earth" or "ground," seems to be etymologically related to the Hebrew word *adom* (meaning "red"), as well as to "Edom," the land associated with Esau. This association between the idea of "mortality" and that of "redness" (by way of the idea of "earthiness") also tends to be supported by 1 Corinthians 15:22, which says, "For even as in the Adam [sic] all die [*apo-thnéskō*], so too in the Christ all will be made alive [*zōo-poieō*]."

  Also, and related to this, the "red stew" served to Esau may have been meant to signify or correspond to the symbol of "blood" (Hebrew *dam*). If so, it would be interesting that in Genesis 25:34 Esau is described as eating "bread" along with the "red stew" that would, *ex hypothesi*, be signifying "blood." This is reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 11:26, in which Paul, speaking of the Lord's supper, says, "For as often as you might eat this bread and drink the cup [of wine, representing 'the blood of Christ'], you publicly proclaim the Lord's death until he should come." Paul seems to be implying that "the Lord's death" would *come to an end* at the time that the Christians no longer "ate the bread and drank the cup" (that is, perhaps, when they no longer felt that they *needed* to do so). I say that because, according to the "exoteric" or "outer" narrative of the Gospels, Jesus Christ had *already* been "raised from the dead," so one is forced to conclude

"harmony."[123] So it seems possible that it was the "Holy Spirit" that was understood to have come to "replace" the symbolic "blood" that had been "drained" or "poured out" (Greek: *ek-cheō*) from the "outer body" of Jesus—which would have been meant to represent *all* symbolic "outer bodies," of *all* persons. And the "body of Christ," the one composed of all Christians (see, e.g., 1 Corinthians 12:17), may have been understood to correspond to a kind of large-scale "inner body" that the apostles were trying to build up "inside of Babylon," one which would have been understood to be "filled" with the Holy Spirit, or "living water," and so would be a "body" that was free of "confusion," "division," and "discord."[124] If this hypothesis is correct, it might explain why John 19:34 says that both "blood" and "water" came out of Jesus's body after it was pierced with a spear while on the Cross: It may have been meant as a clue to the reader that "Jesus" (who would also have corresponded to "Jerusalem" in general) was understood to contain *two* bodies in himself, and when the outer body (or "Babylon," or the "present Jerusalem") was "pierced," the "inner body" (or the "new Jerusalem") would have been "pierced" at the same time; the first, "outer" body would pour out "(red) blood," and the second, "inner" body would pour out "water"—like a "fountain" (cf. Revelation 21:6 and 22:1).[125]

that Paul must have been speaking "esoterically" or metaphorically. Thus one might read this passage as indicating that the New Testament authors thought of themselves as still living in an "age of Esau," in so far as the symbolic "outer body," or "earthly body," or "fleshly body," or "body of death"—perhaps associated with Esau—had not yet been "pierced" or "penetrated." In the meantime, perhaps, they would continue to "wear the hairy outer garment" (the "flesh"?) associated both with the figure of Esau and with the institution of "prophecy"—and so would continue to serve "under the guise of Esau," so to speak—until that "outer body" or "outer garment" had finally been "pierced," and "the Lord" existing beneath the "outer garment" had thus been "brought back to life," so to speak. And to symbolize this, they may have eaten the same "bread" that Esau was depicted as eating, and the same "blood" that he was (possibly) being depicted as "drinking"—which may have been meant to signify the fact that the Christians would continue to publicly speak in the language of "outer meanings" for the time being.

[123] And this would be consistent with a theory that "Babylon" or "Babel" may have been understood to correspond to the "outer body," while "Jerusalem"—more specifically, the "new Jerusalem"—may have been understood to correspond to the "inner body," or "spiritual body"—or, to be more precise, the *manifestation* or *externalization* of what may have been deemed to be the formerly "existent" (in a sense) but still only *potential* spiritual body.

[124] It is possible that this notion of "blood" (*haima*) being "replaced" or "superseded" by "water" (or "living water") is what was meant to be signified by the so-called "miracle" involving Jesus's supposed transformation of water into wine at the wedding at Cana, described in John 2:1-11. Actually, the passage never clearly indicates that the reader was meant to understand that Jesus had transformed literal water into literal wine, even according to the more "outer" terms of the parable or allegory. John 2:9 does speak of "water (that) became [*ginomai*] wine," but the author may have meant to convey the notion of symbolic "water" (or, more likely, symbolic "living water") having come to serve *in the place* of symbolic "wine." Thus the passage might easily be read in such a way that what it is really describing is Jesus ordering the servants at the wedding feast to serve "water" (or "living water") to the "master of the feast" *as if* it were the "wine" that was previously being served. If so, it would effectively be describing "water" (or "living water," which would probably have been understood to symbolize "spirit") as the "new wine" (and hence as the "new blood"), and also as the "good wine"; and, at the same time, it would have been describing the "old wine" (corresponding to the symbol of "old blood" or "red blood") as the "inferior [or lesser: *elasson*] wine" (and hence also as the "inferior type of 'blood'").

[125] The pouring out (*ek-cheō*) of "water" from the "inner body" may be what is being described in Acts 2:15-17, in which Peter says, "[T]hese (people) are not drunk [*methyō*; perhaps meant to indicate that they have not been drinking the 'old' type of 'wine,' i.e., '(red) blood'; cf. Revelation 17:6], as you suppose, for it is (only) the third hour of the day. But this is that which has been uttered through the prophet Joel, 'And in the last days it will be, God says, (that) I will pour out [*ek-cheō*] from my spirit [*pneuma*; perhaps in this

Especially if the symbols of the "outer body" and its "old blood" (or "red blood")—as opposed to "new blood," or "living water," or "Holy Spirit"—were understood to involve the ideas of "confusion" or "mixture," I suspect that the "mixing" (or "confusing," or "commingling," or "confounding," or "pouring together": Hebrew *balal*; LXX Greek *syg-cheō*) of language associated with the symbol of "Babel" or "Babylon" was understood to be more or less conceptually equivalent to the notion of "uncleanliness of spirit" or "impurity of spirit"; and I think that the notion of a "purified language" that is found in Zephaniah 3:9 may have been understood to be closely related to the notion of "purity of spirit."[126] In fact, Zephaniah 3:9, which speaks of a "<u>purified</u> [or ***clarified***, or cleansed, or purged: *barar*] <u>language</u> [*saphah*]," may have been intended to be directly

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instance symbolized by 'water'] upon all flesh [*sarx*]….'" (Compare this to Genesis 9:11.)

I am inclined to think that the "pouring out" of both the "(red) blood" and the "(living) water" was understood to occur simultaneously; and if correct, this would imply that "the Crucifixion" was conceived of as occurring simultaneously with the "pouring out of the Holy Spirit." I think that in many respects it was only for purposes of relating the Christian narrative in allegorical form that a clear separation *in time* was made between events such as "the Crucifixion," "the Resurrection," "the Ascension," "the Pentecost," "the fall of Babylon," and "the creation of the new Jerusalem"; and one finds that the authors do not consistently adhere to these distinctions between events in their own allegorical accounts, when they are read carefully.

[126] Such an association between the idea of "purity of language" and "purity of spirit" is supported by the fact that Zechariah 13:2 and Revelation 18:2 and 21:27 state or imply that "in the day of the Lord" the "unclean spirit" would be done away with; and Revelation 21:27 additionally associates "anything unclean" with "falsehood."

The association between "purity of language" and "purity of spirit" is also suggested by comparing Zephaniah 3:9 with Revelation 22:1,3-4, which indicates the existence of an (albeit somewhat weak) parallelism between them. First, Zephaniah 3:9, speaking in the voice of the Lord, says, "For then [in 'the day of the Lord'] I will turn [or turn about, or turn over, or turn back: *haphak*] unto the peoples a purified [or clarified, or cleansed, or purged: *barar*] language [*saphah*], that all [or 'the whole': *kol*] may call upon [or call by, or read (aloud) in, or call aloud in, or assign names by: *qara*] the name [LXX: *onoma*] of the Lord, to serve [LXX: *douleuō*] him with a united will [or under a single yoke]."

Next, Revelation 22:1,3-4 says, "And (the angel) showed me a river of water of life, clear [*lampros*] as crystal, going forth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And no longer will there be any curse [or 'any accursed thing': *kat-anathema*] (in the new Jerusalem), and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his bond-servants [*doulos*] will render service [*latreuō*] to him. And they will see his face, and his name [*onoma*] (will be) on their foreheads." This passage can in turn be cross-referenced with John 7:37-39 to show that the "river of water of life" was probably understood to correspond to the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Hebrew word *barar* used in Zephaniah 3:9 points to the close relation that the attributes of "clearness or clarity," "purity," and "cleanliness" would have had in the minds of the authors of the New Testament, since all of these English words can be used to describe the new kind of "language" of which that passage speaks. And, because the "river of water of life" of Revelation 22:1 is also described as "clear," that suggests that the "river of water of life"—which I believe was meant to symbolize "spirit"— was also understood to be both "pure" and "clean" as well.

An identification between "purity of language" and "purity of spirit" is also indicated by another cross-reference, this one between Revelation 22:1 and Matthew 4:4. Again, Revelation 22:1 says, "And (the angel) showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, going forth [or proceeding: *ek-poreuomai*] out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." And Jesus in Matthew 4:4 says, "It is written, 'Man [or "the man"] will not live on bread alone, but on every [*panta*] word [or utterance, or saying: *rhéma*] that goes out [or proceeds: *ek-poreuomai*] through the mouth [*stoma*] of God.'" A possible implication is that the "river of water of life" was understood to consist of "words" of some kind, which would bring to mind the idea of "clear speech," and, more specifically, "God speaking clearly." And I believe that in practice the New Testament authors may have equated "God" with their "inner selves," in which case the notion of "God speaking clearly" would translate into the notion of "the inner selves of schizophrenic esotericists being able to communicate clearly"—which would be equivalent to *a healing of their own schizophrenia*.

contrasted with Genesis 11:7, which speaks of a "<u>confusing</u> (or <u>mixing</u>: *balal*) of <u>language</u> [*saphah*]" in connection with the story of the building of the "Tower of Babel." I think it may have been "purity of language" that was understood to make it possible to overcome some prior division into separate "inner" and "outer" types of meaning (followed inevitably by the subsequent and practically immediate "mixing" or "confusing" of those multiple types of meaning). The authors of the New Testament may have—consciously or unconsciously—deemed the overcoming of that division to be what would make it possible for a unified "inner body" or "spiritual body" to be manifested in outer action. That is because, once again, there is reason to think that a resurrected "spiritual body" or "inner body" was understood to be a body in which outer meanings (i.e., "the body," or "the outer body," or "the flesh") and inner meanings (i.e., "the spirit") were no longer cloven in two. But the "inner body" cannot be manifested in outer action so long as it must still *compete* with the "outer body" for its existence, since this competition promotes the internal *division* that is intrinsically hostile to the very existence of an "inner body," which appears to be characterized and defined by its unity (or, at least, its *yearning* for unity). Presumably the "inner body" could only ever be

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Incidentally, the Septuagint translation of Zephaniah 3:9 (the Hebrew Masoretic version of which I just provided in this footnote) reads, "For then I will turn [or turn round, or turn about, or turn upside down, or turn back: *meta-strephō*] upon the peoples a language [or tongue: *glōssa*] (leading) all the offspring [or generation: *genea*] of (the earth) [*gé*] to call upon the name of the Lord." This verse suggests that when Jesus speaks of "this generation" (*hé genea hauté*) in the Gospels, such as in Mark 13:30, what the author really had in mind was "the offspring of the earth," or "the generation of the earth," as opposed to "the offspring of heaven." The "offspring of the earth" would essentially have been those "born of the earth": Greek *gé-genés*, probably related to the Greek *gigantes*—or, what in English we call "giants." This would tend to confirm the hypothesis that I have offered elsewhere in the essay, that the "slaying of Goliath the Philistine" by David, or the "slaying of the Philistines" by Samson, may have been understood to signify the "killing"—and the subsequent "raising"—of those who had been "born of the earth": signifying, in other words, a kind of "baptism" (i.e., "rebirth"). If so, this would indicate that "being born of the earth" was associated in the authors' minds with the idea of "speaking impurely," or "having an unclean spirit"; and also that "baptism" was understood to result in a "cleansing of spirit," which, for the reasons just given, would have been deemed equivalent to a "purification of speech." Alternatively or in addition, it might indicate a belief that when the "offspring of the earth" learned to speak in the "new language" referred to in Zephaniah 3:9, this is what would help to **enable** the "offspring of heaven"—including certain esotericists, perhaps—to have their **own** "unclean spirit" or "impure speech" removed from them; and the reason for that would be that the "offspring of the earth" had theretofore **refused to learn** how to speak the "inner" or "hidden" or "heavenly" language of the esotericists, thus preventing it from **becoming** the "outer" language. (This would be another of saying that the "offspring of the earth" had been unwilling to really **listen** to what the esotericists had been trying to tell them—openly at first, but then perhaps in increasingly oblique and subtle terms as they found that what they had to say was being ignored and spurned.) In that case, then, when the "purified language" was universally adopted, the two "generations" would be "meeting each other half-way," so to speak, thereby resulting in a bridging of the gap between "inner" and "outer."

Related to this, consider the close connection to be found in the Gospels between the notions of "being a demoniac" (*daimonizomai*), "being a lunatic" (*seléniazomai*), and having "(an) unclean spirit" or "(an) impure spirit" (*pneuma akathartos*)—which, *ex hypothesi*, would have been equivalent to having "impure speech." This seems to show that the authors of the Gospels were able to recognize, even if only unconsciously, the intrinsic connection between schizophrenia and esotericism (even including their *own* esotericism) to which I am trying to call attention in this essay.

manifested once the "outer body"—considered as something *separate from* the "inner body"—had been *fully* displaced, or done away, or eliminated, or neutralized.[127]

When I propose that the "Holy Spirit" (or "living water") may have been understood to "replace" or "supersede" the symbolic "(red) blood" that had been "drained" or "poured out" (Greek: *ek-cheō*) from the "outer body" of Jesus, this is not to suggest that the "blood" of Jesus's "outer body" would have been seen as "defective" per se, any more than the *psyché* or "soul" was seen as "defective" per se. But I do think that the "old blood" (or "red blood") circulating through Jesus's "outer body" would probably have been seen as in some way *inferior to* the "new blood" (i.e., "living water") circulating through Jesus's "inner body."[128] It is true that the "blood" (*haima*) that had been "shed" or "poured out" by Jesus is described in 1 Peter 1:19 as "precious" (or "costly": *timios*). But, at the same time, the "merchants" and "traders" of Babylon are also described in Revelation 18:19 as having been made rich by Babylon's "preciousness" (or "costliness," or "wealth": *timiotés*). So 1 Peter 1:19 should not necessarily be read to imply that the New Testament authors believed that the "blood" that "Jesus" had "shed" or "poured out" was not meant to be *replaced by*, or be *transformed into*, something else, and something considered better. In fact, 1 Peter 1:18-19 says,

[Y]ou were ransomed [or redeemed: *lytroō*] from your pointless way of life handed down from (your) (fore)fathers [*patro-paradotos*, derived from *para-didōmi*, which can mean "to hand down, to hand over, to deliver over, to transmit," as well as "to betray"],[129] not by **corruptible** silver or gold, but by the precious [or costly: *timios*] blood of Christ, as (that) of an unblemished [or blameless, or faultless, or unimpaired, or perfect: *amōmos*] and spotless [or faultless, or undefiled, or unsullied, or irreproachable: *aspilos*; in other words, **uncorrupted**] lamb.

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[127] This way of explaining the dynamic might help to shed light on the reason why the maintaining of literalist interpretations of esotericist religious writings (i.e., "the outer body")—even as it *perpetuates the existence* of some hidden "inner body" (here signifying both an "inner meaning" and an "inner self")—also *suppresses* that "inner body" and keeps it from revealing and expressing itself in a normal and healthy way. This would help to explain why there would be psychological resistance to the esotericist arrangement *among esotericists* (who would here be associated with "the inner body"). It cannot be assumed that esotericists wholly *want* to "hide" merely because they do so; in fact, there is good reason to believe that they desperately want to find some way by which they might *stop* hiding—so that they can finally reveal what they consider to be their "true selves." But so long as the "outer body" (and all that is implied by that symbol) continues to exist, they are strongly reluctant to do so; and this helps to explain their hostility toward the very existence of the "outer body."

[128] I think the relationship between "soul" (or *psyché*) and "spirit" (or *pneuma*) might be thought of as being analogous to the relationship between "earth" and "heaven," respectively: In the Bible, "earth" is not depicted as being *bad* per se, but it is clearly depicted as being *inferior* to "heaven." And again, the perceived "inferiority" of *psyché* with respect to *pneuma* is indicated in, for example, James 3:14-15 and Jude 1:19, both of these passages having been quoted in a previous footnote.

[129] Consider the possibility that the idea of "handing down" or "handing over" or "delivering" (*para-didōmi*) in this context is not entirely unrelated to that same idea as found in the context of verses such as Matthew 11:27 (in which Jesus says, "All things [*panta*] have been handed down [*para-didōmi*] to me by the Father [genitive *patros*]…"), and Matthew 17:22 and Matthew 26:2, in which the "body" of Jesus himself is what is to be "handed over" or "delivered over" (*para-didōmi*).

If the symbolic "blood" (along with the "flesh," presumably) was serving as the "ransom" in an exchange, then that means it had to have been "given up," not "retained." Furthermore, the comparison made between "silver or gold" and the "costly blood of Christ" suggests that Jesus's "blood" was indeed being compared to the "wealth" (or "costliness," or "preciousness," or "magnificence," or "opulence": *timiotés*) of Babylon/Babel, with the difference between them perhaps having been that Jesus's "wealth" was understood to be some sort of uncorrupted or pure "version" of the corresponding "wealth" of Babylon. So, according to what I think may have been the authors' conception, the "wealth" of Jesus's "blood" (and "flesh") would not have *permanently replaced* the "wealth" of Babylon; rather, I think the "wealth" of Jesus's "blood" (and "flesh") would have been made to serve as a kind of *temporary substitute* for the "wealth" of Babylon, thereby enabling *both of them* to be "done away with," so that *both of them* could then be replaced *by something else*: something which was not "costly" (*regardless* of whether or not it was "corrupt" or "corruptible"), and which would thenceforth be given "freely," or "without payment," or "as a gift" (Greek *dōrean*) —in exactly the same way that the "living water" is said in Revelation 21:6 to be given out in the "new Jerusalem." And in Revelation 22:1 this "living water" or "water of life" is said to "go forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb," which suggests that in the "new Jerusalem" it would no longer be "blood"—or, at least, not the "old" or "red" or "earthy" kind of "blood"—that would thenceforth flow out of the symbolic sacrificial "lamb."[130] Furthermore, I think that what was *being* redeemed or ransomed in the exchange, according to this symbolic scheme, was "Babylon" itself—or, to be more

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[130] Also, the notion that "Holy Spirit" or "living water" may have been understood to be what would replace the "old blood" or "old wine" is given support by a reading of Acts 2:2,4 in conjunction with Acts 2:13, according to which it seems that being "filled" (*pléroō* and *pléthō*) with the "Holy Spirit" may have been meant to be equated with being "filled" (*mestoō*) with "new wine" (indicated here by "sweet wine," *gleukos*). Moreover, the replacement or substitution of the "old blood" (or "old wine") with this "new blood" (or "new wine," or "living water") may have been understood to signify or correspond to the "making all (things) new" by Jesus that is spoken of in Revelation 21:5, since the next verse, Revelation 21:6, speaks of the "water of life" being given "freely" (or "without payment," or "as a gift": *dōrean*).

  If the "Holy Spirit" was indeed understood to be signified by the symbol of "new wine" (which would have been understood to be a kind of "living water"), then, since "blood" and "wine" are typically corresponding symbols in the Bible (see, e.g., Genesis 49:11, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25, and Revelation 14:20), it would tend to confirm that the "Holy Spirit" was conceived of as the "new blood" that would flow within (or, among the "members" of) the "body of Christ," with the "body of Christ" corresponding to a kind of large-scale "inner body" made "manifest." I think the New Testament authors' understanding may have been that this symbolic "new blood" would begin to "flow" within an individual following the "death" or "piercing" *for the individual* of the symbolic "old man" or "outer body"—which I think would perhaps have been associated with that individual's baptism, which is what would have allowed him to think of himself as having been "joined" or "grafted" as a member of the "*inner* body of Christ."

precise, "the harlot of Babylon," signifying the figure of "Eve" or the archetypal "Woman" in her then-current state.[131] Or, to state it somewhat differently, the figure of "Hagar" was being transformed into the figure of "Sarah," thus reflecting a transformation of the archetypal "Woman" from a state of "slavery" into one of "freedom."[132] Once this process of "ransoming" or "redeeming" was complete, the "harlot" would be suitable to become the "bride" of the "lamb," both now sharing in the same measure of "innocence" and "purity" and "incorruption."[133]

   I believe the two types of "wealth" to which I am referring would have been understood to correspond generally to two different types of *interpretive approaches* to the esoteric symbolism of the Bible (just as "silver" and "gold" would probably each

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[131] This is suggested, for one thing, by Revelation 18:14, which speaks of "the ripe fruit" (*opōra*) of the "desire of the soul [*psyché*]" of the "harlot of Babylon" being taken away from her upon the fall of Babylon. The apparent implication is that "Eve" never *stopped* desiring the "fruit" of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," even after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. This would also suggest that "the Fall" in the Garden of Eden was understood to be associated with the introduction of some fundamental *division* into the world. And I think that this fundamental division was what I have been calling the esotericist phenomenon, and as such represented a division of *meaning*, since it is esotericism's provision for concealed meanings that creates *hiding places* for "evil." A bifurcation into "good and evil" is thus very closely associated with a bifurcation into "light and darkness," or "truth and falsehood"—or, to approach it in a slightly different way, "public (meanings) and private (meanings)." Such a division into "public (meanings) and private (meanings)" might help to explain why, according to Genesis 2:25 and 3:7, "the Fall" was associated with the emergence of a feeling of "shame" by Adam and Eve at their "nakedness." (But that is not to suggest that the dismantling of religious esotericism requires the eradication of "personal privacy" understood in its ordinary, non-esoteric sense.)

[132] In fact, the Greek word *porné*, meaning "harlot" or "prostitute," is probably derived from *pernémi*, meaning "to sell" or "to export for sale," including, "to export captives for sale as slaves." So the authors of the New Testament may have understood the "harlot of Babylon" to essentially be a "sex slave," not just a prostitute. This would be consistent with the description of "Hagar" given by Paul in Galatians 4:22-24 (as well as the description of her given in Genesis 16:1-3), as being not only a "slave," but also Abraham's concubine—making her, in other words, a sex slave (among other things).

   Furthermore, the suggestion that I make of a symbolic transformation of "Hagar" into "Sarah" is perhaps what is being alluded to in Hosea 2:16: "And it will come to pass in that day, says the Lord, (that) you will call me by [*qara*] (the name) 'my husband' [*ishi*], and no longer will you call me by [*qara*] (the name) 'my master' [*baali*]." First, notice that if my suggestion is correct the passage would be identifying "Abraham" with "the Lord"—an idea that I discuss more in Part II of the essay. Second, in connection with the use of the Hebrew word *qara*, again consider Zephaniah 3:9, which says, speaking in the voice of the Lord, "For then ['in the day of the Lord'] I will turn [or turn about, or turn over, or overturn, or turn back: *haphak*] unto the peoples a purified language, that all may call upon [or call by, or read (aloud) in, or assign names by: *qara*] the name of the Lord, to serve him with a united [or a single: *echad*] will [more literally, 'under a single yoke'; and even more literally, 'with a single shoulder': *shekem*]." A comparison of the two passages offers the suggestion that the transformation of "the Lord as my master" into "the Lord as my husband" that was expected to occur "in the day of the Lord" was understood to be associated with, and made possible by, a "turning" (or "overturning") as well as a "purifying" of language. And if this is correct, then Paul's discussion in Galatians 4:22-31 would thus in turn be associating the "overturning of language" and the "purifying of language" (i.e., the putting aside of "fleshly" meanings, I believe) with the transformation of the "present Jerusalem" (i.e., "Babel" or "Babylon") into the "new" or "heavenly Jerusalem" (and the occurrence of this transformation is what would signify the "day of the Lord" or "Second Coming").

[133] Note that this would suggest that the "beast" associated with the "harlot" would also have been transformed into the "lamb": in other words, the "beast" would have been rendered gentle and harmless— and non-carnivorous (i.e., not eating "flesh"). Compare Revelation 17:1-6 with Revelation 21:9-14 to see the intended parallelism between these two sets of symbols.

have been understood to signify types of interpretive approaches in their own right).[134] The "blood" of Jesus would thus have been understood to represent a kind of "means of exchange"; and the "pouring out" of the "blood" (i.e., the symbolic "Crucifixion") would have been understood to represent *a final "trade"*—that is, *a final "translation" of the symbolism*—by means of which all of the "exchanging" and "trading" and "substituting" of meanings that had long been associated with the symbol of "Babylon" or "Babel" would be brought to an end.[135]

This theory receives additional support from several passages in which Paul refers to the "reconciling" that Christ does. In Colossians 1:19-22 he writes,

> For it pleased (God) to have all the fullness [*plérōma*] dwell [*kat-oikeō*] in (Christ), and through him to reconcile [or change, or change back: *apo-katallassō*] all things [*panta*] to [or into: *eis*] himself, having made peace [*eiréno-poieō*] through the blood

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[134] In Colossians 1:25-27, Paul refers to "the word [*logos*] of God" as "the mystery [*mystérion*] hidden away [*apo-kryptō*] from the ages and from the generations but (which has) now been made manifest [*phaneroō*] by his saints." In addition, he says, "(By his saints) God has wished to make known [*gnōrizō*] (how great are) the riches [or wealth: *ploutos*] of the glory [or appearance: *doxa*] of this mystery [*mystérion*] among the Gentiles [or the nations: *ethnos*], which [mystery] is Christ in you, the hope [or expectation: *elpis*] of glory [*doxa*]." Paul thus seems to here be identifying "the word of God," "Christ in you," "the hope [or expectation] of glory," and some sort of "mystery" (perhaps a reference to the "inner person" itself, at least in part).

Paul also seems to be identifying the idea of the "riches" or "wealth" of the Gentiles with the idea of the "glorifying" or "revealing" of the "mystery," which would have been equivalent to the "realization" of "the hope [or expectation] of glory." The word *ploutos*, meaning "riches" or "wealth," is used in reference to Babylon in Revelation 18:17; and Revelation 18:15 and Revelation 18:19 say that it was by the "costliness" (or "wealth," or "preciousness," or "opulence": *timiotés*) of Babylon that the merchants (or **traders**: *emporos*) of **Babylon** "were made rich" [*plouteō*]. Since Revelation 14:8 says that "all the nations [*ethnos*]" had drunk of "the wine of the wrath of the fornication" of "Babylon," this suggests to me that the understanding of the New Testament authors may have been that in "the glory (or glorifying) of the mystery," one kind of "riches" or "wealth" would *displace* another kind. If the "blood of Christ" was understood to represent a kind of "riches" or "wealth" capable of displacing the kind of "riches" or "wealth" that "the Gentiles" or "the nations" already possessed (which might perhaps have been understood to signify the "secret teachings," *mystérion*, of their mystery religions), then the "pouring out" or "shedding" of that "blood"—in other words, the symbolic Crucifixion—might have been associated with the idea of the "glorifying" or "revealing" of some great "mystery" (perhaps revealed in such a way that it would *discredit* the "mysteries" or secretly hoarded "wealth" of the Gentiles—at least in so far as they were kept as mysteries). And the language of John 7:39 does in fact seem to imply that the Crucifixion and Resurrection were meant to be seen as corresponding to a kind of "glorifying" (*doxazō*).

[135] In support of this hypothesis, consider John 2:13-16, in which Jesus is described as "pouring out" (**ek-cheō**) the coins of **the money-changers in the Jerusalem temple** in his anger at the "house of God" having been made to serve as a "house of **trade** [*emporion*]." This may have been meant to prefigure the "pouring out" (**ek-cheō**) of Jesus's "blood" (*haima*) in the Crucifixion, as spoken of, for example, in Luke 22:20—which prefiguration may have been meant to indicate what the symbolic "Crucifixion" was actually understood and expected to accomplish once it took place on a large scale.

Also consider that Isaiah 23:2 (LXX) speaks of the "traders [**meta-ballō**] of Phoenicia" in reference to the notion of their "crossing over [or passing through: *dia-peraō*] the sea." In addition to "**to trade, to exchange, to barter, to traffic in**," the Greek word **meta-ballō** can also mean "**to translate, to shift, to suddenly change course, to wheel round**." Isaiah 23:3 (LXX) further says, "In much water [*hydōr*] (there is) seed [or '(there is) a seed': *sperma*] of traders [**meta-ballō**]; the traders [**meta-ballō**] of the nations [*ethnos*] are like a harvest [*amétos*] being carried in [or contributed: *eis-pherō*]." (Cf. Revelation 21:24-26, describing the "kings of the earth" who "carry [or bring: *pherō*] the glory and honor of the nations [*ethnos*] into [*eis*] (the new Jerusalem).")

[*haima*] of his Cross—through him—both the (things) upon earth and the (things) in the heavens. And you, who were at one time alienated [*ap-allotrioō*] and hostile [or hateful: *echthros*] in mind [*dianoia*], (and) evil in deed, he has now reconciled [or changed, or changed back: *apo-katallassō*] in the body [*sōma*] of his flesh [*sarx*] [or, "in his body of flesh"], through the death [*thanatos*], to present you [or, "to place (you) beside (him)": *par-istémi*] holy and unblemished [or blameless, or faultless, or unimpaired, or perfect: *amōmos*] and above reproach [*anegklétos*] before him….

And in Ephesians 2:14-16 Paul writes,

For (Christ) himself is our peace [or harmony, or concord, or wholeness: *eiréné*],[136] having made [*poieō*] both [*amphoteroi*] (into) one, and having pulled apart [or broken down, or torn down: *lyō*] the dividing wall [*meso-toichon*, derived from *toichos*, which means "wall" and is an alternate form of *teichos*] of the barrier [or hedge, or fence: *phragmos*], the hostility [or enmity, or hatred: *echthra*] in **his** [!] flesh [*en té sarki **autou***], having done away with [*katargeō*] the law of commandments [*entolé*] in ordinances [or decrees: *dogma*], so that he might in himself transform [or fashion, or build, or form: *ktizō*] the two [*dyo*] into one new [*kainos*] man [or person: *anthrōpos*], making [*poieō*] peace [or harmony, or concord, or wholeness: *eiréné*], and might reconcile [or change, or change back: *apo-katallassō*] both [*amphoteroi*] to God in one body [*sōma*], through the Cross, having put to death [or killed, or slain: *apokteinō*] the hostility [or enmity, or hatred: *echthra*] in it [the word "it" apparently referring to "the body," "the flesh," and "the man" all at once].[137]

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[136] Keep in mind that the Greek word *eiréné*, meaning "peace, harmony, concord, wholeness," is often used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word *shalom*, having roughly the same meanings; and consider the significance that that fact might have with regard to the bringing into being of the "new Jerusalem"—a name that is derived from the Hebrew adjective *shalem*, which corresponds to the noun *shalom*, meaning "complete, full, whole, peaceful, safe."

[137] Consider that one might compare this passage to Genesis 11:1-9 (the "Tower of Babel" passage), if one associates the "fortified structure" (or "tower," or "castle": Hebrew *migdal*) in the latter passage with the ideas of "hostility" and "enmity," as well as if one thinks of a "dividing wall" or "barrier" or "fence" as having been erected with the building of that "fortified structure"; and also given that the words that Paul uses obviously give rise to the idea of something being made "inaccessible" (or "impenetrable," or "fortified," or "walled-off," or "fenced-off": Hebrew *batsar*). In fact, Isaiah 2:15 speaks of a "fortified [*batsar*] wall [LXX: *teichos*]," and Isaiah 22:10 speaks of the "fortifying [*batsar*] of walls [LXX: *teichos*]"; and Hosea 8:14 speaks of Judah "multiplying walled-up [or fortified: *batsar*; LXX: *teicheō*] cities"; and 1 Chronicles 32:1 likewise speaks of "walled-up [or fortified: *batsar*; LXX: *teicheō*] cities."

If that suggestion is correct, then consider also that Paul's use of the word *lyō* in Ephesians 2:14-16 to mean "to pull apart, to tear down, to break down" in connection with this "wall" or "barrier" might in that case imply—given Jesus's use of the closely related word *kata-lyō*, meaning "to tear down," in passages such as Luke 21:5-6 in connection with the "temple" (Greek *hieron*) in Jerusalem—that Paul was comparing both Jesus's "body" and the Jerusalem "temple" to the "Tower of Babel." And in John 2:19 Jesus, like Paul, uses the Greek word *lyō*, saying, "Pull down [or tear down, or pull apart, or tear apart: *lyō*] this temple [*naos*], and in three days I will raise it up [*egeirō*]." Furthermore, consider the larger passage in which John 2:19 is found, John 2:13-21, in which Jesus *compares his own "body" to the Jerusalem "temple"* (Greek *naos*)—which he in turn implicitly *compares to "Babylon,"* partly because of calling it a "house of trade" (*oikon emporiou*).

Also give special consideration to John 2:17, which, referring to Psalm 69:9 and speaking in reference to Jesus, says, "The zeal [more literally, heat or burning: *zélos*] of your house [*oikos*] will consume me [or 'eat me up': *kat-esthiō*]"—which brings to mind the image of the mythical "Phoenix." (Note that Revelation 18:8 says that "Babylon" would be "burned up [or consumed: *kata-kaiō*] in fire [*en pyri*]," and Revelation

It is interesting that the word *apo-katallassō*, meaning "to reconcile" or "to change (back)," is used in both of these passages, and in both cases is associated with the Crucifixion—that is, with the "pulling apart" of the "flesh," and with the "death" of the "body of flesh"; and, it is thus also implied, with the "pouring out" of the "blood"—with the result that some state of "unity" would thereby ultimately be achieved. The word *katallassō*, from which *apo-katallassō* is derived, can, like *apo-katallassō*, similarly mean "to reconcile" (i.e., "to change (one's attitude toward a person)"); it can also mean "to atone." But in addition to these meanings, *katallassō* can also have the meaning of "to exchange" or "to change" (especially as in "money changing"), or "to buy and sell." This suggests that the "reconciliation" or "atonement" achieved by the symbolic "Crucifixion" may actually have been understood to be achieved by means of the executing of some great "exchange of currencies" or "changing of monies"—which I think may have been understood to symbolize some great "translation" (or "changing of perceived meanings," or "re-interpretation") of the symbolism.

<u>The possible symbolic significance of "oldness" in the New Testament; and the possible significance of symbolism involving the archetypal figures of the "elder brother/elder son" and "younger brother/younger son"</u>

In Romans 7:6 (which I also quote above), the idea of "newness" is found associated with the idea of "the spirit," as well as with those of "life" and "freedom" (or "freely given service"), while the idea of "oldness" or the state of "being an elder," or "seniority," is associated with "the body," "death," and "bondage" (or "slavery," or "restraint"):

> But now we have been discharged [or "put away": *katargeō*] from the law, having died [*apothnéskō*] in [*en*] that (by) which we were being restrained [or "being held," or "being held back," or "being held down": *kat-echō*], so that we give service [*douleuō*] in newness [or freshness: *kainotés*] of spirit [*pneuma*], and not in oldness [*palaiotés*] of written letter [*gramma*].

18:9 and 18:18 speak of Babylon's "burning" (*pyrōsis*). And in Revelation 20:9 one can find the Greek word *kat-esthiō*, meaning "to consume, to devour, to eat up," used in connection with the idea of "fire" (*pyr*) in particular.) This may have also been meant as an allusion to the notion of Jesus serving as the "whole burnt offering"—which would be consistent with Jesus's being referred to in the New Testament as "the Lamb." In Genesis 22:7-8, the sacrificial "lamb" is associated both with "Isaac" (corresponding to "the Son" and to Jesus), and with the making of a "whole burnt offering" (Hebrew *olah*, which more literally means "an ascent," and can also mean "a stairway" or "steps"). So the idea in the authors' minds may have been that after having been "burned up" (or "burned down"), the "Lamb" (or "temple") would be "resurrected" and would "ascend" into a *new* kind of "temple" (or "tabernacle," or "tent": Greek *skéné*); a new kind of "body"; a new kind of "covenant"; and a new kind of "heaven" and "earth." And following (or coinciding with) this "ascent" or "ascension" by "the Lamb," the "new Jerusalem" would "descend" (Greek *kata-bainō*) from heaven (see Revelation 21:2), as a result of which there would no longer be any need to make further "ascents" (Hebrew *olah*) to heaven by way of offering ritual sacrifices of "the Lamb" to God, because *the distance separating* "the Father" from "the Son" would have been bridged, and both "God" and "the Lamb" would have come to occupy *the same place* in the interior of the human person—which would become both "God's throne" and the "new temple," replacing the previous type of temple where animal and cereal sacrifices would be offered. (See Revelation 21:22, Revelation 22:1, and John 7:38.)

The association of the idea of "oldness" specifically with the idea of "being restrained" brings to mind the phrase "elder in chains," which is one possible translation of the phrase *presbeuō en halysei* as an alternative to "ambassador in chains" in Ephesians 6:20, one of the verses already quoted above. And here in Romans 7:6, both of these ideas are also in turn found associated with the idea of the "written letter" (i.e., "the outer law"): a term that can, I believe, be thought of as an alternate name for the idea of the "outer meaning."

In 2 Corinthians 5:16-20, a similar association can be found between the idea of "oldness" and that of "the flesh"; and "the flesh," for reasons given above, appears in general to correspond to the idea of the "written letter" or "the law," as well as to that of "captivity" or "restraint." In 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 Paul writes,

> Even if [or even though: *ei kai*] we came to know [or we learned, or we became acquainted with: *ginōskō*] Christ according to flesh [*sarx*], now we know [*ginōskō*] him (in this way) no longer, so that if anyone (is) in [*en*] **Christ**, (he is) a **new** [*kainé*, a form of *kainos*] **creation** [*ktisis*]. The old (things) [or former (things), or first (things): *archaia*, related to the word *arché*, meaning "beginning, origin, first (part or element), leading (part or element)"] have passed away [*par-erchomai*]; behold, (the) **new (things)** [*kaina*, a form of *kainos*] have **come into being** [*gegonan*, a form of *ginomai*]. And all (things) [*panta*] (are) from God, he who changed [*kat-allassō*] us to (become more like) himself [or, "who reconciled us to himself"] through Christ, and who gave to us the ministration of [or "office of," in the sense of "having responsibility for"] change [or reconciliation: *katallagé*, derived from *kat-allassō*]— just as [or "so that"] God has been, in Christ, changing [*kat-allassō*] (the) world [*kosmos*] to (become more like) himself [or "has been, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself"], not including in (people's) accounts [or, "not imputing to them": *logizomai*, related to the word *logos*, which can mean "account"] their stumblings [or fallings: *para-ptōma*], and having placed [or deposited: *tithémi*] in us the account [or

message, or discourse, or word: *logos*][138] of change [or reconciliation: *katallagé*].[139] Therefore [*oun*], we are ambassadors [or "elders"; or, both "elders" and "ambassadors" at once: *presbeuō*] on behalf of [or for the sake of: *hyper*] Christ, as if God is calling for [or summoning, or exhorting: *para-kaleō*] (you) through us.[140] We beseech you on behalf of [or for the sake of: *hyper*] Christ: Be reconciled to God [or, "Be changed to (become more like) God": *kat-allassō*].[141]

As an initial matter, notice that in this passage "knowing Christ according to flesh" is seemingly being associated with "the old things [*archaia*]," while "being in Christ" is being equated with "being a new creation," and with the "coming into being of new

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[138] Compare the use here of the Greek word *logos*, meaning "word, utterance, message, account, discourse, speech, meaning," to the use in Genesis 11:1 (contained in the passage about the building of "Babel") of the Hebrew word *dabar*, which can similarly mean "word, utterance, account, discourse, speech, message." (And the Greek word *logos* is indeed the word frequently used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word *dabar*.) This comparison gives rise to the suggestion that the "reconciling" (or "changing," or "changing back": *katallassō* or *apo-katallassō*) of which Paul speaks here in 2 Corinthians 5:16-20, as well as in Colossians 1:19-22 and Ephesians 2:14-16 (both of which I quoted just a bit above that in the previous section), may have been understood—consciously or unconsciously—to refer to the "reconciling" of the *dual* or *multiple* "accounts" (or "messages," or "discourses," or "meanings," or "speeches") that I believe Genesis 11:1-9 implies had first come into being at "Babel." It would signify the "making of both into one" and the "transforming of the two into one new man," as Paul puts it in Ephesians 2:14-16. The "inner meaning" and the "outer meaning" would be made into a "single meaning," just as the "inner self" and "outer self" would be made into a "single self." (And this would be more than just an analogy: The first "reconciliation" is what would make the second "reconciliation" *possible*.)

  By the way, observe the contrast between the words "word" (Hebrew *dabar*; Greek *logos*) and "language" (Hebrew *saphah*; Greek *cheilos*) as they are used in, for example, Isaiah 29:11, 29:13, and 29:18. This may be reflecting the same distinction that one finds made in Genesis 11:1 between "language" (Hebrew *saphah*) and "words" (Hebrew *dabar*). A possible suggestion is that when the "unity" of the more *interior* "words" (or "speech," or "message," or "discourse": Hebrew *dabar*; Greek *logos* or *phōné*) was shattered at "Babel," there were at least *two* "messages" or "discourses" that became lost from public understanding, even as the more *exterior* "language" (or "lip," or "edge": Hebrew *saphah*; Greek *cheilos*) continued to operate in public view. But it is very important to consider: Even though *both* of these "messages or "discourses" would have become hidden from public view, one of them may have felt a need to "go into hiding" *even more deeply than the other* in order to *protect* itself from that *other* hidden "message" or "discourse." (The distinction between these two "discourses" would correspond to the distinction that I suggest elsewhere in the essay between the "word of God" and the "word of man": The "more deeply hidden" discourse would correspond to the "word of God," while the "less deeply hidden" discourse would correspond to what I am calling the "word of man." And both of these "messages" or "discourses" might be thought to constitute or correspond to what I elsewhere in the essay call "unconsciously organized conspiracies.")

  Also, a comparison of Isaiah 29:11, 29:13, and 29:18 suggests the possibility of an intended association between the idea of the "mouth" (Hebrew *peh*; Greek *stoma*) and that of "language" (or "lip," or "edge": Hebrew *saphah*; Greek *cheilos*), and between the idea of "words" (or "speech," or "message": Hebrew *dabar*; Greek *logos*) and that of the "heart" (Hebrew *leb*; Greek *kardia*)—which would tend to confirm the greater perceived "interiority" of "words" (or "speech," or "message," or "discourse": Hebrew *dabar*) as compared to "language" (Hebrew *saphah*).

[139] The Greek word *logizomai* can mean "to give an account," in the sense of "to give a definition," just as the word *logos* can mean "account" or "definition." So Paul's meaning here may have been that the person who was "changed" would be "redefined," and in such a way that his "stumblings" would no longer be considered part of his "definition" (or "self-definition," perhaps).

  Also notice that the "stumblings" or "fallings" are associated with the "flesh," or "outer body," so that, presumably, once the "outer body" was "taken out of the account," so too would its "stumblings" be. And if, as I suggest in one the footnotes just below, the "outer body" was understood to be associated with the

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things [*kaina*]." In other words, there is an *opposition* being set up between "knowing Christ according to flesh" and "being in Christ"; and those who only know Christ "according to flesh"—which I believe means "according to the *outer* interpretation of the esoteric symbolism"—are not yet considered to "be *in* Christ." Furthermore, the theme of "old things (*archaia*) having passed away (*par-erchomai*)" and of "new things (*kaina*) having come into being (*gegonan*, a form of *ginomai*)" is strongly reminiscent of Revelation 21:1-7, which describes the "passing away" (*ap-erchomai*) of "(the) first heaven and the first earth," and the creation or coming into being of "a new [*kainos*] heaven and a new [*kainos*] earth"; and in this passage Jesus also says, "I make all (things) [*panta*] new [*kaina*]," as well as announcing—presumably in reference to these "new

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"socially conditioned self" or "socially presented self," then this passage would be suggesting that the type of sins deemed to have been created by society—i.e., the "sins of the outer body"—would have been effectively laid at the doorstep of an evil and fundamentally unnatural and disordered society rather than attributed to the "genuine" individual person.

[140] On the one hand, a translation of the Greek verb *presbeuō* in this passage as "to be an ambassador" seems preferable to "to be an elder" because of the immediate context, which speaks of acting "on behalf of" (*hyper*) Christ. On the other hand, "to be an elder" would seem to be the preferable translation as a more general matter, since a related word, the substantivized adjective *presbyteros*, is, as it is found in the New Testament, almost universally translated as "an elder," not "an ambassador."

[141] As an aside, I think that this entire passage is essentially speaking of nothing other than the "inner man" or "inner self" (represented by "God" or "Christ") becoming "externalized," both in the lives of the Christians being addressed as well as in the "world" generally; it is this "externalizing" that I think the "changing" or "reconciling" (*katallassō*) was essentially meant to refer to. I think the process may have been basically understood to involve the *replacing*, by the "inner self," of what had theretofore been the "outer self." Or, to conceptualize it another way, the "inner self" (read: "God" or "Christ") would have been *allowed* to become responsible for changing a person (that is, the "self" considered *as a whole*) into a *new kind* of "outer self." I think Paul was looking forward to the creation of a new state of affairs in which the "inner person" would be free to "be itself," out in the open and without any concealment.

But if Paul's goal was for the "inner person" to be out in the open and without concealment, what was stopping him, or anyone else, from realizing that goal immediately and forever after? It must have been that Paul believed that the "outer body" or "outer person" had to be "done away with" or "destroyed" (or else allowed or encouraged to "wither" or "wear away") *before* the "inner person" would ever have had the opportunity to fully reveal itself and thereby find its freedom. And this suggests, even if only implicitly, that the choice of whether or not to "reveal oneself" was not deemed to be entirely in the hands of any single individual; it must have been expected that the *social environment* would have to change sufficiently before that great "revealing" of everyone's "inner self" could take place. In general, there seems to have been a very close (and I think appropriate) association in the minds of the New Testament authors between the symbol of the "outer body" and the notion of some "self" that was conditioned by a person's social environment, such that it would not have been possible to imagine a "putting off" of an individual "outer body" without assuming a prior fundamental change in social arrangements and relationships; but, at the same time, it would not have been possible to imagine such a social change occurring without assuming a prior willingness on the part of individuals to "put off" or "lay aside" those ways of thinking and behaving that helped to give life to the social arrangements that were felt to oppress people's more authentic personalities and natures.

However, in the specific context of esotericism, to posit that Paul was of the belief that the generic "inner self" was not ready *quite yet* to "come out of hiding"—that essentially the outer world had not yet been made "safe enough" for this to happen, and that more work would first need to be done to "prepare things" for its emergence, with the result that this "inner self" would have to continue to "hide out" for the time being—would really just be another way of saying that Paul and the other apostles were *themselves* not yet ready to "put off" the "outer body" *of esotericism*. But given that the idea of the "inner self" was typically associated with "sincerity" and "purity" and "truth," it seems reasonable to surmise that it must have been deception and fraud and "fakeness"—and all of the exquisitely subtle forms of *aggression* that these make possible—that the "inner self" was really hiding *from*. So once again, I believe the early Christian apostles

things"—that "they have come into being [or, that 'they have been born': *gegonan*, a form of *ginomai*]." But notice that this parallel between the two passages tends to imply that the "Second Coming" was considered to have *already* occurred for those individuals who were "in Christ." So in those places in the New Testament epistles where the "coming of the Lord" is spoken of as an event that would occur in the future, this may have been understood to refer to that time when the same "inner meanings" that had *already* been (to some extent) discerned by those who were "in Christ" would be publicly disclosed (or otherwise discovered or known) on a more widespread basis. And perhaps it was believed that only with the occurrence of such a great "revealing" could the transforming or changing or reconciling of *everyone*—the whole "world" (*kosmos*), even those who were already "in Christ"—become *completed*. If so, then that might be partly because even if the "inner meanings" had already been "discerned" by those who were "in Christ" to some greater extent than those who were not yet "in Christ," those "inner meanings" would still not necessarily have been discerned at a fully *conscious* level of awareness; it may be that even those who were "in Christ" still required that the "inner meanings" be made *more* conscious to them before those meanings could be considered to have been fully "revealed" or "disclosed." Or—closely related to this idea—perhaps it was the inability of the persons who were already "in Christ" to *articulate* their understandings of the "inner meanings" in more conscious (and thus, *less misleading*) terms to others that was continuing to prevent a more widespead "revealing" from occurring, thereby preventing the rest of the "world" from being similarly "reconciled"; and the resulting failure of the others to be "reconciled" would in turn have had a negative impact on the Christians' *own* ability to fully "uncover" those "inner meanings," since both those who were "in Christ" and those who were not "in Christ" were inhabitants of the same society, and so could not help but influence each other's thinking (or lack of thinking).

    The passage I just quoted, 2 Corinthians 5:16-20, includes two references to "oldness": first, the use of the word *archaia*, meaning "old (things)"; and second, the use

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failed to appreciate that they were in part the *creators* of exactly what they found so objectionable about the generic symbolic "outer body"—so that if they assumed that they could start being open and honest *just as soon as* the "outer body" had fallen away, they ought to have expected that they would be waiting indefinitely.

   The "outer body" of esotericism that the apostles refused to "put off" would essentially correspond to the language of "outer meanings" that may have helped the apostles and evangelists to personally feel safe and protected. One part of the reason why it may have made them feel this way is that the "outer body" of esotericism would, in a sense, have served as *their own* "outer body," or "outer hide," or "external covering," in that the veiled language of "outer meanings" would have given them a feeling of ego-protection by giving them the ability to influence others, while at the same time allowing them to avoid directly stating their actual intentions and beliefs—because doing that would have made them vulnerable to being criticized or ridiculed. Another part of the reason might be found by thinking of the symbolic "outer body" as the apostles' own sense of *social identity*. Paul and the other apostles *were esotericists*: that was their "trade" or "occupation"; it was what they "did"; it is what they had been trained to do, and, with respect to the rest of society, it was what *defined* them. If Paul was not an esotericist (or a "tentmaker," as Acts 18:3 esoterically puts it), then what was he? Nothing but a naked "inner self," with *no place* left in the very sort of world that at least some part of him wanted to see created. So I think the less selfless tendencies within Paul and the other apostles may have "flinched" at this realization, and sabotaged the other tendencies within them that *did* want to see an end brought to the deception of religious esotericism. They were not (nor would anyone have been) capable of resolving the contradiction that they, as esotericists, had created by their partial opposition to esotericism. The contradiction cannot be resolved; it can only be walked away from.

of the word *presbeuō*, meaning "to be older," "to be senior," or "to be prior in age," or, alternatively (but still related to the other meanings), "to be an ambassador." As I already pointed out, the "old (things)" (*archaia*) are apparently being associated with the symbol of the "flesh," which, by looking at other New Testament passages, can in turn be associated with the notion of "restraint" or "captivity." With regard to the word *presbeuō*, in this passage, unlike in the case of the phrase *presbeuō en halysei* used in Ephesians 6:20, there is no overt connection between the use of the word *presbeuō* and the idea of "restraint." That might indicate that Paul intended for this particular use of the word to be understood to have a primary sense of "to be an ambassador"; but even if so, it would not necessarily exclude the possibility that he intended for it to have both senses at the same time. I think it is conceivable that, because of their "seniority" or their status as "elders" (in terms of symbolic "age" and amount of learning, not literal age) with respect to the ordinary convert to Christianity, Paul saw himself and the other apostles—or, perhaps, to be more precise, the "Christ within them" or the "*logos* within them" mentioned in the passage—as *intermediaries* (and thus also "ambassadors" or "delegates") between the "old" and the "new": intermediaries, that is, between the cryptic outer meanings and the "true" or "intended" inner meanings of the scriptures that would have been deemed to be "revealed" in so far as they had "been made new" or had "become new." If so, the understanding of the New Testament authors and other high-level Christians may have been that while the apostles would perhaps speak *less* cryptically and would try to spread their "inner message" to a wider audience than what would have been considered permissible under the "old order," they would still speak *more* cryptically than what people in the future would be expected to do under some "new order," once—as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 13:8 and 13:2—"prophecies" (*prophéteia*), and "tongues" (*glōssa*), and "(occult) knowledge" (*gnōsis*), and (so it is implied) "mysteries" (*mystérion*), had all been "done away with" (or "exhausted," or "worked out," or "rendered useless": *kat-argeō*) and "brought to an end" (*pauō*).

However, the sense of "outerness" that I believe may have been attached to the idea of "oldness" would also have an even more important potential significance. The Bible says that the Jewish and Christian God is "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (see, for example, Exodus 3:6). Abraham is said in Genesis 16:15 and Genesis 21:3 to have been the father of Ishmael and Isaac, and Isaac is said in Genesis 25:19-26 to have been the father of the "twins" Esau and Jacob. In regard to both of these generations, I think that the authors of the New Testament may have deemed the "elder son" (namely, Ishmael and Esau) to symbolize the "outer meaning" of the esoteric symbolism, while deeming the "younger son" (namely, Isaac and Jacob) to symbolize the "inner meaning" of that same esoteric symbolism (or, to be more precise, *an understanding* of the "inner meaning"). I make this suggestion partly because one comes to an understanding of the "outer" or "exoteric" meaning of the text *before* one comes to an understanding of its "inner" or "esoteric" meaning—which would make the *first* of the two interpretations the "elder" or "senior" interpretation.[142] Such an hypothesis is also supported by the fact that both Isaac and Jacob are described as having been favored over their older brothers

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[142] This hypothesis receives some support from the fact that in a footnote in *The Guide of the Perplexed* (which was written in Arabic), translator Shlomo Pines says that an Arabic term used by Maimonides that Pines translates into English as "the first meaning" signifies "the conventional meaning" (p. 64, n. 19). This fact also tends to support the explanation that I offer below in the main text regarding the "first fraud/second fraud" and "First Coming/Second Coming" symbolic dichotomies.

Ishmael and Esau (see Genesis 21:9-12, 25:23, and 27:37), which would be consistent with assuming the greater "value" (or "worth," or "preciousness," or "dignity": Greek *timé*) of the inner meaning.[143] The same split between the literal and "spiritual" interpretations might also be what was meant to be symbolized by references to "two brothers" or "twins" found in the Gospels (see, for example, Matthew 4:18, 4:21, and 20:24). It might also be what is being referred to in verses such as Luke 17:34-35, in which Jesus, speaking of the "end times," says,

> I say to you, in that night [*nyx*] there will be two (persons) [or two (men): *dyo*] on one bed [*kliné*]; one will be received [or taken, or accepted; or, more figuratively, "learned": *para-lambanō*] and the other will be let go [or given up, or yielded up: *aphiémi*]. There will be two (women) [*dyo*] grinding meal [*aléthō*] at the same (place together);[144] one will be received [or taken, or accepted, or learned: *para-lambanō*],[145] and the other will be let go [or given up, or yielded up: *aphiémi*].

The particular words used by the author, *para-lambanō* (meaning "to take," "to receive," "to accept," or, more figuratively, "to learn"), and *aphiémi* (meaning "to let go," "to give up," or "to yield up"), do indeed lend themselves to a reading of the parable in such a

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   Also, in connection with the esoteric meanings that I have suggested for the symbolic "elder son" (or "first son") and "younger son" (or "second son"), consider Genesis 25:22-23, in which Rebekah inquires of the Lord, asking why "the sons struggled with each other [or 'bruised each other,' or 'oppressed each other'; more literally, 'crushed each other': *ratsats*] within her [or 'in her inner parts,' or 'in her center': *qereb*]"; and the Lord replies by saying, "Two nations [*gowy*; LXX: *ethnos*] are in your womb [*beten*; LXX: *gastér*], and two peoples [or communities: *leom*] from your inner parts [*meeh*; LXX: *koilia*] will be separated [or divided, or distinguished: *parad*; LXX: *dia-stellō*, which can have those same meanings as well as that of 'to set apart']; and one people [*leom*] will be more well-established [or courageous, or strong, or alert: *amets*; LXX: *hyper-echō*, meaning 'to surpass, to excel'] than (the other) people [*leom*], and the elder [or 'the many,' or 'the greater,' or 'the larger,' or 'the superior': *rab*; LXX: *megas*] will serve [or 'be made to do the work of': *abad*; LXX: *douleuō*] the younger [or 'the lesser,' or 'the few,' or 'the small,' or 'the little,' or 'the ignoble,' or 'the inferior': *tsair*; LXX: *elassōn*]." (This passage is referred to by Paul in Romans 9:10-12.)

[143] That the symbolic relations between these two "brothers" must have been considered quite significant by the authors of the New Testament and the founders of Christianity is indicated by the fact that these matters are the subject of discussion by Paul in Romans 9:6-13; as well as in Galatians 4:22-31, the passage I quoted above in which Paul emphasizes the great importance for Christians of making a distinction between the symbolic "son of the slave woman"—that is, "Ishmael"—and the symbolic "son of the free (woman)"—that is, "Isaac," with whom he identifies both Christ and the Christians.

[144] In the version of this parable given in Matthew 24:41, the two women are described as grinding meal "in the mill" or "at the millstone" (*en tō mylō*).

   Incidentally, that such statements would never have been expected to be read literally *by anyone* is indicated by the fact that people would not have ordinarily ground meal during nighttime.

[145] The Greek word *para-lambanō* that is used here is the same word used by Plato in the passage from the *Theaetetus* that I quote in Part II of the essay: "As to this problem, then, have we not here a tradition [more literally, 'something handed down,' or 'something received': *para-lambanō*] from the ancients who hid [or concealed, or 'covered over': *epi-kryptō*] their meaning from the common herd [or 'the multitude': *polys*] in poetical figures [or 'fabrications'; more literally, 'makings' or 'productions': *poiésis*]…?" (180C-D; translation by Francis Cornford.) This gives rise to the suggestion that the "receiving" (*para-lambanō*) of which Jesus is speaking in the parable may have been meant to be understood to refer to a special "receiving" of "esoteric knowledge" or "sacred tradition" by "the initiated." Consider, however, that the word *para-lambanō* (as well as *lambanō*, from which *para-lambanō* is derived) can also mean "to initiate (someone into a secret society)."

way that the first figurative "person" in each of the two pairs serves as a symbol for the "inner meaning" (or "inner body"), while the second figurative "person" serves as a symbol for the "outer meaning" (or "outer body"). The "inner meaning" (or "inner body") would be "received" (or "taken," or "accepted," or "learned"), while the "outer meaning" (or "outer body") would be "let go" (or "given up," or "yielded up"). According to this reading, one *actual* (and not figurative) person could be thought of as doing *both* the "receiving" *and* the "letting go" of these two figurative "persons": In other words, the *actual* person would be involved in a process of separating or winnowing of two potentially distinct elements, so that one of them could be kept and the other could be thrown away.[146]

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[146] There are other possible ways of trying to make sense of this parable or proverb. For example, Luke 17:34-35 (the passage quoted) can be compared with Matthew 5:40, in which Jesus says, "And to the one desiring [*thelō*] to separate [or sift, or bring (you) to trial, or judge, or choose between: *krinō*] you and to take [or receive: **lambanō**] your tunic [or 'inner garment': *chitōn*], yield up [or give forth: **aphiémi**] to him the cloak [or 'outer garment': *himation*] as well." If this verse was intended to be read in conjunction with Luke 17:34-35, then it would, on the one hand, support the hypothesis that the "two persons" in each of the two pairs of which the parable speaks were meant to refer to an "inner meaning" (or "inner body," or "inner garment," perhaps corresponding to an "inner self") and an "outer meaning" (or "outer body," or "outer garment," perhaps corresponding to an "outer self"). On the other hand, it would also tend to indicate that —unlike the suggestion I offer in the main text—the authors did *not* anticipate that any "inner meaning" would be "learned" (or "received," or "accepted": *para-lambanō*) by the individual person at the "end of the age." In that case, it would be some *outside entity* that would have been understood to be responsible for the "taking" or "receiving" (or possibly "initiating": either *lambanō* or *para-lambanō*) of the "inner garment" or "inner body," and not the individual person himself. But the individual person *would be* responsible for the "yielding up" or "letting go" (*aphiémi*) of the "outer garment" or "outer body," possibly in order to *prevent* the "separating" or "dividing" (*krinō*) of the two "garments" or "bodies" that was desired by this outside entity—rather than, as I suggest in the main text, in order to *promote* a separating of the two. Note, however, that even if the purpose of "yielding up" or "giving away" the "outer garment" was to *prevent* that separation from occurring, the reason for *wanting* to prevent the separation may have been to *conceal* the true nature of the "inner garment" by using the *confusion* created by the "outer garment" (i.e., the "outer meaning")—due to the *multiplicity* of possible interpretations that the "outer meaning" would generate—as a kind of "smokescreen," or "cloak," to protect the "inner garment" (i.e., the "inner meaning," or the "inner self") from harm.

   Matthew 5:40 (the passage that I just quoted in the footnote) also raises a question: To whom might "the one desiring to separate you" have been meant to refer? A possible answer is found in Luke 22:31, in which Jesus says, "Simon, Simon, behold [or understand: *idou*, a form of *eidō*; which may have been meant to serve as a signal indicating that some especially significant or unexpected 'inner meaning' was involved in what he was saying], Satan desired (to have) [*exaiteō*] you (all) to sift [or winnow: *siniazō*] like wheat." (Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:35-49.) In other words, the authors of the Gospels may have intended that **Satan** be understood to be the "outside entity" desiring to do the "taking" or "receiving" or "initiating" (*lambanō* or *para-lambanō*) of the "inner garment" or "inner body" (or the "body" of "inner meanings"). This is not necessarily inconsistent with the hypothesis I just offered, that the ultimate reason for "yielding up" (*aphiémi*) the "cloak" (i.e., "outer meaning") may have been to better conceal the "inner garment" (i.e., "inner meaning") from "the wrong sort of people," so to speak. But another conceivable interpretation of Matthew 5:40—one which is consistent with the identifying of "Satan" as the "outside entity" that in Matthew 5:40 desires to "take" or "receive" (*lambanō* or *para-lambanō*) the "inner garment" or "inner body," and one which might also help to explain the "two persons" proverb given in Luke 17:34-35—is that what the authors of both passages would have understood to uniquely *characterize* the "end of the age," as opposed to all of the other times at which Satan desired to "take" or "receive" or "initiate" (*lambanō* or *para-lambanō*) the "inner garment" or "inner body," was that then, for the first time, certain individuals would have made the decision to "yield up" (*aphiémi*) to Satan their "cloak" or "covering" or "outer body"; because with no *separate* "outer body" to serve as a "cover" or "cloak" for Satan's work, there would no longer be any *separate*—and hence *secret* and *hidden*—"inner body" that Satan could

Regarding the distinction between the figures of "Esau" and "Jacob," consider the description of the birth of Esau in Genesis 25:25:

The first [or leader: *rishon*, derived from *rosh*, meaning "chief, head, top"; LXX: *prōto-tokos*, meaning "first-born"][147] came forth wholly [*kol*; LXX: *holos*] red [or, possibly, "earthy": *admoni*; LXX: *pyrrakés*, literally meaning "fiery-red"], like an outer garment [or cloak, or coat: **addereth**; LXX: *dora*, meaning "a skin" or "a hide"] of hair [or roughness, or bristles, or fur: **sear**; LXX: *dasys*],[148] and they called his name Esau [perhaps derived from the Hebrew word *asah*, which in this case would

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initiate into some *secret* and *hidden* body of "occult knowledge," or could otherwise "initiate" into habits of deception. As I believe is being indicated in Mark 3:23-26 and similar passages from the Gospels, Satan's power may have been deemed to *depend upon* making this "separation" or "division" between an "outer body" and an "inner body"; but these passages would also seem to be identifying this same proclivity or tendency as the source of Satan's ultimate demise. [As a brief aside, the Greek word *siniazō*, which is used in Luke 22:31 and means "to sift," can also have the more figurative meaning of "to riddle"—which may shed light on the purpose that the ancient esotericists' riddling was deemed to serve. But if the riddling was intended to facilitate "sifting," on exactly what basis were people being sifted? Exactly what characteristics were being "selected for"? Would all of those characteristics necessarily have been *intended* by the esotericists designing the riddles? Would either esotericists or non-esotericists necessarily have considered those characteristics desirable if they had been made to *clearly understand* which specific ones they were encouraging by the use of their methods?]

There is still another possible explanation of these passages, one that might allow a reader to reconcile an interpretation according to which the purpose of the "letting go" or "yielding up" (*aphiémi*) would be to *prevent* a separation between the "inner garment" (or "inner body") and the "outer garment" (or "outer body"), with an interpretation according to which its purpose would be to *promote* or *create* a separation between them. This would be to suppose that in Luke 17:34-35 (and also its close counterpart in Matthew 24:40-41) the author was reusing the same (or at least a very similar) combination of Greek words that is found in Matthew 5:40 (as well as elsewhere in the Gospels) to indicate that the approach that would be followed *at* the "end of the age" would represent *an exact reversal* of the approach that a Christian esotericist was expected to have been following *prior to* the "end of the age" (and the author may have expected that some readers would notice the irony in the different way in which the same combination of words was being reused). This would be because the "outer body" would, at the "end of the age," *no longer be* in the possession of the person, or under his control: It would *already* have been fully "taken" or "received" (*lambanō* or *para-lambanō*) as a result of having been "given over" or "handed over" (or "betrayed": *para-didōmi*); and now the only question remaining before the person was what to do with the "inner body" (corresponding to the "spirit") still under his control. Such a notion is suggested by the Gospels' Crucifixion narrative—which is especially significant given that I believe the Crucifixion narrative was intended to prefigure the "end of the age." [And Luke 22:3-6 and 22:53, and John 13:27 and 13:30, indicate that Satan "entered into" (*eis-erchomai*) Judas just before Jesus was "betrayed" (or "given over," or "transmitted," or "handed over": *para-didōmi*) by him—which suggests that with Jesus's arrest, the "outer garment" or "outer body" was deemed to be in the "power" of "darkness," and in the "hands" of "Satan"—who, I will presume, was "the one" in Matthew 5:40 who desired to "separate" (*krinō*) the two "garments" or "bodies" of a person. So, perhaps the "outer body" would be in the hands of Satan at that point because a person had *already* made the decision, in keeping with the teaching of Matthew 5:40, to "yield up" or "give forth" (*aphiémi*) the "outer garment"—just as Jesus did not resist the "handing over" (*para-didōmi*) of his "outer body."]

Furthermore, the Crucifixion narrative suggests what the person would have been expected to do in such a situation. At that point, the goal *would* be to create a separation between the "inner body" (corresponding to the "spirit" and the "inner meaning") and the "outer body" (corresponding to the "flesh" and the "outer meaning"); but, importantly, the separation would not be made *on Satan's terms*. At the moment when the "power of darkness" or "night"—in other words, obscurity or meaninglessness—was at its greatest, this particular separation would be made with the intention of *putting an end* to all of the confusion

probably have been meant to have its more original sense of "to touch" or "to handle (an object or tool)," but which more generally means "to make, to do"].

This verse should be compared to Zechariah 13:4, which I already quoted above: "And it will come to pass in that day (that) every one of the prophets will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on an outer garment [*addereth*; LXX: *derris*, meaning "a skin"] of hair [*sear*; LXX: *trichinos*] in order to deceive."[149] It seems reasonable to infer based on a comparison of these two verses that *every* prophet was understood to be operating beneath the guise of an outer "covering"—equivalent to an "outer meaning," or "literal meaning," or "fleshly meaning," or "carnal meaning," or

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("darkness") that had been generated by the *prior* insistence on keeping the "outer meaning" and "inner meaning" *together*, yet also keeping them *separate enough* that they could not create a *single* or *unitary* meaning—which would enable the first meaning to continue to be used to *hide* or *conceal* the second meaning.

An interpretation such as this receives some support from the language used in Matthew 27:50-51, describing Jesus's death, in which the Greek word *aphiémi*—again, meaning "to yield up, to let go of, to give up, to give forth, to let loose"—is used in connection with Jesus's "spirit" (*pneuma*, which I am supposing would have been understood to correspond to the symbol of the "inner garment," *chitōn*) rather than with his "body" or "flesh" (which I am supposing would have been understood to correspond to the symbol of the "cloak" or "outer garment," *himation*). Moreover, it is the particular kind of "giving up" (or "letting go," or "letting loose": *aphiémi*) found in this passage that apparently *leads to* the "splitting" or "tearing" (*schizō*) of a piece of cloth—namely, the "veil of the temple"—"into two" (*eis dyo*) parts; with the "veil of the temple" perhaps having been understood to represent the more "incomplete" kind of "joining together" of the "inner garment" and "outer garment" according to which the "veiling" of meaning could continue to take place. Matthew 27:50-51 says, "And Jesus, having again cried out [or shouted, or screamed: *krazō*] with a loud voice [*phōné megalé*], gave up [or let go, or let loose, or set free: *aphiémi*] the spirit [*pneuma*]. And behold [or understand: *idou*, a form of *eidō*], the veil [*kata-petasma*] of the temple [*naos*] was split [or torn: *schizō*] from top [*anōthen*] to bottom [*katō*] into two [*eis dyo*], and the earth [*gé*] was shaken [*seiō*], and the rocks [*petra*] were split [*schizō*]."

Similarly, Mark 15:37-38 says, "And Jesus, having let out [or sent forth, or let loose: *aphiémi*] a loud cry [or a loud shout, or a loud scream: *phōné megalé*], expired [or gave out (his) spirit, or gave forth (his) spirit: *ek-pneō*, which is related to *pneuma*, meaning 'spirit' or 'breath']. And the veil [*kata-petasma*] of the temple [*naos*] was split [or torn: *schizō*] into two, from top [*anōthen*] to bottom [*katō*]." So, assuming the symbol of the "inner garment" was understood to correspond to the "spirit," as opposed to the "outer body" or the "flesh," Mark 15:37-38 again seems to associate the idea of "letting go" (or possibly, in this case, "sending forth," or "launching," or "letting fly (as with missiles)": *aphiémi*) with the symbol of the "inner garment"—but more specifically, with the *revealing in public* of the "inner garment," that is, the *making public* of the "inner meaning." (And again, this association would seem to represent a *reversal* of the associations made in Matthew 5:40, in which the "inner garment" is "received" and the "outer garment" is "yielded up" or "let go.")

So, with the "Crucifixion," the figure of Jesus may have been voluntarily "yielding up" (or "letting loose," or "setting free": *aphiémi*) the "spirit" *at the same time as*, and *because of the fact*, that the "body of the flesh" was being "taken" (*para-lambanō*) from him—and in such a way that, for the first time, both the "body" and the "spirit" would be "given over" (*para-didōmi*), but *as separate entities*. And the authors' thinking may have been that with the "Resurrection," those two "separate entities" would then be brought back together, but *in a new, more closely integrated way* than the way in which they had been joined the first time. If that reading is correct, then the text would seem to support the hypothesis that the "Crucifixion" was meant to be understood as prefiguring the "end of the age," since the kind of "taking" (or "receiving": *para-lambanō*) and "yielding up" (or "letting go": *aphiémi*) that, according to Luke 17:34-35, was expected to occur at the "end of the age," would correspond to the kind that is described in Matthew 27:50-51 and Mark 15:37-38 as occurring at the "Crucifixion." Note that Matthew 27:45 says that just prior to Jesus's death, "darkness [or obscurity: *skotos*] came to be over all the earth [or land: *gé*]"—and this may have been understood to correspond to the "night" (*nyx*) spoken of in Luke 17:34-35 (the passage

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"natural meaning"—which, I believe, was figuratively represented by "Esau." Moreover, it would have been *understood* that this outer meaning would be inherently misleading and deceptive in the way it functioned. In other words, the figure of speech of "wearing the hairy outer garment" that is used in Zechariah 13:4 seems to be referring to the idea of "impersonating Esau" by means of wearing a mask or disguise—that is, *pretending* to believe in the truth of the literal meaning while in the presence of the "multitude," while *covertly* reading the text in a highly metaphorical way, so that the words being used, and the characters and situations being described, secretly become converted into esoteric religious symbols and allegories whose "true" meanings are known only to "the initiated." So it is not likely to be a coincidence that Genesis 27:1-38 describes an

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quoted in the main text), as well as to the "darkening [or obscuring: *skotizō*] of the sun" that in Mark 13:24 Jesus predicts would occur at the time of the "tribulation" (*thlipsis*). [For examples of the use of the word *para-didōmi*, meaning "to give"—which is essentially the "counterpart" or "reciprocal" of the word *para-lambanō*, meaning "to take"—see Matthew 20:19 and Mark 13:9-13; and also note the use in the latter passage of the Greek word *derō*, meaning "to flog, to scourge, to beat," but more literally, "to skin"— possibly suggesting the idea that the "outer garment" would be "taken" (*para-lambanō*) from the disciples at that time; and Jesus says that it would be at that time that they ought to give their "testimony" (or "evidence": *martyrion*) and "proclaim" (or "announce," or "call out," or "teach publicly": *kéryssō*) the "good news" (*eu-aggelion*)—which may have been understood to correspond to the "inner meaning," that is, the meaning that comes from the "spirit"—and so this "proclaiming" may have been understood to correspond to a "giving up" (or "letting go," or "letting loose": *aphiémi*) on the part of the disciples/apostles that would answer to the prefigurative "giving up of the spirit" by Jesus on the Cross.]

Consider that this analysis might also shed light on how Matthew 5:39 and Matthew 5:41 (the verses on either side of Matthew 5:40) ought to be interpreted.

It is also worth noting that in Luke 4:6, the devil, when speaking to Jesus during the Temptation in the Wilderness, uses the word *para-didōmi*—again, meaning "to give over, to hand over, to deliver (over), to transmit (a teaching), to hand down (a tradition)," as well as "to betray." As I just mentioned, the words *didōmi* and *para-didōmi* are essentially the "counterparts" or "reciprocals" of the word *lambanō* that Jesus uses in Matthew 5:40 (quoted at the beginning of the footnote), as well as of the word *para-lambanō*, which has a similar meaning. As such, an initiate would "receive" (*lambanō* or *para-lambanō*) the teaching or doctrine that the initiator was "transmitting" or "giving over" (*didōmi* or *para-didōmi*) to him. And, in Luke 4:6, the devil also uses the Greek word *thelō*, meaning "to wish, to want, to desire": the same word used in Matthew 5:40; so a reading of those two passages in conjunction with one another, along with Luke 22:31, may suggest that it was the "transmitting" or "giving over" (*didōmi* or *para-didōmi*) of certain teachings that would have been thought to result in the "separating" or "sifting" of Simon and the other disciples, by enabling Satan to "take" or "receive" (*lambanō* or *para-lambanō*) their "inner garments" or "inner bodies" (possibly in this case signifying their "souls").

Also, the use in Matthew 4:5,8-9 (which again describes the Temptation in the Wilderness) of the Greek words *para-lambanō* and *didōmi* suggests essentially the same idea that I think one might find in the passages discussed above. [Incidentally, I think the "high mountain" or "exceedingly high mountain" mentioned in Matthew 4:8 and Luke 4:5 may have been meant to refer to the notion of a *completed* "Tower of Babel."] Notice also that in Matthew 4:9,11 it is said that Satan "leaves" (or "gives up," or "lets go of": *aphiémi*) Jesus after Jesus refuses to "receive" or "accept" what it is that Satan wished to "transmit" (or "give over": *didōmi*) to him—which might suggest that being "let go" (or "left (behind)": *aphiémi*), as the word is used in Luke 17:34-35 (the passage I quote in the main text), may have been meant to be thought of as something desirable. [Perhaps Jesus refuses to "receive" or "accept" the "inner body" of teachings that Satan was offering to him in the hope that it would be received as Jesus's *own* "inner body"; and so Satan "lets go of" Jesus's "outer body"—but only "for a time," as it is put in Luke 4:13, that is to say, only until the time of the "betrayal" (or "handing over," or "giving over": *para-didōmi*) of Jesus's "outer body" by Judas.] Notice that Luke 17:34-35 speaks of the events occurring *at night* (Greek *nyx*)—that is, in "darkness," suggestive of "concealment," "hiding," and "secrecy"—and those were probably not considered by the authors of the New Testament to be desirable conditions for any person to be "received" or "accepted" or "initiated," or to do any "receiving" of teachings from "initiators" or "spiritual masters."

episode in which Jacob *impersonates Esau* in order to "take his blessing from him"; nor is it likely to be a coincidence that the figure of Jacob is repeatedly described or portrayed as practicing "deceit" or "trickery" or "treachery" (Hebrew *ramah* or *mirmah*; see, e.g., Genesis 27:35 and 29:25).[150]

If the archetypal "elder son" (represented by Ishmael and Esau) was indeed meant to symbolize the "outer meaning" of the Biblical symbolism, while the archetypal "younger son" (represented by Isaac and Jacob) was meant to symbolize the "inner meaning" of that same symbolism, then this would provide an additional reason why it would not be unreasonable to think that Paul intended that the phrase *presbeuō en halysei* in Ephesians 6:20, usually translated as "I am an ambassador in chains," be translated as "I am an elder

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Consider that Revelation 22:5 says that "night [*nyx*] will not exist" in the "new Jerusalem," and that in 1 Thessalonians 5:5 Paul writes, "For you are all sons of light [*phōs*] and sons of day [*hémera*]. We are not of night [*nyx*] nor of darkness [or obscurity: *skotos*]." The authors' thinking may instead have been that—when there is only "darkness" to be found—one should, with regard both to the "inner" and the "outer," only be thinking about "giving up" (or "letting go," or "letting loose," or "setting free": *aphiémi*)—or "giving over" (or "giving," or "handing over": *para-didōmi*)—and not about doing any "receiving" or "accepting" (*para-lambanō*).

[147] Note that in Luke 2:7 Jesus is described as Mary's "first-born" (***prōto-tokos***) son. Also, compare the Hebrew word ***rishon***, used in the quoted passage, which can mean "beginning, former, formerly, (at) first, chief, leader, first (in place or rank)," with the Greek word *arché*, which can similarly mean "beginning, origin, chief, leader, leading (part or element), first (in place or rank), prince, principality, principal (part or element), rule, ruler, rulership." Then carefully consider the use of the words *arché* and *ap-arché* (meaning "first-fruits") in passages such as 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; as well as Revelation 21:6, in which Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, **the beginning** [*arché*] **and** the end [*telos*]." It is conceivable that the figure of "Esau" was thought to correspond in general to the idea of the "beginning" (*arché*), while the figure of "Jacob" was thought to correspond in general to the idea of the "end" (or "completion," or "goal": *telos*). The "end" may have been thought to signify the "revealing" of the "inner person" or "inner self" or "inner meaning" (i.e., the *logos*).

Also compare Isaiah 48:12, in which the Lord says, "Hear me, O Jacob and Israel, **I am first** [*rishon*; LXX: ***prōtos***], **and** I am last [*acharon*; the LXX has 'into the age' or 'into eternity': *aiōn*]"; also Isaiah 41:4, in which the Lord says, "Who has acted [*paal*; LXX: *en-ergeō*] and accomplished [*asah*; LXX: *poieō*], calling [*qara*] the [two?] generations [or ages, or periods of time: *dor*] out of the first [or beginning: *rosh*]? [Beginning with the word "calling," the LXX instead has, "He called [*kaleō*] it [or her]—the one calling [*kaleō*] it [or her] from the first [or beginning, or leader: ***arché***] of (the) [two?] generations [*genea*]" (perhaps referring to "the generation of the earth," as opposed to "the generation of the heavens").] I am the Lord [*yahweh*], **(the) first (one)** [*rishon*; LXX: ***prōtos***] **and** (the) last (ones) [*acharonim*, the plural of *acharon*; the LXX has 'and unto the arriving things': *ta ep-erchomena*, derived from *ep-erchomai*, meaning 'to arrive, to overtake, to overcome']—I am he."

Also compare 2 Corinthians 5:16-20, which I quote above in the main text, to Isaiah 42:9 (LXX), which says, "The (things) [*ta*] from (the) beginning [*arché*], behold, they have arrived [*hékō*], and (the) new (things) [*kaina*, a form of *kainos*] that I will announce [*an-aggellō*]—even before the announcing [*an-aggellō*], it was revealed [*déloō*] to you."

[148] Consider that it is said in Matthew 27:27-31 that the Roman soldiers stripped Jesus of his clothes and mockingly put one of their "scarlet" or "crimson" (*kokkinos*) "cloaks" (*chlamys*) on him before putting his own clothes back on him. [However, it should be noted that in Mark 15:17 and John 19:2, the "cloak" or "robe" (*himation*) is described as having been "purple" (*porphyra*).] The author may have meant this to be read, at least in part, as an allusion of some kind to Esau's "red outer garment." (And, in connection with this, it may be significant that ancient Jewish writers would sometimes obliquely refer to the Roman empire as "Edom.")

By the way, notice the possible parallels between Matthew 27:27-31 and Genesis 38:27-30, in which the word "scarlet" (LXX: *kokkinos*) is used to describe the "thread" that is put on the hand of one of the two twin infants (namely Zerach, a name which means "a dawning, a rising (of the sun)") while they are both still in the womb, in order to indicate that he would be born first. Zerach then retracts his hand, allowing

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in chains"—or, at least, to think that both translations should be considered equally valid.[151] Paul might, in essence, have been telling his audience that he was still wearing the "outer garment of hair [or roughness]" of a prophet, which would thus have given him the *appearance* of being an "elder" along the lines of "Esau." And Paul's feeling required to *present himself* under the guise of "Esau" or "Edom," while at the same time thinking of himself as *actually* serving in the role of "Jacob" or "Israel" beneath that "outer cover," would have resulted in his regarding himself as having been metaphorically "bound" or "put in chains"—that is, *restricted* in terms of what he would have felt permitted to say openly.[152]

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his twin brother Peretz (a name which means "a breach") to be born first.

Also compare the "white [or clear, or transparent: *leukos*] horse" upon which Revelation 19:11 says that Jesus was seated, to the "scarlet [*kokkinos*] beast" upon which Revelation 17:3 says that the "harlot of Babylon" was seated. The "whiteness" (or "clearness," or "transparency") of the horse may have been understood to correspond to "spirit" (*pneuma*) and to "heaven," while the "scarletness" of the beast may have been understood to correspond to "soul" (*psyché*) and to "earth." And I think these two kinds of "mounts" may have also been understood to correspond to two different kinds of meanings or interpretative approaches.

[149] Compare the Septuagint translation of Zechariah 13:2-4—and more specifically, its use of the Greek words ***derris***, meaning "a skin," and ***trichinos***, meaning "hairy"—to Matthew 3:4, which says, "And John (the Baptist) himself had his garment [*endyma*] (made) from the hair [genitive plural ***trichōn***] of a camel, and a belt (made) of leather [*dermatinos*, derived from *derma*, meaning 'skin, hide,' in turn derived from *derō*, meaning 'to skin'] around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild [or uncultivated; more literally, 'growing in the fields': *agrios*, derived from *agros*, meaning 'field'] honey." If one assumes that the "outer garment of hair" spoken of in Zechariah 13:2-4 was meant to refer to the "outer garment of hair" that is associated in Genesis 25:25 with the figure of "Esau," then that may suggest that the authors of the New Testament understood the figure of "John the Baptist" to in some way represent or be associated with the "outer body" or "outer garment" that "Jesus" would eventually have to "put off." Such an hypothesis also receives support from the fact that in Genesis 25:27 (LXX) Esau is described as "dwelling in the fields" (or, as "wild," or "rude," or "rustic," or "boorish," or "savage," or "rugged," or "uncultivated": *agroikos*, derived from *agros*, meaning "field"), which brings to mind the use in Matthew 3:4 of the word *agrios*, which can have meanings similar to *agroikos*; it also brings to mind the fact that John the Baptist is described in Matthew 3:1 as living in the "wilderness" (*erémos*). [Incidentally, I suspect that "honey" may have been understood to symbolize a certain kind of "meaning" or "insight" to be obtained from a person's reading of the scriptures.]

[150] It is also interesting and possibly revealing that when Jacob is described in Genesis 31:20,26-27 as acting treacherously with respect to Laban (a name which literally means "white"), the expression used by Laban to mean that Jacob "deceived" or "betrayed" him literally means something like he "stole his heart" or "stole his inner self" ("heart" or "inner self": *leb* or *lebab*)—which may be pointing to the loss or deprivation of meaning that is created by the practice of esotericism. (The Septuagint translates this expression using the Greek word *kryptō*, meaning "to hide from, to conceal.")

It may be significant that Jacob is also described in Genesis 31:27 as having "fled" (*barach*) and as having "hidden" (or "withdrawn": *chaba*) when he deceived Laban—since these motives, I believe, underlie the entire esotericist phenomenon. The "sea serpent" or "sea monster" Leviathan—a symbol that I think was understood to significantly overlap with that of the "serpent" of the Garden of Eden—is described as "fleeing" (*bariach*, derived from *barach*) at the time that the Lord "slays" him, according to Job 26:13 and Isaiah 27:1 (both of which verses I quote and discuss in Part II of the essay). And, according to Genesis 3:8,10, it was only after Adam and Eve were persuaded by the serpent to eat from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" that they first "hid themselves from" or "withdrew from" (*chaba*) the "face" or "presence" (*paneh*) of the Lord.

(For more on the relation between these various symbols and ideas, also see Jonah 1:9-10,17—which may, incidentally, be read to suggest that "the fear of the Lord" was not *necessarily* and *under all conditions* thought by the authors of the Bible to be the good thing that it has invariably been made out to

<u>The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus understood as symbolically or allegorically prefiguring future events, rather than as describing past historical events</u>

   It is ordinarily assumed that the description of the episode of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection given in the Gospels was meant to record past historical events.   I believe, however, that it was intended by the authors of the New Testament to symbolically or allegorically *prefigure* future events.[153] According to such a reading of the New Testament, what might be called the "First Coming" would correspond to the *initial*

be by popular Christianity. Of course, such a reading assumes that Jonah's "fear [*yare*] of the Lord" in verse 1:9 was meant to be equated with his "fleeing [*barach*] from the presence [or face: *paneh*] of the Lord" in verse 1:10—which would not be an unreasonable assumption, given that producing a desire to "flee" is the effect that one would normally expect "fear" to have on a person.)

[151] In the Septuagint translation of Genesis 27:1, for example, Esau is described as Isaac's "elder [**presbyteros**] son."

[152] It may be that this same idea is being expressed in Philemon 1:9, in which Paul describes himself as "an elder [or senior: *presbytés*], ***but now also*** a prisoner [or captive, or 'bound one': *desmios*] of Jesus Christ." This might be read to suggest that Paul came to see his "seniority" or "elderness" (perhaps a reference to his learning in "the law")—which he perhaps formerly regarded as a source of power and freedom—as a source of restraint and captivity. But he apparently decided to accept that sense of captivity or imprisonment for the sake of Christ—which might suggest that he had chosen to pursue his ministry by continuing to speak *in terms of* "the law," and *as* a Jew, but without viewing the *promotion* of the Jewish law as a desirable end in itself. Or, perhaps his meaning was that first he had been "imprisoned" by "the law," and now he had become "imprisoned" in a new way and for different reasons by Jesus Christ. (Notice, by the way, that in Philemon 1:13 Paul speaks of serving "in the bonds [or chains, or shackles: *desmos*] ***of the gospel*** [or good news: *eu-aggelion*]"—which again indicates that the "imprisonment" or "captivity" of which Paul regularly speaks in his epistles should not be understood in an ordinary, literal sense, or thought of as being something that had been directly imposed upon him from without.)

[153] One piece of evidence that might be deemed to support this hypothesis is Acts 1:11, in which, just after the Ascension of Jesus takes place, an angel says, "Men [*anér*], **Galileans**, why do you stand [*histémi*] looking into heaven? This Jesus, having been taken away [or taken up: *ana-lambanō*] from you into heaven, will come in the very same manner as **you** observed him going into heaven." Consider that the Galileans are depicted in the New Testament as having observed Jesus go into heaven *only after* they had "seen" Jesus engage in an "earthly ministry," be "crucified," and then be "resurrected"—thus suggesting that all of these literary episodes may have been meant to be read as prefigurations of future events (or, rather, of *types* of future events). Moreover, the angel's question, "Why do you stand looking into heaven?" seems to imply that the author was making a point of emphasizing that "the manner in which Jesus would come" (at least for these "Galileans") should *not* be understood as "the Ascension into heaven taking place in reverse"—which, of course, is what it appears to mean upon an initial reading.

   It should be noted that the interpretation I am offering appears—at first—to be inconsistent with Matthew 24:30, in which Jesus, speaking of the "end times," says, "And then the sign [*sémeion*] of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then **all the tribes of the earth** will mourn, and **they** will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with much power and glory." One possible way to reconcile the apparent inconsistency is to suppose that these particular "Galileans" or "disciples of Christ" were not considered to be among the "tribes of the earth," which was probably a "technical" term of some kind. The "disciples" may have been considered to be among the "twelve tribes of Israel" (cf. James 1:1), especially given that there were *twelve* disciples; and these "twelve tribes of Israel" may have been understood to correspond to the twelve signs of the zodiac, located "in the heavens." So it is possible that the "coming of the Lord" was expected to occur in two different ways, depending upon whether one was still "of the earth" or already "in the kingdom of heaven" ***at the time that*** the more ***generally perceived*** "coming" occurred.

   Another possible (and perhaps related) way to reconcile the apparent inconsistency is to suppose that the understanding of the authors of the New Testament was that the ***figure*** of "Jesus" was to be regarded as a

public presentation of the Gospel narrative, understood in more or less literal terms.[154] If the Gospel narrative was in fact intended to prefigure future events under the guise of describing past events, then that would mean that this "First Coming" would also refer to the initial dissemination, in heavily symbolic or allegorical terms, of the broad outlines of an (at least partly) humanly-designed and humanly-executed conspiracy.[155] And what is generally called the "Second Coming"—or, as it is stated more literally in the Bible, "the coming (*erchomai*) of the Lord," or "the becoming present (or coming near: *parousia*) of the Lord," or "the day (*hémera*) of the Lord," or "the uncovering (*apokalypsis*) of the Lord"[156]—would refer to the final *realization*, or *bringing to fulfillment*, of the aims of this conspiracy (to whatever extent one chooses to regard this "conspiracy" as having been conscious or non-conscious, or human or non-human in nature); and this "fulfillment" would have in some way involved the "revealing" (or "uncovering": Greek *apo-kalyptō*) of previously hidden *inner meanings* that the authors of the New Testament intended would be given to their own writings, and inner meanings that those authors had themselves discerned in the text of the Old Testament.[157] (It is conceivable that a

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literary "role model" or "ideal type" (with these perhaps having been thought to be equivalent to what is called a "name": *onoma*); and it would be **through the actions of his "disciples"** that "Jesus Christ" would be **manifested in the world**, as these "disciples" went about "acting out the role" that had been presented to them in literary and symbolic form. This possibility is indicated, for example, by Matthew 24:9 and 24:22 (if one translates the word *dia* in the latter verse as "through" instead of as "for the sake of"). It would also be consistent with my general sense that the literary episodes of the "Passion" and "Crucifixion" (as well as the "Resurrection") were meant to be understood as being *prefigurative* for the events associated with the "end of the age." The belief of the authors may have been that it would be **because of** the Christ-**like** self-sacrifice of the "disciples of Christ" (i.e., "Galileans") that "the sign of the Son of Man" would "appear in heaven" to "the tribes of the earth." In other words, in Acts 1:11, the angel would have effectively been telling the "Galileans": "You are disciples of Christ, which means that the kingdom of heaven is **already** within **you**. But it's **not** already within everyone else, and that's why other people are only going to be able to see the 'Son of Man' coming by 'looking up.' So now get on with it, do what you have to do, and take up your crosses—for the sake of those others."

   (Also, as still another hypothesis—but one that is not necessarily inconsistent with either of the other suggestions—the solution to the riddle might hinge upon the use of the word "stand" [*histémi*], as opposed to "sit." The latter seems to be associated with the idea of "separating" for reasons I offer in Part II of the essay.)

[154] I have no reason to think that the authors of the New Testament ever actually used the term "First Coming" among themselves (or even the term "Second Coming," for that matter), but the notion of a "Second Coming" is implicit in the New Testament, so it is necessary to have some conception of what the notion of a "First Coming" would have referred to in the minds of the authors.

[155] To some extent, this symbolism would probably also have been understood to signify ongoing or perennial archetypes as well. But, in any event, **I feel certain that the Crucifixion and Resurrection symbolism**—understood in terms of its "inner meaning" or "allegorical meaning," that is—**was never intended by the authors of the New Testament to refer to events that had occurred in what to them would have been the historical past**. However, it is exceedingly likely that those authors *anticipated* that *some* portion of the audience would read the symbolism in that way, and had no desire to *prevent* that from happening (which to my mind would make those authors guilty of having participated in a deception).

[156] It is suggested by a parable that Jesus tells in Luke 12:36 that the "Second Coming" should perhaps also be thought of as the "unloosing [or unwinding, or resolving, or solving (as with a problem), or breaking up, or analyzing: *ana-lyō*] of the Lord [*kyrios*]." I think the author of that verse may have been trying to take advantage of a possible double meaning involving the Greek word *ana-lyō*, which can also mean "to return" or "to depart" (because of the idea of "unloosing" oneself from one's point of departure, or "loosing" a ship from its moorings).

[157] As such, what the New Testament refers to as the "coming of the Lord" might best be thought of as "the Lord *coming out of hiding*." This is indicated by the association made by the New Testament authors

"revealing" of this kind would have been *in addition to* the revealing of some sort of previously hidden knowledge that had not been presented, even allegorically, in the Bible itself—but this is pure conjecture on my part.) Such a conspiracy might be generally described as one that involved trying to *use* esotericism to *destroy* esotericism. In so far as the conspiracy was consciously designed by human beings—as I believe some part of it must have been—it would have represented an instance of the "conscious" dimension of the "self-annihilating" or "self-refuting" tendencies within esotericism that I identified toward the beginning of the essay.[158] However, this conscious element *by itself* could not have been sufficient to actually *accomplish* the destruction of esotericism; in fact, by itself it could succeed only in perpetuating it. So it can be assumed that, if such a conspiracy did indeed exist, it certainly did *not* go according to plan—a result that could

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between "heaven" and the "inner man" (Greek *esō anthrōpos*; a comparison of Romans 7:4-25 with 1 Corinthians 15:35-49, for example, tends to suggest that the "inner man" ought to be equated with the "man from heaven," *anthrōpos ex ouranou*). It is also indicated, for example, by the fact that the Hebrew word *olam*, which can mean "eternity," properly means "something concealed," or "something hidden," or "something secret." (I also suspect that there may be a similar etymological relation between the Greek word *aiōn*, meaning "an age" or "eternity," and the words *ainigma*, meaning "riddle, puzzle," and *ainos*, meaning "proverb, obscure saying, fable, riddle.")

   Incidentally, the Hebrew noun *olam* is derived from the verb *alam*, which can mean "to conceal," "to hide," or "to make secret," and this word *alam* (beginning with the letter *aleph*) is very similar or even identical in pronunciation to the Hebrew word *alam* (beginning with the letter *ayin*), which can mean "to bind," or "to be silent, to be mute," or "to be solitary." The meanings of the two Hebrew words are similar enough (with the general idea of "secrecy" being found in both) to lead me to think that the words are probably related to each other, and so might shed light on each other's meanings. If that is correct, then the "coming of the Lord" might have been understood to represent not only a "coming out of hiding," but also a "breaking of silence" or a "telling of secrets" by the "inner self" or "man from heaven."

   This would illustrate the very important connection to be made between, on the one hand, esotericist religion considered *as a social institution*, along with the psychological or psychosocial factors that would initially lead a person to be attracted to esotericism, and, on the other hand, the conceptions that traditional religious elites have formed of more *abstract ideas* such as "God," "the divine," and "the eternal." I believe that members of the esotericist social class would often project attitudes that they deemed to be appropriate in their own personal life situations onto these more abstract and "rarefied" concepts; so that if, for example, they felt that it was necessary that they "keep secrets," then it would have seemed fitting or obvious to them that God (or the gods) would have to do so as well. This may have been because they believed that the element within them that felt the greatest need to protect itself by "keeping secrets" was the part *most akin* to God and the divine or heavenly realm, since they would have considered this element to be the *most valuable* (but also the most vulnerable) part of themselves. And by saying this I certainly do not mean to suggest that such a belief would have no validity; I only wish to point out that a perceived need to protect some psychological dimension or "part" of the individual esotericist's psyche has been the source of certain undesirable effects on society and has also given rise to undesirable ways of thinking about God —especially including the belief that God has "endorsed" the kind of secrecy and mass deception that esotericists have apparently convinced themselves that they needed to engage in for the sake of "protecting God" or "protecting God's honor"—by which what they were really trying to do was protect their own "inner selves"—from "profanation" or "defilement" by "the multitude" or "the vulgar."

[158] Support for the notion that the authors of the New Testament actually *regarded* the Old Testament as "self-annihilating" or "self-neutralizing" might possibly be found, for example, in Galatians 2:18-20, in which Paul writes, "For if I again [*palin*] build [*oiko-domeō*] these things [probably referring to 'works of law'] that I tore down [*kata-lyō*], I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through (the) law [or 'by means of (the) law': *dia nomou*] I died [*apo-thnéskō*] to (the) law, so that [*hina*] I might live to God. I have been crucified together [*sy-stauroō*] with Christ." If one accepts that "the law" can in this particular instance be thought of as equivalent to the symbol of the "outer body" or the idea of the "outer meaning," then Paul's statement might be rephrased, "For by means of the outer body, I died to the outer body"; or, "***For by means of the outer meaning, I died to the outer meaning***."

have been predicted even at the very moment anyone decided to use esotericism to destroy esotericism by way of deliberate organization.[159]

Again, the "First Coming" can be thought of as corresponding to the original public *dissemination* of a body of outer symbols that had in part been specifically *designed* for the purpose of having their "inner meanings" revealed at some later point in time. What I am calling the "First Coming" cannot be wholly assigned to any particular date, since the symbols involved were not necessarily being introduced to people for the first time by the Christian evangelists. Much of this symbolism would have been chosen because it was found in the Hebrew scriptures and Jewish religion; but some of it, I suspect, may have been chosen for incorporation precisely because it was *not* found in the Hebrew scriptures or the Jewish religion.[160] And I think that even the Jewish symbolism that was chosen may have been chosen and presented (albeit probably somewhat unconsciously) in such a way that it would help to demonstrate commonalities among the religious belief-systems of the ancient world: the sort of commonalities that would be more likely found at a deeper, structural level of the religions, and therefore that would not have been

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[By the way, the Greek word *kata-lyō*, meaning "to tear down, to break up, to break apart," is the same word used by Jesus in Matthew 24:2 in reference to "the Jerusalem temple"—which suggests that the symbol of a "stone" (*lithos*) may have been understood to signify a "work of the law," at least in part.]

[159] If one can accept the premise that the Gospel narratives were intended to prefigure future events, then, given the fact that the Christian apostles were also *actively involved* in proselytizing and the organizing of churches, it is *necessarily true* that the Christian apostles were engaged in a conscious conspiracy of some kind. That is to say, they did not see themselves as mere "bystanders" or impartial observers of the events that they were predicting would take place in the future.

I take the position that Christianity was planned as a conspiracy at its inception only because I cannot think how else to explain the textual evidence found in the New Testament, and not because I am otherwise inclined to try to explain either esotericism, or the "self-annihilating" tendencies or potential within esotericism, as being *fundamentally* or *entirely* the product of conscious conspiracy, since I would consider this to be logically incoherent. At one point I was inclined to believe that these sorts of "consciously organized conspiracies" may have played a bigger role in the paradox of the Bible than I now believe. I have since come to assign a more important role to "unconsciously organized conspiracies" (by which I still have in mind *human* conspiracies), which, regarded as a basic heuristic principle, I think deserves more attention than it currently receives. I think the "Christian conspiracy," while a conscious one—at least in part—was nevertheless steeped in "unconsciousness." The conspiracy was just conscious enough to be a source of enduring problems for human civilization, but still not conscious enough to *see through to a solution* the problems that the conspirators were creating for the world by their choice to perpetuate the Lie by failing to *decisively repudiate* religious esotericism. (This is of course not to suggest that the world had not experienced major problems—arguably even worse problems—caused by the esotericist religions existing *prior to* Christianity.)

I have considered the question many times, and I still find myself at a loss to understand how the anti-esotericist message that can be fairly readily discerned in the Bible (at least once one makes a point of looking for it) might be reconciled with its authors' virtually unremitting use of esotericist writing techniques, other than to explain this as a kind of "unconsciously organized conspiracy," or as what some might prefer to call the "workings of divine providence." (However, not all of the "unconsciously organized conspiracies" that I have in mind can be considered "divinely providential" in the sense of being beneficial to humanity or to life as a whole; in fact, many can be exceedingly destructive.) But, at the same time, I recognize that merely classifying the anti-esotericist tendencies in the Bible, and in religions based on the Bible, as an instance of some vague notion of an "unconsciously organized conspiracy," without more, does not *explain* very much; it really just points to the presence of unconscious forces at work behind the paradox of the Bible, and also to how difficult it is to understand their workings.

[160] However, it is possible that at least some of that symbolism may have been present in the religion practiced by *ancestors* of the New Testament-era Jews, but evidence of this had not been recorded in the now-extant Hebrew scriptures.

readily apparent either to the casual onlooker or to someone already inclined *not* to see them.[161] (However, some of the similarities and commonalities *are* readily apparent, but have often been willfully ignored or overlooked.)

I believe that several of the hypotheses I am offering—including that the "outer body of Jesus" was understood to signify a "body of lies" or "body of deception"; that the Gospel narrative was intended to prefigure future events; and that the authors of the New Testament were involved in conscious conspiring—receive support from Matthew 27:62-66. In this passage the now-dead Jesus is spoken of as an "impostor" or "deceiver," and the ministry that the Gospels depict him as having conducted prior to the Crucifixion is spoken of as a "fraud" or "deception":

> And (on) the next day [after the Crucifixion], which is (the day) after (the day of) the Preparation [for the Sabbath],[162] the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together [*syn-agō*] before Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember [*mimnéskō*] how that impostor [or deceiver; more literally, 'wanderer': *planos*] said, while he was still alive [*zaō*], 'With [or after: *meta*] three days I rise [or wake: *egeirō*].' Therefore order [*keleuō*] the tomb [or sepulchre: *taphos*] to be secured [*asphalizō*] until [*heōs*] [and also including?] the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him away [*kleptō*], and say to the people [*laos*], 'He has been raised [or woken: *egeirō*] from the dead [*nekros*]'; and the last [*eschatos*] fraud [or deception; more literally, 'wandering': *plané*] will be worse than the first [*prōtos*]."[163] Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers

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[161] The reason why I think these connections would have tended to be present at a deeper, less conspicuous level is that they would have pointed to the remnants of the beliefs of some earlier, more unified religious belief-system: a hypothetical "primordial religion" of some kind, which would have existed, if not before the *occurrence* of an esotericist/exotericist "split," then at least before the split had become as *pronounced* as it later became. The passage of a significant amount of time subsequent to the fragmenting of that primordial religion, and of the "inner meanings" (or "inner teachings," or "inner doctrine") that had been associated with it (or, alternatively, the passage of a significant amount of time over which the fragmentation of meaning that was *already* present in the primordial religion became *exascerbated*), would have resulted in those "inner meanings" (which may or may not have *started out* as "inner meanings"), once widely shared among many different peoples, gradually becoming forgotten. As time went on, to an increasing degree, all that would have been left remaining would have been the outer symbols alone, which in different parts of the world would have tended to resemble each other less and less, due in part to their becoming increasingly detached from any shared, common set of "inner meanings"; and, as a practical matter, this may in many cases have resulted in their being detached from any meaningfulness at all (unless the symbols had been subsequently "repurposed" in an ad hoc manner—which would have created its own problems).

[162] Notice that this might be read to imply that the "Crucifixion" was meant to be regarded as a "Preparation" for the "Sabbath" (which is associated with the idea of "wholeness" or "fulness"). Compare the use in John 19:30 of the Greek word *teleō*, meaning "to finish, to complete, to fulfill," with the use in Genesis 2:1-3 (LXX) of the related Greek word *syn-teleō*, having a similar meaning—perhaps suggesting the Crucifixion was meant to be understood as a sort of "inversion" of the original Creation of mankind, such that Adam ("Man") *came into being* on the "sixth day," and Jesus (the "Son of Man," who would become "the new Adam" with his "rising") was also *killed* on the "sixth day."

[163] It is conceivable that this notion of "stealing (*kleptō*) Jesus away from the tomb," and its suggested relation to "fraud" or "deception" or "trickery" (*plané*), bears some relation to the Hebrew verbal expression that I mentioned in a previous footnote, specifically in reference to Jacob, according to which the idea of "deceiving" or "tricking" someone is more literally expressed by saying that the deceiver "stole the heart" or "stole the inner self" ("heart" or "inner self": *leb* or *lebab*) of the person being deceived. (The Septuagint version of Genesis 31:26 translates this expression by combining the Greek verb *klopophoreō*— which is related to the Greek word *kleptō*, the word used in Matthew 27:62-66—and similarly means "to

[or a sentry: *koustōdia*]; go, make it (as) secure [*asphalizō*] as you know (how) [*eidō*] [or, 'make it secure, as you know (how to do)'; or, 'make it secure, as you are skilled at (doing)'].'' So they went (and) made the tomb [*taphos*] secure [*asphalizō*] (by) sealing [*sphragizō*] the stone [*lithos*] and (setting) the guard of soldiers [*koustōdia*].[164]

Read allegorically, this passage may have been meant (consciously or unconsciously) to convey the idea that the Bible itself—as well, for that matter, as *all* esoteric scriptures and myths—was a kind of "fraud" or "deception" or "impostor"; and appropriately so, since it had been presenting itself in a misleading and duplicitous way, by hiding beneath its outer, apparent meanings other, more "true" meanings.[165] (Of course, the specific "esoteric meaning" that I am suggesting for this passage would not have become known

steal from"—with the adverb *kryphé*, meaning "in secret.") If so, then it is also conceivable that both the pre-Resurrection Jesus and Jesus's "disciples" were being compared to "Jacob," and the "resurrection of Jesus" was being compared to the "redemption of Jacob" spoken of in Isaiah 48:20 (which is there said to occur at the time of the "flight from Babylon/Babel"). And the dichotomy between the "first fraud" and a possible "last fraud" presented here might thus be related to the dichotomy between the archetypal symbol of the "first son" (represented by "Esau"—or, "Esau being impersonated by Jacob") and that of the "second son" (represented by "Jacob"). Also, these connections might suggest that the "opening" of Jesus's tomb, and the removal by the angel of the "stone" covering the entrance to the tomb, may have been regarded as a metaphorical "circumcision of the heart."

[164] Another possibility is that the notion of "stealing (*kleptō*) Jesus away from the tomb" was in some way related to what Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, that "the day of the Lord comes as a thief [*kleptés*] in (the) night [*nyx*]." In the next verse, 1 Thessalonians 5:3, he says, "When they say, 'Peace [or wholeness: *eiréné*] and security [*asphaleia*],' then sudden [*aiphnidios*] destruction [*olethros*] comes upon [*ep-histémi*] them, even as the labor pains [*ōdin*] (come) to her who has (a child) in (the) womb [*gastér*], and they shall by no means escape [*ek-pheugō*]." Paul's use of the Greek adjective *asphaleia*, meaning "security," might have been related in Paul's mind with the way in which the corresponding Greek verb *asphalizō*, meaning "to make secure," is used in Matthew 27:62-66 (the passage quoted in the main text). If so, then the "birth of the child in the womb" might have been understood to correspond to the emergence of the risen Jesus from the formerly "sealed tomb." (And Matthew 12:40 increases the likelihood that the authors of the New Testament may have thought of Jesus's entombment as a period of "gestation" within the "womb" of "mother earth.") And this would argue in favor of the notion that the "Resurrection" was understood to be prefigurative of the events of the "Second Coming."

Furthermore, as I mentioned in an earlier footnote, 1 Thessalonians 5:3 is reminiscent of Psalm 69:22, which speaks of "peace" (or "wholeness," or "contentedness": Hebrew *shalom*) coming to suddenly act as a "trap" or "snare" for certain people; and Jeremiah 50:24 describes "Babel" or "Babylon" as similarly being caught in a "trap" or "snare"—which tends to confirm that the understanding of Christians was that "the day of the Lord" or "Second Coming" represented the point in time when "Babel" or "Babylon" would be made to fall. Moreover, Jeremiah 50:43 (LXX), speaking of the "King of Babel/Babylon," says that "tribulation [*thlipsis*] overcame [*kata-krateō*] him, labor pains [*ōdin*] as of a woman giving birth [*tiktō*]." This should be compared to Matthew 24:8-9, and the use by Jesus, in his description of the "end of the age," of the Greek words *thlipsis*, meaning "tribulation, distress, anguish," and *ōdin*, meaning "labor pain, birth pang"; a possible suggestion to be derived from this comparison is that the transition to the "new age" may have been seen to involve "Babel/Babylon" "giving birth" to the "new Jerusalem" from its symbolic "womb."

However, if the authors of the New Testament understood the author of Psalm 69:22 to share the thinking of the author of Jeremiah 50:24 in expecting that it was "Babel/Babylon" that would get "trapped" or "ensnared," then a comparison between Luke 23:35-36 and the verses that immediately precede Psalm 69:22—Psalm 69:19-21—would indicate that the "springing of the trap" would have been associated with the episode of Jesus's Crucifixion in the minds of the authors of the New Testament. So we are again presented with an equivalence between the event of the "Crucifixion" and that of the "fall of Babel/Babylon"—which would thus make the "Crucifixion and Resurrection" prefigurative for the "end of the age" and the beginning of a "new age."

to most people until the Bible was no longer serving to deceive people; but until then, the deceit would be flaunted before their eyes without their even being aware of it—perhaps for the unconsciously intended purpose of making them want to reject the entire scam of esotericist religion all the more vehemently once they finally did discover the deception that had been perpetrated against them.) If such a reading is correct, then it is the "inner meaning" of the scriptures—but only *so long as* that "inner meaning" continued to be "veiled" by another, "outer meaning"—that this passage would be describing as an "impostor." And the image of "Jesus being raised from the dead" may have been intended to be read as a figurative way of expressing the notion of some "inner meaning" in the Bible being "resurrected"—that is, publicly revealed, or rehabilitated, or "brought

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[165] The division that I believe was understood to be made with the "Crucifixion," between the "outer body" (or "outer meaning") and the "inner body" (or "inner meaning"), would, I think, have been deemed to apply simultaneously both to the figure of Jesus and to the scriptures. (The event of the "Crucifixion" is also what would have marked the making of the division between the "old covenant" and the "new covenant.")

The idea of an equivalence between the figure of Jesus and the scriptures themselves is indicated, for example, by Luke 24:27, which says, "And having originated [or commenced, or ruled: *archomai*] from Moses and from all the prophets, (the resurrected Jesus) thoroughly interpreted [or translated: *di-erméneuō*] to (his disciples) in all the scriptures [*graphé*] the things concerning himself."

Also, in John 5:39 Jesus says, "You search the scriptures [*graphé*] because you suppose you have eternal [*aiōnios*] life in them; and these are what are bearing witness [*martyreō*] about me."

Another example can be found in Luke 24:44-46, in which the resurrected Jesus says to his disciples, "These (are) my words [*logos*], which I spoke to you while still [or 'even while'] being with you, that everything [*panta*] written [*gegrammena*, a form of *graphō* in the perfect tense] about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and Psalms must be fulfilled [or made full, or completed: *pléroō*]. Then [or thereupon: *tote*] he opened up [or 'opened thoroughly,' or 'opened by dividing in two': *di-anoigō*] their mind [*nous*] to comprehend [more literally, 'put together': *syn-iémi*] the scriptures [*graphé*]. And he said to them, 'In this manner [or 'and so,' or 'thus': *houtōs*] it has been written [*gegraptai*, a form of *graphō* in the perfect tense], that the Christ (was) to suffer and to rise up [*an-istémi*] from the dead with the third day….'"

I infer that Jesus's "words spoken while still being with the disciples" were meant to be understood as most specifically referring to the saying that "the Christ was to suffer and to rise up from the dead with the third day." Jesus's "opening up" of the mind of his disciples to "comprehend" or "put together" the Old Testament scriptures in some *new way* or *second way* (indicated by the phrase "in this manner") is, I believe, what allowed them to understand the *inner significance* of the *symbolism* of the Crucifixion, and so to realize that this same inner significance had *already* been communicated in the writings of the Old Testament. I make this suggestion for the reason that by merely saying "the Christ was to suffer and to rise up from the dead with the third day," *Jesus is not saying anything new*: this is what he had *already* told the disciples *prior to* the Crucifixion, for example in Luke 9:44-45, Mark 9:31-32, and Matthew 17:22-23. And it cannot be understood to involve Jesus trying to *prove* that the Resurrection occurred, according to the literal or outer sense of the symbol of the "Resurrection," since according to its literal sense the disciples were supposedly all by that point eyewitnesses of its occurrence. Moreover, Mark 9:31-32 says, "(Jesus) said to (the disciples), 'The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And (once) he has been killed, with three days he will rise [*an-istémi*].' But they were not understanding the saying [*rhéma*], and they were afraid to ask him." But according to the *literal* terms of what Jesus said, what is there not to understand? It seems quite plain and straightforward—which implies that what he said was *not* meant to be understood literally.

So I think the "opening up" of the mind of the disciples, and the "comprehending" or "putting together" of the scriptures, may have been considered to be *equivalent to* the "crucifying" (or "piercing"), and the "rising," respectively, of Christ; and this would explain why the disciples were only able to "understand the saying" *after* Jesus had been "crucified" and "resurrected." The "opening up" or "opening by dividing in two" (*di-anoigō*) of the mind of the disciples—perhaps something like a "taking apart" or "breaking apart" or "analysis" of their minds or their ideas—may have been understood to correspond to the "crucifying" or the "piercing" of Christ, while the "comprehending" or "putting together" (*syn-iémi*) of the scriptures may

back to life," as a result of the esoteric symbols and parables being once again *made meaningful*—after some period of concealment, or "en-cryption," so to speak.[166] (And the "resurrection" of this "inner meaning" may have been understood to correspond to the "inner self" of the individual person being similarly "resurrected" or "woken" after a period of "dormancy" during which it had been hiding beneath an "outer self" or "false self.") Observe also that (according to the portrayal of them in the passage, and according to my interpretation of the passage) what the "chief priests and Pharisees" are actually afraid of is not that the "raising" or "opening up" of this "inner meaning" will *occur*, but that it will occur *prematurely*, taking place before the symbolic "third day" arrives (or, before it has been completed—it is not precisely clear what either Jesus or the chief priests and Pharisees have in mind when they speak of "three days").

Such a reading would seem to be consistent with the suggestion I made earlier in the essay, that the New Testament authors may have understood the archetypal figure of the "elder son" (represented by Ishmael and Esau) to signify the "outer meaning," while understanding the archetypal figure of the "younger son" (represented by Isaac and Jacob) to signify the "inner meaning." The "*first* fraud" would refer to the "outer meaning," corresponding to the "*first* son," while the "*second* fraud" or "*last* fraud" would refer to some *incorrect* or *unintended understanding* of the "inner meaning"; and the "inner meaning"—whether the understanding of it be thought of as correct or incorrect—would here correspond to the "*second* son." If so, then the authors of the New Testament apparently expected that the emergence of the "second son" would *not* lead to "wandering" (*plané*) in the way the "first son" had done; and, for some reason, the authors seem to have been confident that "the day of the Lord" would not arrive until any significant possibility that the revelation or "raising" of the "inner meaning" might lead to such "wandering" no longer existed.[167] This leads me to the conclusion that this

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have been understood to correspond to the "raising" of Christ (possibly thought to represent a kind of "synthesis"). Furthermore, the text, by its use of the Greek word *tote* (meaning "then" or "thereupon") *immediately after* speaking of the "fulfilling" of the scriptures, might be similarly suggesting that the "fulfilling" of the scriptures was understood to be *equivalent to* the "comprehending" or "putting together" of the scriptures in a "new way," or "second way," such that their "inner meaning" would be revealed to the reader.

[166] It is possible that the "large stone" (*lithos megas*) that had been "rolled" (*pros-kyliō*) in front of the entrance to the tomb (see, e.g., Mark 15:46 and Mark 16:4) was understood to correspond to a "millstone," so that the authors' point may have been that the "inner meaning" would not be able to "rise up" until the symbolic "millstone" (*mylos*)—signifying a process of interpretation—had been sufficiently "worked" or "turned"—and thus "rolled away" (*apo-kyliō*)—with the symbol of "three days" signifying a "full turning" or "full transposition" of meaning; and once that had happened, the "stone" (*lithos*) or "large millstone" (*mylos megas*) could be "thrown away into the sea," never to be "worked" again (see Revelation 18:21).

Also compare this to Genesis 29:2-3, which speaks of a "large stone" (LXX: *lithos megas*) that would be "rolled away" (LXX: *apo-kyliō*) from the "mouth" (LXX: *stoma*) of a "well" in order to "water" the "flocks of sheep"—**but one which the "shepherds" would always return to its place** after each "watering" was finished. So the opening up of the entrance to Jesus's tomb may have been meant to signify the idea that the "mouth" (*stoma*) of this "well" would never again be "covered" (*kalyptō*), nor would the "large stone" (*lithos megas*) be "returned to its place," once that "mouth" (*stoma*) had been "uncovered" (*apo-kalyptō*).

[167] Notice that it was the "securing of the tomb until the third day" that was apparently understood to be what would *prevent* the "second son" or "inner meaning" from *being* a "fraud" (or a "deception," or a "misleading," or a "wandering": *plané*). This suggests that some period of encryption or keeping secret of the "inner meaning" among some portion of the Christian leadership may have been understood by the New Testament authors to be a necessary "part of the plan"; and, whether or not it was deemed to be *desirable*, it was in any event deemed by them to be *unavoidable*—even if it was the "chief priests and

"cessation of wandering" must have been understood—whether consciously or unconsciously—to refer to the wholesale dismantling of the esotericist system, since esotericist techniques *by their nature* lead to mental "wandering"; indeed, it is their very *purpose*. I am therefore inclined to believe, in other words, that the revelation of any "inner meaning" or "inner doctrine" incompatible with the message that the esotericist form of religion *must itself be ended* would have been considered—whether consciously or unconsciously—to be a "fraudulent" or "misleading" inner meaning or inner teaching.

Furthermore, the idea of there being a symbolic "first person" or "first man" (which I think may have been understood to correspond to the "first son," the "outer meaning," and the "First Coming"), and as well as a symbolic "second person" or "second man"

Pharisees" who were being depicted as the persons demanding that it be done. In fact, it may have been *because of* the perceived actions and behavioral tendencies of the "chief priests and Pharisees"—whatever exactly those sorts of actions and behavioral tendencies were understood to be—that the authors of the New Testament felt that the strategy they were pursuing was the only means by which they might ensure that the particular kind of "second son" who ended up "rising from the dead" would *not* be a "deceiver" or a "deception"; and so they therefore *attributed* their own concealment of inner meanings to the "chief priests and Pharisees"; thus their attitude would effectively have been that "They forced us to do it." I think the author of Matthew 27:64 may have been trying to suggest that it was the religious institutional framework *confronting* the Christian apostles that (in their minds) made it necessary for them to take the approach they were taking—which would have been a perceived *adaptation* to the situation confronting them—because, if they were not able to bring about a *full* or *drastic* change in meaning (signified, perhaps, by the symbol of "three days"), they would effectively have brought about no change at all, in that the esotericist dynamic in general would be able to continue on into the future. Moreover, because by pursuing half-measures they would (according to the argument) have botched their one chance at "turning the tables" on esotericism, they would have made the "last" esotericist "fraud" or "deception" even worse than the "first" one, since they would (according to the argument) have destroyed their one and only significant hope of permanently dislodging it.

In other words, the author would have effectively been *blaming* the "chief priests and Pharisees" for the Christians' desire to keep the "inner meaning" in an "encrypted" or "sealed" state: it would have been an instance of psychological projection, and the author would have been getting confused (and, in the process, confusing the reader) about which characters' positions were meant to represent the position of the author and other leaders of the early Christian movement. Otherwise, it is difficult for me to understand why in this episode the author would effectively be portraying the "chief priests and Pharisees" as guardians of truth and the "disciples" as potential charlatans who must be guarded against. It is necessary to keep in mind that—according to the "outer" Gospel narrative—the insistence of the "chief priests and Pharisees" that the entrance to the tomb be "sealed" until the third day *did in fact* result in a "happy ending," so to speak, in that the "rising" of the "second man" from the tomb did *not* result in the occurrence of the "second fraud" or "second deception" that the "chief priests and Pharisees" had feared. (And that is so even if that is not how the "chief priests and Pharisees" would have seen it, and even if it was only because of the intervention of "angels," and not because of anything the "disciples" did, that the "large stone" got rolled away. The point is that if the disciples had been depicted as the actors rolling away the "large stone," then the result would have been a "fraud" or "deception" from the *Christian* perspective.) So the authors of the New Testament must have been *identifying themselves with* the characters of the "chief priests and Pharisees" in at least *some* sense.

For the authors to have been engaging in psychological projection and identification of such magnitude would strongly indicate that any "plot" that they may have developed (for which the Gospel narratives would have been functioning as the figurative or symbolic "outline") would be a deeply confused (and confusing) one. The authors seem not to have been at all clear in their own minds about *why* the encryption of meaning was taking place, and exactly *who* was responsible for it—which indicates to me that they had never fully thought though the problem of esotericism. They may have told themselves that they were being "forced" or "required" to do something that was actually within their power to stop doing any time they wished.

(which I think may have correspond to the "second son," the "inner meaning," and the "Second Coming"), is indicated by 1 Corinthians 15:45-47, in which Paul writes,

> The first [*prōtos*] man Adam came into being a living soul [*psyché*]; the last [*eschatos*] Adam a life-giving spirit [*pneuma*]. But the spiritual [*pneumatikos*] (was) not first [*prōton*], but rather the natural [*psychikos*], (and) after that the spiritual [*pneumatikos*]. The first [*prōtos*] man out of earth [*gé*] (and) made of dust [or "made of dirt," or "made of earth," or "earthy": *choikos*]; the second [*deuteros*] man out of heaven.

As a first matter, I think the symbol of "earth" or "dust" would have been meant to refer to the *materiality* or *physicality* of the outer symbolic forms (and this might correspond to the meaning of Esau's name, if it was in fact derived from the Hebrew word *asah*, which in this context would probably mean "to touch" or "to handle [an object or tool]"), while the symbol of "heaven" would have been meant to refer to their more intangible conceptual aspect.[168] Second, the Greek word *pneumatikos*, which means "spiritual," is the adjective answering to the adverb *pneumatikōs*, which literally means "spiritually"; but we know from Revelation 11:8 that *pneumatikōs* can have the meaning of "figuratively," "symbolically," "allegorically," or "metaphorically." That suggests that "the spiritual (man)" may have been understood to correspond to or represent the collected *body* of *figurative meanings* that the authors of the New Testament surreptitiously attached to the "material" or "carnal" symbols that they had in the first instance presented to the members of the Christian churches. Third, notice that the term "last" or "final" (*eschatos*) is here implicitly equated with the term "second" (*deuteros*), which makes it more likely that when Matthew 27:64 speaks of a "first [*prōtos*] fraud" and a "last [*eschatos*] fraud," the author may have understood this to correspond to the "first man" and "second man" about which Paul is writing in the passage being quoted here—in which case, as I suggested above, the phrase "last fraud" would have been meant to refer to a particular *type* of "second man" (i.e., "inner meaning"); and this would in turn imply that there was understood to be some *other* type of "second man," or "last man," or "spiritual man" (i.e., "inner meaning") that was *not* a "fraud" or "deception"

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[168] Note in connection with this what Genesis 27:22-23 says: "So Jacob went near to [*nagash*; LXX: *eggizō*] Isaac his father, who felt [*mashash*; LXX: *psélaphaō*] him and said, 'The voice [*qol*; LXX: *phōné*] is the voice [*qol*; LXX: *phōné*] of Jacob, but the hands [*yad*; LXX: *cheir*] are the hands [*yad*; LXX: *cheir*] of Esau.' And he did not recognize [*nakar*; LXX: *epi-ginōskō*] him, because his hands were hairy [or shaggy, or rough: *sa'iyr*; LXX: *dasos*] like his brother Esau's hands. So he blessed [*barak*; LXX: *eu-logeō*] him."

   Also, compare the use in Genesis 27:22-23 (LXX) of the Greek word *epi-ginōskō*, meaning "to recognize, to know (well), to understand, to discern," with Paul's use of that same word in 2 Corinthians 1:13-15—along with his use in the latter passage of the words *proteron*, meaning "at the first, the first time," *deuteros*, meaning "second," and *charis*, which can mean "grace, favor, blessing." Also consider the use of the word *epi-ginōskō* in 1 Corinthians 13:12, in which Paul contrasts "knowing in part" (*ginōskō ek merous*) with "knowing fully" (*epi-ginōskō*); moreover, he there implicitly associates "knowing only in part" with the "obscurity" or "darkness" of "riddles" (*ainigma*)—which is reminiscent of Isaac's eyesight being described in Genesis 27:1 as "dimmed" or "darkened" or "failing" (Hebrew *kahah*; Greek *amblynō*, which more literally means "blunted"), this being responsible for Isaac's failure to "recognize" Jacob. In other words, it would be one's inability to "see through" the "darkness" of the "riddles" or "enigmas" that would be responsible for one's inability to recognize their "inner meaning" (symbolized by the figure of Jacob).

(and one that would not lead to "wandering"). Fourth, consider that in 1 Corinthians 15:45-47 (the passage that I just gave in the block quotation), Paul says that both of these two "men" are to be regarded as different forms of the *same* "total man," Adam. That increases the likelihood that the "outer meaning" and "inner meaning"—the "first man" and "second man"—may have been similarly understood to have been both contained in the *same* "total man," Jesus; and it was only with the symbolic Crucifixion and Resurrection that the authors of the New Testament would have understood a conceptual division to have been effected between the "outer man" and the "inner man" that, when they come together, form what I am calling the "total man"—whether one chooses to think of this "total man" as "Adam" or as "Jesus"; and, whether one chooses to think of "Adam" as the "old Jesus," or "Jesus" as the "new Adam."[169]

The "piercing" of a prophet's "outer covering" as the necessary "penalty" for his having been deceptive—that is, for his having "impersonated Esau"

Another piece of evidence in support of the theory that the symbolic "outer body of Jesus" may have been understood to signify a kind of "body of lies" that would finally be "put off" or "laid aside" in the symbolic "Crucifixion," is provided by Zechariah 12:10. In this verse, the author, speaking in the voice of the Lord, says,

> I [the Lord] will pour out [*shaphak*; LXX: *ek-cheō*] upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit [*ruach*; LXX: *pneuma*] of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon [or look unto: *nabat*; LXX: *epi-blepō*] **me** [LXX: *me*] whom they have pierced [or pierced through: *daqar*] [the LXX instead has "over whom they danced triumphantly": *katorcheomai*]; and they shall lament [or mourn: *saphad*; LXX: *koptō*] over **him** [LXX: *autō*], as one laments over an only (son) [*yachid*; LXX: *agapétos*, meaning "a loved one" or "a dear one"], and shall be in bitterness [*marar*; LXX: *odynaō*, meaning "to be in anguish, to be tormented, to suffer pain"] over **him**, as one that is in bitterness over a firstborn [*bekor*; LXX: *prōto-tokos*].[170]

Notice the distinction that is made here between "me" and "him." It is "the Lord" who is depicted as a kind of "person," who: a) has been "pierced"; and b) can *now for the first time* be "looked upon." And perhaps the fact that this "person" can now be "looked upon" is *because of* his having been "pierced"—so that an "opening" has been made into his "hide" or "outer covering," and some deeper insight into his essence has thus been *revealed*. I posit that after the "piercing" occurs, a conceptual division is made between something living and something dead; and the name "the Lord" remains associated with the "something living," which is henceforth "looked upon," while a kind of "corpse" is also produced that has now become *conceptually dissociated* or *separated* from "the Lord." And this "corpse" is also depicted as being that of a "firstborn son"—which

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[169] That it would not be inappropriate to think of "Adam" as the "old Jesus" or the "former Jesus" is indicated by Luke 3:38, in which Adam is referred to as "the (son) of God."
[170] I think this same prophetic image was probably understood by the authors of the New Testament to have been "fulfilled" in *both* John 19:34,37 *and* in Acts 2:1-4, 2:16-24, 2:33, and 2:36-37—which would give support to the notion that the "Crucifixion" was meant to be understood figuratively.

suggests that a *conceptual dissociation* or *separation* between "the Lord" and the symbolic "firstborn son" (i.e., the "outer meaning") has also occurred.

The use of the symbolism of "piercing" in particular, rather than of "opening" in general, suggests something more in addition to mere "opening": "piercing" is "opening" something in such a way that the passage of either *air* or *liquid* is made possible. Any involvement of metaphorical "air" in the "piercing" symbolism would suggest the idea of "spirit" or "breath" (Greek *pneuma*), and thus the idea of "expiring" or "breathing out" or "giving out spirit" (Greek *ek-pneō*)—just as we find Jesus described doing at his death; as, for example, in Mark 15:37-39.[171] And the specific type of metaphorical "liquids" that would have been involved in the Bible's "piercing" symbolism would likely have been "blood" (or "wine") and "water"—and these are what, in John 19:34, are described as coming out of Jesus's body just after his death, as a result of his body having been "pierced."[172] I suspect that in practice these symbols of "blood" (or "water") and "spirit" (or "air," or "breath") may have often been understood to be functionally interchangeable, partly because of the quality of fluidity that is shared by both gases and liquids;[173] and I think the authors probably at various times envisioned "blood," "water," and "spirit" (or "breath") as *all* escaping from the generic symbolic "opening" that had been created by the generic symbolic "piercing." As such, I think that in the descriptions of the Crucifixion found in the Gospels, the fact that *both* "air" and "liquids" are described as "coming out of" or "going forth from" Jesus's crucified body shows how concerned the authors of the Gospels were with emphasizing that *this* was the symbolic "piercing" referred to in Zechariah 12:10; and making this point was probably more important to them than distinguishing between the specific shades of meaning conveyed by the symbols of "air," "water," and "blood" (although I do think "air" and "water" may have had distinguishable symbolic meanings in the minds of the authors, at least some of the time). In short, I do not think it is likely the authors of the Gospel narratives had two or more conceptually distinct "piercings" in mind: I think *the entire episode* of the "Crucifixion" of Jesus was meant to be thought of as constituting a *single* "piercing" corresponding to the "piercing" described in Zechariah 12:10.[174]

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[171] Mark 15:37-39 says, "And Jesus, having let out [or released: *aphiémi*] a loud [or great, or large: *megas*] cry [or speech, or language, or message, or discourse: *phōné*], expired [or breathed out, or expelled his spirit: *ek-pneō*]. And the veil of the temple was torn [or split: *schizō*] into two, from top to bottom. And the centurion, who had come over to (Jesus's) side [*par-istémi*] from the opposite [or, more figuratively, 'hostile': *enantios*] (side) of him, having seen that he expired [or breathed out, or expelled his spirit: *ek-pneō*] in this manner [or thus: *houtōs*], said, 'Truly a man [*anthrōpos*] such as this was Son of God [or "was a son of God"].'"

Incidentally, a possible suggestion being made by this passage is that Jesus's "expiring ***in this manner***" was understood to refer to his expelling or "pouring out" his spirit (*pneuma*) in such a way that his doing so would "open up" or "cut through" or "tear apart" the "outer meanings" (symbolized by the "veil of the temple"). And this may have been understood to be related to his emitting of a "loud cry" (or "great discourse," or "large speech"—with the idea of "largeness" or "greatness" possibly having an esoteric significance here) that would help those who heard it to make sense of the esoteric symbolism by means of clear and open discourse (as opposed to "whispering"), thereby enabling them to "open up" the "outer meanings" for themselves.

[172] John 19:34 says, "But one of the soldiers pierced [*nyssō*] his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out [*ex-erchomai*]."

[173] So that, in John 7:38-39, for example, we find "spirit" (*pneuma*, which more literally means "air" or "wind" or "breath") being referred to as "living water."

But apart from the "person" who represents "the Lord" in Zechariah 12:10, the verse describes *another* "person"—corresponding, I believe, to the notion of the "outer person" or "outer man" or "outer self"—and the passage says that this *other* "person" would be "mourned over." I believe that these two "persons" may have been understood to roughly correspond to what I have been calling a "spirit of truth" and a "body of lies," respectively—both of which, when joined together, would have been understood to constitute what the Bible calls "prophecy." In addition, I think that this "outer person" may have been associated with the "firstborn son," also corresponding to the symbolic figure of the "elder brother." So this passage seems to be saying that the fate of the "firstborn son" or "elder brother" was to be "killed" by being "pierced"; and only after that had happened could "the Lord" be "looked upon" or "beheld" *in the person of* the "secondborn son" or "younger brother." But the passage also says that it is "the Lord" who has been "pierced," which seems to indicate that "the Lord" was also understood to be present within (or joined together with) the person of the "firstborn son" or "elder brother"—the difference being, perhaps, that while "the Lord" was always *present within* the person of the "firstborn son" or "elder brother," so long as the "firstborn son" was still "alive," "the Lord" himself (represented primarily by the figure of the "secondborn son") would have always been *hidden* or *concealed*, and so could not have been "looked upon." So, according to the author's conceptual scheme, it may have been that there was understood to be only one *living* "son" who was *visible* at any one time.[175] And perhaps the "firstborn son," the "outer person," would have had to have been "killed" by being "pierced" before the "secondborn son" or "inner person" (perhaps thought of as virtually equivalent to "the Lord" himself) could ever be (fully) revealed, or known, or perceived; and the ability to perceive this "secondborn son" would presumably have also been understood to constitute a more direct knowledge of "the Lord." In addition, consider that according to such a symbolic arrangement, both of these "persons" would be "pierced" simultaneously; the difference between the two "piercings" would be that the "inner person" or "secondborn son" (i.e., "the Lord") would *survive* the "piercing"—and, indeed, would continuously "pour out spirit" because of it,[176] and give rise to a *new* kind of "outer person"—while the (initial) "outer person" would *not* survive the "piercing."

   Furthermore, it strikes me as possible that the "birth" or "emergence" of the symbolic "secondborn son" was thought to be equivalent to the "inner person" *taking on the role* or *taking on the functions* of the "outer person": the "inner person," that is, *becoming externalized*. The "birth" of the "secondborn son" would thus have signified the coming

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[174] That a basic equivalence may have been seen between the symbol of "emission of spirit (i.e., breath)" and the symbol of "emission of blood" or "emission of water," at least in this context, is indicated by those manuscripts of the Gospel of Matthew that, in Matthew 27:49-50, read, "But another, having taken a spear, pierced [*nyssō*] his side, and water and blood came out [*ex-erchomai*]. And Jesus, having again cried out with a loud voice, let go [or gave forth, or yielded up: *aphiémi*] the spirit [*pneuma*]."

[175] It may be that there was understood to be only one "body" involved, and a "body" would only have been able to be filled or animated by one "spirit" at a time, such that a particular type of "spirit"—either "Holy Spirit" or "unclean spirit"—would have been what *defined* the "body" as an "inner body" or an "outer body," respectively.

[176] Compare John 7:37-39, John 19:34, Revelation 21:6, and Revelation 22:1. A comparison of these passages, along with Genesis 22:1-2,7-10, also points out an association between the figure of "Isaac"—who is representative of the "sacrificial lamb," as well as the "secondborn son" (and therefore also, I believe, the "inner meaning")—and the figure of "Jesus"; and it suggests that the endless flow of "living water" found in the "new Jerusalem" is the result of the "Lamb" having been successfully sacrificed.

into being of a *unified person*, to be contrasted with an individual in which an ongoing division between these two aspects was maintained.[177] If that is correct, then this way of conceptualizing the symbolism may have been related to the perceived nature of the "Holy Spirit," such that a "body" that was "filled" with the "Holy Spirit" would have been deemed to have a more "integrated" quality than the same "body" when it was filled with some *other* kind of "air" or "liquid"—both of which symbols would have signified a "spirit" of some kind. Perhaps this "other kind" of spirit would have been considered to be a *mixture* of the Holy Spirit and something else, leading to *conflict* between the two: hence the idea of an "impure spirit" (or "unclean spirit": Greek *pneuma a-kathartos*). I make this suggestion because an association between the idea of the "Holy Spirit" and the idea of "unity" or "overcoming of division" is indicated in several verses from the New Testament, some of which I have already indicated in the essay.[178]

Again, I think the "outer person" (or "outer body") and "inner person" (or "inner body") would have corresponded to, respectively, the "outer meaning" (or "outer symbolic forms") and the "inner meaning" of the scriptures. And the "outer person" or "outer body" would, at the same time, have represented the customarily accepted manner of *"joining together"* or *"mixing"* the outer symbolic forms and inner meanings in such a way that the "outer body" would serve to *hide* or *conceal* the true "inner meanings." What might be called the "joined person" or "mixed person" would have been understood to include *both* the "outer person" and the "inner person" as its component "parts," with the "inner person" thought of as being held as a kind of "captive" within the "outer person"; so the "outer body" would also have signified a kind of "state of imprisonment or captivity." And again, I think the point of this passage may have been that it was necessary that this symbolic "joined person" or "mixed person"—which in the New Testament can be found represented by the figure of "Jesus"—be "pierced," with the result that the "outer person" or "outer body" would be "killed" and then *separated from* the "inner person" or "inner body," in order to make it possible for "the Lord" to be *fully revealed* in the form of the "inner person" or "secondborn son," who would "inherit" or "take over" the estate and the functions of the "firstborn son" from him (thus, in a sense, "becoming" an "elder son" in addition to a "younger son"). But, at the same time, it may have been deemed to be inevitable that this "death" of the "firstborn son" (i.e., the "outer meaning") would lead to "mourning" among those who had accepted some more literal interpretation of the esoteric symbolism, since they would feel a great sense of loss at having to let go of the old body of meanings that they had assigned to the symbolism, due to their having become so greatly attached and accustomed to them.[179]

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[177] In terms of the Gospel narrative, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem may have been understood to correspond generally to the birth of the symbolic "first son," while the Crucifixion and Resurrection may have been understood to correspond generally to the "birth" of the symbolic "second son." This is partly indicated by Luke 2:7, in which Jesus is described as Mary's "firstborn [*prōto-tokos*] son."

[178] To give still another example, Paul implicitly makes the same point in 1 Corinthians 3:3-4: "For while there is jealousy [or rivalry: *zélos*] and strife [*eris*] among [or in: *en*] you, are you not of the flesh [*sarx*] and are you (not) walking [or following: *peri-pateō*] according to man [or 'after man': *kata anthrōpos*]? For when one says, 'I belong to Paul,' and another, 'I belong to Apollos,' are you not (mere) human beings [*anthrōpos*]?"

[179] Also, consider that Zechariah 12:10 speaks of the mourning taking place for "an <u>only</u> (son)" (or "a <u>single</u> (son)," or "a <u>united</u> (son)": *yachid*). A possible implication is that the "death" of the "first son" was understood to coincide with the *realization* that there had been *another* "son" (or "set of meanings") in existence all along, but one which, from their perspective, had been hidden in a merely potential state.

There is also an alternative way of conceptualizing the symbolism (which I think may have been entertained by the authors of the New Testament even at the same time as they entertained the conception that I just laid out, given my sense that those authors did not assign a very high priority to consistency). The piercing of Jesus's side is implicitly described in John 19:37 as the "fulfillment" of the prophecy made in Zechariah 12:10. As I have already indicated, I think this may have been meant to call attention to the possible fact that *the entire episode* of the Crucifixion of Jesus—and not only the specific act of the piercing of Jesus's side by a Roman soldier—was meant to signify the "killing" of the "outer man" (or the "outer deceptive body," or the "outer body of lies," or the "firstborn son," or the "false self") by way of a "piercing."[180] (Again, I believe that the entire episode of the Crucifixion was only understood to involve a *single* symbolic "piercing.") The "killing" of the "outer man" may have been understood to signify the *separation* of some prior *joining* of an "outer body" with an "inner body," each of which would have had a particular kind of "blood," or "soul," or "spirit." This "outer man" or "outer body" would have been "killed" by being "pierced" in order to allow the old "soul" (*psyché*, associated with "blood") or "spirit" (which, in the case of both the Greek word *pneuma* and the Hebrew word *ruach*, can also mean "air" or "wind") to escape. (Especially in the case of "spirit," it may have been an "impure spirit" or "unclean spirit" that the authors specifically had in mind.) That *same* "body" of outer symbols would then have been filled with or joined to a *new* "spirit": namely, the Holy Spirit. It would

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I think it is also conceivable that the author of Zechariah 12:10 expected that "mourning" or "lamenting" would occur because people would have come to understand *the reason why* it was ever felt by a schizophrenic person (and, to some extent, by every person) that a division needed to be made between an "inner self" and an "outer self." Even if some of the schizophrenic esotericist authors of the Bible focus a great deal of their attention on the need to separate the "inner body" from the "outer body," I do not think it should be inferred from this that a schizophrenic esotericist would have ever become *comfortable with* the notion that his "outer body" or "outer self" would have to be thrown away like a piece of garbage in order that his "inner self" or "true self" be able to survive. I think the expectation may have been that the "mourning" would be over the fact *that things had ever been allowed to reach the point* where any person would even feel the need to make such a mental distinction in a desperate attempt to preserve his "true self"—even if it ended up being preserved only as a mere fragment of what his original self (i.e., the "firstborn" self) once was and at one point had the potential to become. I think it is probably significant that in Zechariah 13:2-4 (which I quote again just below in the main text), it is a would-be prophet's "father" and "mother" who would be responsible for "piercing" him for "speaking lies"; I think this might be expressing the idea that if the father and mother of a "prophet" *had been the sort of people who would* "pierce" (i.e., expose) a child for "speaking lies" (i.e., becoming "duplicitous" or "double-faced"), there would have been *no need* for the child to create a division in his mind between a "false self" and a "true self" or "real self": His family, in other words, would not have been a schizophrenogenic one. The fact that some parents were not willing to "pierce" their child in this way was likely seen to be due to the fact that they did not want to take the chance of being "pierced" (i.e., exposed) for their own lying tendencies. If they found lying tolerable in a child of theirs, it could only be because they found lying tolerable in themselves; but if all parents were to universally come to find lying intolerable in themselves, they would also come to find it intolerable in any of their children. So it may be that the "mourning" or "lamenting" in this particular instance was thought to be over the fact that the required "piercing" (i.e., exposing) had come *so late* in the life of the "prophet," and over all of the damage caused as a result of that fact. If so, it would seem to reflect a persistent theme to be found in the Bible: ***The esotericist wants to be exposed***; but his fear of exposure is so great that he finds it impossible to expose *himself*.

[180] But if the episode of the Crucifixion was indeed understood to be a "prefiguring" as I have suggested, then it was no more *historical* a fulfillment than Zechariah 12:10 itself was. It was essentially just picking up the same basic motif for yet another "prophetical" (by which I mean "allegorical" or "figurative") presentation of that motif.

have been this *new* joining of the *same* metaphorical "body" with a new, pure kind of "spirit" or "blood" that would have resulted in that "body"—first made temporarily "dead"—being made once again "alive": in other words, *meaningful*. It is some explanation along these lines that I believe may have been originally intended to serve as the "inner meaning" of the symbol of the "Resurrection" of Christ's "body."[181]

In connection with the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, I think it is highly significant that Zechariah 12:10 is found in the text near Zechariah 13:2-4 (which I quoted earlier in the essay), which also mentions "piercing"—and the same Hebrew word *daqar* is used in both instances. Once again, the latter passage says,

> And it will come to pass in that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the earth [or the land: *erets*], and they will be remembered no more; and moreover I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass away from the earth [or the land: *erets*]. And it will come to pass that if any one again [or still: *owd*] prophesies, his father and mother who engendered him will say to him, "You shall not live, for you speak lies [or falsity: *sheqer*] in the name of the Lord"; and his father and mother who engendered him will pierce him [or pierce him through: *daqar*] when he prophesies. And it will come to pass in that day (that) every one of the prophets will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on a hairy outer garment in order to deceive [*kachash*].

Again, we know that John 19:37 implicitly describes the "piercing" of Jesus on the Cross as the "fulfillment" of the "piercing" (Hebrew *daqar*) predicted in Zechariah 12:10. Because the text of Zechariah 12:10 is found so near to the text of Zechariah 13:2-4, which likewise mentions "piercing" (Hebrew *daqar*), it would be reasonable to assume that the reasons given in Zechariah 13:2-4 why someone would be "pierced" *after* the arrival of "the day of the Lord" would be the *same* reasons why the person being spoken of in Zechariah 12:10 (there identified as "the Lord") is described as having been "pierced" (*daqar*).[182] So if, according to Zechariah 13:2-4, a person deserved to be

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[181] If the objection be made that Jesus Christ was thought by the authors of the New Testament to have been *always* "pure," so that it would not have been possible for them to think of any "unclean spirit" as having escaped from him, then we can simply posit that he was somehow deemed to have *taken on the role* of someone acting *as if* he had an "unclean spirit," and *as if* he was expelling an "unclean spirit" at his death —all the while retaining his inner purity "underneath it all," within his "true self." This may not make a great deal of sense, but it makes no less sense than the traditional Christian theories of Jesus having taken all of the world's sins upon himself in order to wipe out sin, even while himself remaining sinless. (And I believe, incidentally, that this way of thinking itself merely reflects a projected view of how the Christian apostles and later Christian teachers and ministers actually *viewed themselves* and their own activities: as sometimes knowingly doing evil in the hope that good might come of it—all the while remaining "stainless" and "unblemished" in their "inner selves.")

[182] This seems to serve as additional evidence that the description of the Crucifixion and Resurrection given in the Gospels was meant to be understood as generally prefiguring future events, since a comparison of the passages from Zechariah with the passages from the Gospel of John would appear to be identifying "Christ's Resurrection" with "the day of the Lord."

This hypothesis is also seemingly confirmed by 1 Corinthians 11:26, in which Paul says, "For as often as you might eat this bread and might drink the cup, you announce the death of the Lord until he should come." I think it is likely that the reason why the "death of the Lord" or the "Crucifixion" would, from the perspective of the persons whom Paul was addressing, have been considered to have taken place "in the past," is that these particular individuals had already been "baptized into his death," even though most other

"pierced" (*daqar*) for "prophesying"—which the text associates with "speaking lies," "putting on a hairy outer garment," and "deceiving"—then it would be reasonable to suppose that these were the very reasons why "the Lord," in the "outer person" or "outer body" of "Jesus" (*along with* his "spiritual" or "inner" body), had been "pierced" in the Crucifixion, as indicated in John 19:34 and 19:37. And if this is correct, then it would imply that the figure of "Jesus" who was depicted as living and teaching *before* the events of the Crucifixion and Resurrection was meant by the authors of the Gospels to be understood as someone who "spoke lies," who "wore a hairy outer garment," and who "deceived" others. In other words, the figure of "Jesus"—both before *and* after the Crucifixion and Resurrection—would have been serving as the prototypical "prophet"; but the symbolic "Crucifixion and Resurrection" is what would have made it possible to *distinguish* the "spiritual" aspect of the "prophet" from his "fleshly" or "carnal" or "natural" aspect (which is the aspect that would have been associated with his "speaking lies" and "deceiving").

To reach this conclusion would tend to confirm that my earlier assessment of the character of the pre-Crucifixion Jesus as it is presented in the Gospels—namely, as someone who practiced deception (based, for example, on John 11:11-14)—does not constitute an unfair misreading of the Gospels; and it may indeed even have been the very assessment that their authors had *consciously* intended would be made by the more careful and wary reader. The authors of the Gospels would have meant for the reader to understand that "piercing"—which I think would have been meant to symbolize the *exposing*, or *revealing*, or *penetrating* of the disguise or cover represented by the "outer meaning"—was the *inevitable* penalty for practicing deception: for trying, in other words, to keep some inner meaning "hermetically sealed" (pun intended) from a corresponding "outer meaning" that had already been put into circulation among the "profane multitude." In short, I think the "Jesus" who had not yet "risen" was, consciously or unconsciously, intended by the authors of the New Testament to represent an esotericist form of religion, one whose religious teachers—all of whom would have likewise been collectively represented by the figure of "Jesus"—still *veiled* their "inner" (or "true," or "intended," or "best") meanings in the form of cryptic parables and allegories. I think the "rising" of that same esotericist religion, and those same religious teachers, would have been understood to signify the shedding (or laying aside, or putting off) of those former methods of concealment, as well as of any "outer meanings" that were *doing* the concealing; and such methods and meanings would have been collectively signified by the symbol of the "outer body," as well as the symbol of the "hairy outer garment" that was associated with the figure of Esau—or, to be more precise, associated with the *impersonation of Esau* by Jacob.[183]

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persons still had not. See, e.g., Romans 6:3-5. So for those *other* persons, the story of the Crucifixion would still have been serving as a *pre*-figuration (but, from the perspective of *all* persons, the story would have been meant to be understood as *figurative* rather than *literal*). And the "Resurrection" would have been "pre-figurative" from the perspective of *all* persons. Cf. 2 Timothy 2:18. But even here it is dangerous to make categorical assertions, since the authors of the epistles were not always consistent on such points. It is safe to say that, *at least in a certain sense*, in the minds of the authors of the New Testament, Christ's *Resurrection* had not yet occurred *for anyone*, including themselves.

[183] The putting off by "Jacob" of his deceptive ways in order to reveal his "true self" may have been what the author of Isaiah 48:20 had in mind when he wrote of the "redemption of Jacob": "Come out [*yatsa*; LXX: *ex-erchomai*] from Babylon [*babel*], flee [*barach*; LXX: *pheugō*] from the Chaldeans, with a shouting [or joyful, or singing: *rinnah*; LXX: **euphrosyné**] voice [*qol*; LXX: *phōné*] declare [or proclaim,

Chapter 5: Schizophrenia, malignant narcissism, and autistic thinking; and their relation to esotericism and esotericist "initiation"

    I firmly believe that a primary cause of the phenomenon of religious esotericism is psychological disturbance or trauma, or mental pathology; and I believe that only by viewing it as such can one possibly hope to make sense of religious esotericism.[184] I have been led to this conclusion in large part by the fact that the ways in which religious esotericists use language is strikingly similar to the ways in which some schizophrenic persons have been described using language; so, if we can determine the reasons why certain schizophrenic persons use language in the way that they do, then it might be

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or tell plainly, or expose, or disclose, or make public, or make manifest, or make apparent, or make known: *nagad*; LXX: *an-aggellō*] this, make (it) heard, send (it) forth [or go forth: *yatsa*; LXX: *ap-aggellō*] to the end [or 'after part,' or 'last part': *qatseh*; LXX: *eschatos*] of the earth; say, 'The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob!'"

   Also, compare this verse to Genesis 31:26-27 and its use of the Hebrew word *nagad*, meaning "to tell plainly, to boldly announce," in reference to the failure of the presumably still "unredeemed" Jacob to do just that with Laban (a name which literally means "white," which might have been either intended or understood to refer to the idea of a lack of the kind of "darkness" caused by "covering" or "concealment").

   Incidentally, consider that the author of the Parable of the Prodigal Son that is related in Luke 15:11-32 may have meant, at least in part, to allude to the figures of Jacob and Esau when he has Jesus tell of a "younger son" and "elder son" in that parable. This is suggested partly by the use, in the Septuagint translation of Genesis 31:27, of the Greek noun *euphrosyné*, meaning "joy, merriness, gladness"—which can be compared to the use in Luke 15:23,24,32 of the corresponding Greek verb *euphrainō*, meaning "to rejoice, to make merry, to be glad"—suggesting a possible *reversal* of Jacob's previous *failure* to "make merry" referred to in Genesis 31:26-27 (there attributed to Jacob's "secretiveness" and desire to "hide" or "withdraw" from Laban). If that is correct, then the "return" of the "prodigal son" or "younger son" would seem to correspond (at least in part) to the "redemption" of Jacob by his "coming out of Babel (or Babylon)." Such an hypothesis is also suggested by the fact that in Luke 15:30 the "elder son" of the parable specifically accuses the "younger son" of having "eaten up the father's living" with "harlots" (*porné*); and this of course brings to mind the famous "harlot [*porné*] of Babylon." [Also compare Genesis 31:43 (LXX) (in which Laban says to Jacob, *panta hosa sy horas ema esti*, meaning "all, as much as you see, is mine"); Genesis 27:36-38 (in which Esau, the "elder son," bemoans the fact that Isaac, the "father," had only one "blessing" to give, and had already given it to Jacob, the "younger son"); and Luke 15:31 (in which—in response to the jealousy toward the "younger son" expressed by the "elder son"—"the father" says to the "elder son," *panta ta ema sa estin*, meaning "all that (is) mine is yours").]

   Something else to consider is that Genesis 29:1,4-5 indicates that Laban inhabited "the land of the sons of the east [or earlier times, or times before: *qedem*]" (and more specifically the city of Haran or Harran in upper Mesopotamia), which Genesis 31:20-21 indicates was located "across the Euphrates"—which suggests that the land inhabited by Laban may have been understood to correspond to symbolic "Babel" or "Babylon" (even though this is not where the actual historical city of Babylon or region of Babylonia was located). The "end of the earth" spoken of in Isaiah 48:20 might have been meant to refer to "the west," which might have been identified with the land of Canaan to which Genesis 31:20-21 says that Jacob was "fleeing" (Hebrew *barach*)—a fact which Genesis 31:20-21 again says that Jacob failed to "openly announce" or "boldly proclaim" (Hebrew *nagad*). Compare the use in Genesis 29:1 of the Hebrew word *qedem*, which can mean "before," with the use in Isaiah 48:20 of the Hebrew word *qatseh*, which can mean "after." The relationship between these two words or concepts might have been understood to correspond to the relationship between the Greek words *arché*, meaning "beginning" or "origin," and *telos*, meaning "end" or "completion" or "goal" (cf. Revelation 21:6), and between the Greek words *prōtos*, meaning "first," and *eschatos*, meaning "last"—which I believe in turn corresponds to the relationship between the "inner meaning" and the "revelation" (or "manifestation," or "uncovering," or "illumination") of that inner meaning: which "revelation" is symbolized by the rising of the sun and the spreading of the rays of sunlight from east to west. [Incidentally, it is interesting that the Greek word for "east" is *anatolé*, which more literally means "a rising (of the sun)" and is derived from *ana-tellō*, meaning "to rise up"; and *ana-*

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possible to determine the reasons for the existence of religious esotericism as a social and cultural phenomenon in human history.[185]

    A quotation that reveals a great deal about the manner of thinking of religious esotericists can be found in the writings of Jabir ibn Hayyan, an Islamic alchemist who lived during the 8th and 9th centuries. In his *Book of Stones*, Jabir, speaking about his use of esoteric writing techniques, says,

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tellō is related to *telos*, meaning "end, conclusion, goal"—which suggests that in the collective mind of the ancient Greeks, the symbol of the "sunrise" was thought to signify a kind of "completion" of a process.]

    Also, the role of the character "Laban" and his possible connection to symbolic "Babel" or "Babylon" might be relevant to Genesis 11:3, which, in telling the story of the "Tower of Babel," uses the words *laban*, which can mean either "to make brick" or "to make white, to make whiter, to whiten," and *lebenah*, which can mean either "a brick" or "a white (thing)."

[184] I found the following description, given by the publisher, of the book *The Unsayable: The Hidden Language of Trauma* (Random House, 2006), by Annie Rogers (which I have not read): "In her twenty years as a clinical psychologist, Annie Rogers has learned to understand the silent language of girls who will not—who cannot—speak about devastating sexual trauma. Abuse too painful to put into words does have a language, though, a language of coded signs and symptoms that conventional therapy fails to understand. Rogers opens with a harrowing account of her own emotional collapse in childhood and goes on to illustrate its significance to how she hears and understands [my emphasis; cf. Mark 7:14] trauma in her clinical work. Years after her breakdown, when she discovered the brilliant work of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, Rogers at last had the key she needed to unlock the secrets of the unsayable [my emphasis; cf. Matthew 16:19]. With Lacan's theory of language and its layered associations as her guide, Rogers was able to make startling connections with seemingly unreachable girls who had lost years of childhood, who had endured the unspeakable in silence."

    This book description lends at least some support to my suspicion that the phenomenon of religious esotericism may ultimately find its roots—at least in part—in the mistreatment, abuse, and traumatizing of children.

[185] I know of some existing literature that, in certain respects, comes close to making the argument that I am trying to advance. Needless to say, much attention has been devoted to the similarity between the content of religious symbolism and the content of psychotic hallucinations and delusions, as they both seem to find their source in the thinking of the unconscious or sleeping/dreaming mind. But in addition to that, I can think of a few other, more specific examples of literature related to the themes of this essay. I am aware that the German psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers wrote a paper (which I have not read) in which he argued that if the prophet Ezekiel were alive today he would probably be diagnosed as a schizophrenic, based partly on medical symptoms that Jaspers believed Ezekiel was describing in reference to himself; but I do not believe Jaspers ever argued that esotericist writings were *intrinsically* schizophrenic, or had an *intrinsic* tendency to cause schizophrenia in populations that were adherents of esoteric religions.

    As another example, in *Primitive Religion: Its Nature and Origin* (Viking Press, 1937), especially pp. 105-68, anthropologist Paul Radin makes the argument that there is a connection between the vocation of shamanism and the existence of psychological disturbance. He claims that "neurotic-epileptoid individuals predominate among the medicine-men" in non-agricultural cultures (p. 108). Also: "Throughout the world of primitive man some form of emotional instability and well-marked sensitivity has always been predicated as the essential trait of the medicine man and shaman." (p. 106.) He also writes, "The necessity of suffering, we cannot too strongly insist, was not a theory developed by the shaman in order to describe and authenticate the contact between man and the supernatural world. Pain and suffering were concrete facts imposed upon him by the very nature of his physical-mental constitution. It was the expression of a conflict within himself, the splitting off of an unconscious state from a conscious one and its subsequent reintegration on a new level of awareness. This synthesis was then projected outward and re-enacted before the world as the drama of man's perpetual struggle for security, a security to which he attains by

> [W]e deliberately abrogate in one book what we say in another. **The purpose is to baffle and lead into error everyone except those whom God loves and provides for**.[186]

According to the Wikipedia article on Jabir, "His works seem to have been deliberately written in highly esoteric code, so that only those who had been initiated into his alchemical school could understand them. It is therefore difficult at best for the modern reader to discern which aspects of Jabir's work are to be read as ambiguous symbols, and what is to be taken literally. Because his works rarely made overt sense, the term 'gibberish' is believed to have originally referred to his writings."[187] Let me repeat what Jabir wrote: "The purpose is to baffle *and lead into error* [!] everyone except those whom God loves and provides for." This quotation sums up perfectly the mentality that

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delving into the unknown and by becoming as one with the hidden and the mysterious. Under these conditions it is not difficult to understand how a trance or an epileptic seizure should have come to be interpreted as a type of temporary death and rebirth." (p. 109.) Radin also speaks of "the persistence of certain neurotic-epileptoid features in even the most complicated civilizations where the priest has become a figure of an entirely different order from the simple magician or shaman" (p. 110). He also writes, "[T]he basic qualification for the shaman and medicine-man in the more simply organized groups like the Eskimo and the Arunta is that he belong to the neurotic-epileptoid type. … [A]s we approach tribes with a more complex form of economic organization, these qualifications, while they are still present, become secondary to new ones. For this we have already given the explanation, namely that, as the emoluments of office increased, many people who were quite normal were attracted to the priesthood. The pattern of behaviour, however, had by that time become fixed and the non-neurotic shaman had to accept the formulation which owed its origin and its initial development to his neurotic predecessors and colleagues. … What was thus originally due to psychical necessity became the prescribed and mechanical formulae to be employed by anyone who desired to enter the priestly profession or for any successful approach to the supernatural. In other words, some of the basic problems of religion were to be envisaged, for good or evil, in terms derived from a very special and manifestly non-normal experience." (pp. 131-32.)

   [Consider, by the way, that when "normal" individuals are effectively forced to feign "belief" in types of experiences they have never personally had, this will inevitably lead to deception, self-deception, and deceptiveness on the part of the priestly or shamanic class—and from there it will spread to the rest of the society. Also consider that it may have been this very kind of "feigning" that led the authors of the Gospels to have Jesus denounce the Pharisees and scribes as "hypocrites" (Greek *hypokrités*), since it is possible that those authors did not believe that the latter had personally had the *experiences* that would have *allowed* them to make sense of the esoteric symbolism of the Bible—but believed that, even in spite of this fact, the Pharisees and scribes were still trying to impose their interpretations of the symbolism on those persons who *had* had the relevant experiences.]

   As a last example, the psychologist Julian Jaynes, in his *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, argued that what we know as human consciousness emerged fairly recently in history, perhaps only three thousand years ago, and that before that the human mind was essentially psychotic or schizophrenic, and compliantly followed the directives of the "voices" that it "heard" coming from the right hemisphere of the human brain; and Jaynes argued that documentary evidence of this psychotic state of mind can be found in various ancient religions of the world. (I do not necessarily agree with Jaynes' main thesis, but I do recall finding it to be a very interesting and thought-provoking book nonetheless.) However, I do not recall that Jaynes made an attempt to relate this psychotic mental state to the practice of religious esotericism per se, at least not directly.

[186] Syed Nomanul Haq, *Names, Natures and Things: The Alchemist Jabir ibn Hayyan and his Kitab al-Ahjar* (*Book of Stones*) (Springer, 1994), p. 162; the emphases are mine. By the way, with regard to the phrase "lead into error," recall how in Matthew 27:64 the chief priests and Pharisees accuse the figure of "Jesus" of having been responsible for a "deception" or "fraud"—or, more literally, a "wandering" (*plané*).

[187] Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jabir_ibn_Hayyan (last checked April 29, 2016).

permits supposedly righteous religious people to justify the use of esotericist writing techniques—which is, after all, ***just another name for lying***.

As the material that is quoted below in this chapter demonstrates, the mentality of certain psychologically disturbed people is very similar to this. The attitude of certain schizophrenics, as well as of certain malignant narcissists and others, often seems to be something along the lines of, "If you really loved (me), then you would understand my secret language."[188] Meanwhile, the attitude of the typical religious esotericist is something along the lines of, "If you really loved (God), then you would understand my secret language." If one attributes the attitude of the religious esotericist to psychological projection, so that he is substituting the idea of "God" for himself, then this shows the

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[188] The commonality of the presence of such an attitude among both schizophrenics and narcissists (in addition to others) might be due to the fact that individuals of both types have not infrequently been raised by more or less narcissistic, or self-absorbed, or self-involved parents. So, even though a schizophrenic person might not be narcissistic himself, there is a decent chance that his parents were narcissistic or otherwise self-involved. And, as a result of this, he may have picked up certain narcissistic tendencies, even if they did not give rise to full-blown narcissism. (However, it should again be emphasized that it is not necessarily true that a person who has been diagnosed as "schizophrenic" was raised by narcissistic parents or himself has narcissistic tendencies.)

In *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil* (Simon & Schuster, 1983), from which I also quote below in the main text, psychiatrist M. Scott Peck assigns the name "evil" to certain people, many of whom would be diagnosed with a "personality disorder" in general, and most likely that of "narcissistic personality disorder" (p. 128; although, so far as I can tell, he would not necessarily restrict the classification of "evil" to a person falling solely into one of those two categories). In fact, Peck relates narcissism and what he calls "evil" specifically to schizophrenia, saying, "Among themselves psychiatrists often refer to something called 'ambulatory schizophrenia.' By this name we mean people … who generally function well in the world, who never develop a full-blown schizophrenic illness or require hospitalization but who demonstrate a disorganization in their thinking—particularly at times of stress— which resembles that of more obvious 'classical' schizophrenia. It is not, however, a formal diagnostic category for the very good reason that we do not know enough about the condition to be definite about it. We do not, in fact, know whether it has any real relationship to true schizophrenia." (p. 128.)

In a footnote, Peck continues, "The relationship between evil and schizophrenia is not only a matter for fascinating speculation but also very serious research. Many (but certainly not all) of the parents of schizophrenic children seem to be ambulatory schizophrenics or evil or both. Much has been written about the 'schizophrenogenic' parent, and usually an ambulatory schizophrenic or evil person is what is described. Does this mean that ambulatory schizophrenia is a variant of true schizophrenia and a simple genetic transmission is involved? Or is schizophrenia in the child the psychological product of its parents' evil destructiveness? Might even evil itself have a genetic basis, as seems the case in most instances of schizophrenia? We do not know, nor will we know until the psychobiology of human evil has become the subject of much scientific research." (pp. 128-29.)

Elsewhere in the book, Peck gives a background explanation of the basic life attitude of the narcissist, which I think also overlaps with the attitude of the schizophrenic religious esotericist: "The essence of maternal love for the infant is affirmation. The ordinary, healthy mother loves her infant for no reason other than simply the fact that it is here. The infant does not have to *do* anything to earn her love. There are no strings attached to it. The love is unconditional. She loves the infant for itself, as it is. This love is a statement of affirmation; it says, 'You are of great value simply because you exist.'

"During the second and third year of its life the mother begins to increasingly expect certain things, such as toilet training, from her child. And when this happens her love inevitably becomes, to at least some degree, conditional. She now says, 'I love you, but . . . ' 'But I wish you would stop tearing up the books.' 'But I wish you would stop pulling the lamp off the table.' 'But I wish you would help me by going to the potty so I don't have to wash these diapers anymore.' The child learns the words 'good' and 'bad.' And it learns it can continue to be fully affirmed only by being a good child. Now it has to earn its affirmation. And so it is forever after. The period of unconditional affirmation lasts only as long as infancy. As psychological adults we have learned, to a greater or lesser degree, that in order to be loved it is our

thinking process of the religious esotericist and that of the schizophrenic to be virtually identical; but the religious esotericist's thinking process is that of someone who, for all practical purposes, is either unable or unwilling to distinguish in his own mind between himself and God—that is, God regarded in his absoluteness—*when the person makes his demands on others*. In other words, it is someone whose thoughts are characterized by a tremendous ***self-absorption***. It is profoundly disturbing to think that this mentality may have characterized a significant number of the gurus, sages, priests, and prophets to whom people have turned for life guidance down through the ages.

It is important to emphasize that by my pointing out this connection, I am not trying to demonize all schizophrenics (or, for that matter, members of any other group of people). I do not in any way mean to suggest that schizophrenics are "guilty," and that everyone else is "innocent."[189] In fact, I am somewhat inclined to say that, if anything,

responsibility to make ourselves lovable.

"A key element in Charlene's behavior ['Charlene' is being presented as an example of the sort of person Peck would describe as 'evil'] was her request—no, her demand—that I love her regardless of how she behaved—that I affirm her not just for who she might become but for who she was, sickness and all. In so doing I would give her what she desired from me—the love of a mother for her infant, the consistently unconditional love that can be experienced only in infancy. It is no wonder that this was so, because we had evidence that she had failed to receive from her mother the unconditionally affirming love during her infancy which ought to be the heritage of every child. Of this heritage she had been cheated. But it was impossible for me to make it up to her. For she demanded that I love her unconditionally as a sick adult. She insisted that I love her as a mother would an infant, but she insisted also that I treat her as an adult peer. If for no other reason, her demand was impossible to fulfill because it was a demand to affirm her sickness. [In a footnote Peck then writes, 'In Martin Buber's words, the evil insist upon "affirmation independent of all findings" (Good and Evil [Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953], p. 136).'] Charlene did not want to be healed. She wanted to be loved, not changed. She wanted to be loved for herself, neurosis and all. Although she would never say so, it gradually became clear that Charlene remained in therapy with the intent to obtain my love without therapy—that is, to have both my love and her neurosis: to have her cake and eat it too." (pp. 161-62.)

I would like to point out as a general matter that I do not necessarily agree with Peck's therapeutic philosophy, since I doubt that an adult can (or should) be "re-raised" by another adult. (That this was indeed his therapeutic philosophy is made more clear in portions of the book from which I have not quoted, in which Peck says that he encouraged psychological regression in his patients.) So, I am not sure that "Charlene" was wrong in not being willing to trustingly submit to Peck as a young child would submit to a parent; but I do think "Charlene" was wrong in her basic refusal to change—even when her failure to do so harmed others—however she chose to go about trying to achieve that change. In so far as ***the refusal to change or adapt oneself in order to avoid harming others*** is understood to be the core of the problem being identified in the passage, it serves as a highly useful assessment of the basic type of attitude that some people develop in reaction to the situation in which their poor upbringing has put them. Furthermore, one should consider just how dramatically the rest of society might, through esotericist religion, be affected by such an attitude. That is because esoteric religion by its very nature involves, not only a failure, but a stubborn ***refusal***, to conform its "sacred" communications to the ways in which the general society ***customarily uses*** its language, such that the refusal by esotericists to conform results in members of that society being lied to, misled, or confused—that is to say, ***harmed***.

[189] Indeed, I am forced to assume that the "schizophrenic" nature of the esoteric religions that are promoted by supposed "non-schizophrenics" must make a significant contribution to the development of schizophrenia in individual persons, and that this causative relationship is no less important than the one working in the other direction, in which individual esotericist schizophrenics have, in effect, promoted "societal schizophrenia" through their religious writings and teachings. The first of the two causative relationships is indicated partly by the fact that a strong interest in religious esotericism, occultism, or mysticism is very commonly found in persons clinically diagnosed with schizophrenia, even those who do not go on to become influential "prophets" of any kind. There is something quite perverse about the fact that society has customarily encouraged the very persons who have been most desperately in need of

the reverse is the case; but that too would be inaccurate, since I think there is "guilt" to be found on both "sides of the equation" (to the extent that two separate "sides" can even be distinguished).[190] And when I speak of "schizophrenics," I wish also to emphasize that I am speaking only of persons who communicate using highly cryptic metaphor, and whose communication contains obscure "hidden meanings" or "hidden messages." For that reason, I do not mean to suggest that all persons who have been given a diagnosis of "schizophrenia" are dishonest, since, as far as I know, not all persons who have been given a diagnosis of "schizophrenia" communicate in this way; and, even among those persons who *do* communicate in the ways I just described, it cannot necessarily be assumed that it is their actual *intention* to be misleading to others (even if it is their

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mental guidance and support, to seek help in esotericist religion—which is really the **last** place where they ought to have been looking for help.

[190] I readily admit that my knowledge of the subject of schizophrenia is still quite lacking, and that my understanding of it continues to grow and evolve. The question of "who is to blame" for society's ills, as between non-schizophrenics and esotericist schizophrenics, is, I find, a very complicated and confusing one, but it seems to me that it probably reduces ultimately to something like a "chicken-and-egg" problem. If there is one thing I hope to convey to the reader, it is **the extreme importance to society of the subject matter of schizophrenia itself**, especially as it pertains to religion, so that readers who share an anti-esotericist perspective can research it more than I have been able to do. I would also like to emphasize that the problems and traits associated with schizophrenia cannot be conceptually limited to those persons who have been officially diagnosed as "schizophrenic." **The striking similarity between religious esotericist modes of communication and schizophrenic modes of communication simply cannot be written off as trivial**. And esotericist modes of communication underlie all of the world's traditional religions—which in turn underlie all of human civilization. That means that if esotericist religion is a problem that all human beings have in common, then so too is schizophrenia. **Nobody** can live in human society without having been psychologically harmed by such a state of affairs. As such, I do not think it would go too far to say that all of human civilization as we know it is at least somewhat "schizophrenogenic," i.e., schizophrenia-producing.

Related to this, consider what the authors of the medical journal article "The Role of Psychotic Disorders in Religious History Considered" write in their conclusion: "We suggest that some of civilization's most significant religious figures may have had psychotic symptoms that contributed inspiration for their revelations. It is hoped that this analysis will engender scholarly dialogue about the rational limits of human experience and serve to educate the general public, persons living with mental illness, and healthcare providers about the possibility that persons with primary and mood disorder-associated psychotic-spectrum disorders have had a monumental influence on civilization." (Evan D. Murray, Miles G. Cunningham, and Bruce H. Price, *The Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 24:4, Fall 2012, p. 424.)

However, I wish to note that my own view is that it is the *authors* of the ancient esoteric writings who should be considered to have been at least somewhat psychotic, and to have been the persons who received the "revelations," rather than the characters that they wrote about. I also wish to note that my opposition to esoteric religion is not based on my necessarily having made any determination that the esotericist authors of the sacred scriptures of the world's traditional religions somehow crossed "the rational limits of human experience"; nor any determination that we ought to extend what we conceive those limits to be. My opposition is instead based on the fact that those authors failed to communicate their experiences and revelations—whatever they were—in a way that was *unambiguous* and that would not be likely to mislead or unnecessarily confuse the general readership of their writings; and my opposition to esoteric religion is also based on my belief that by effectively requiring people to immerse themselves in writings of that kind —as the world's traditional religions all do—those religions tend to promote the development of psychosis in society.

My sense is that the hope generally prevailing among most people is that so long as some group of people can be labeled as "insane" and safely cordoned off from everyone else, this will entitle them to think of the rest of society as "being sane" and "making sense" in their minds. They are obviously not justified in thinking that. The problem of insanity permeates **all** of our society. I admit to having concerns that by

intention to communicate in ways that *happen to be* objectively misleading to others).[191] And, conversely, I certainly do not mean to suggest that only schizophrenic persons are capable of being dishonest or thinking illogically, or that these problems are in any way restricted to them.

Furthermore, my goal is not to defame esotericist religion by insinuating that, since it has been the product of "crazy people," it ought simply to be dispensed with for that reason alone. I am not trying to score cheap shots against esotericist religion through name-calling or guilt by association. Esotericist religion is not objectionable because it is the product of any particular group of people—even so-called "crazy people." It is objectionable for definite, identifiable, socially harmful characteristics of its own, namely that it both exhibits and encourages *illogical and dishonest thinking patterns* which are expressed in people's *communications*. Schizophrenic religious esotericists (as well as all promoters of their esotericist religious writings) do harm by *spreading* these irrational ways of thinking by means of misleading or confusing ways of communicating; and this occurs when, while an esotericist author does not himself believe in the *literal* truth of his own words, he at the same time either *actively encourages* others to believe in their literal truth, or is *content knowing* or *indifferent to the fact* that others will likely arrive at a belief in their literal truth. When harm is caused in such ways, I believe that others are justified in denouncing and trying to prevent what they are doing—in fact, I believe they have an affirmative obligation to do so; and they should not feel concern that their opposition will amount to "picking on" or trying to scapegoat anyone. When I denounce certain ways of thinking, I do so *only* in so far as these ways of thinking are involved in communication that is *objectively misleading or deliberately confusing*, and not *merely* because others happen to consider the content of their communication to be "unusual" or "unfamiliar" or "strange." But, having said that, if the reason *why* the communication is considered "strange," or "odd," or "peculiar," or "bizarre," is *because* most people consider it to be misleading or deliberately confusing, then it deserves to be deemed

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associating schizophrenia with religious esotericism in the way that I am doing, I am taking the risk of encouraging people to assign to diagnosed schizophrenics the exclusive "blame" for the problem of esotericist religion. And that would potentially give so-called "non-schizophrenics" an excuse to ignore the subject matter of schizophrenia and its social causes, along with an excuse to ignore the closely related phenomenon of religious esotericism—at least if they were to decide to simply write off the entire subject matter of religion as nothing but "a whole lot of insanity," and turn to their narrow acquisitive pursuits with more enthusiasm than ever. But such a misguided reaction would only perpetuate the *actual* insanity in society, which is fundamentally rooted in dishonesty, a lack of interest in being rational, and a failure to think about and address social problems in a holistic manner, rather than rooted in religion per se. In fact, I believe that organized religion must be the means by which humanity regains (or attains) its sanity. But in order for that to happen, we need to start rethinking our background assumptions about what is "sane" and "insane" according to logical reasoning, and not merely according to whatever we have been *accustomed* to thinking of as "reasonable" or "normal." And when considered on that basis, **_esoteric religion is not sane_**; but then, most of those who have willingly embraced esoteric religion have been (so-called) **_non_**-schizophrenics—which raises the question of just how sane the so-called "non-schizophrenics" of our society really are.

[191] However, the fact that their communications are objectively misleading to others, even if misleading others is not their intention, might indicate that they have become so self-involved—at least partly for reasons beyond their control—that they have simply come to **take no interest** in whether or not other persons end up getting confused or misled by the things they say, and have become largely **unaware of** and **oblivious to** the harmful effect they may be having on others by their communication.

socially harmful. No one has the "right" to be "eccentric" (even "spiritually eccentric") if the likely and foreseeable result will be the deception or confusion of others.[192]

While I believe people's thoughts, strictly speaking, are entirely their own concern, the way in which they use language with other people is *never* solely their own concern, precisely because human communication is, by definition, *never private*.[193] (Or, at least, it *should* not be private, since I believe all of human society's problems flow from its having initially chosen to permit the development of "private *group* meanings" and "secret languages" among some subset of the larger society composed of people sharing the same conventional language.) *Language is always "public property"*; and the community composed of all speakers of a language always has the legitimate authority to insist that its common language be used such a way that it does not lead to deception or confusion among its speakers.[194] If a person fails to abide by the rule not to use deliberately misleading or confusing language, then he should be regarded as having effectively forfeited his status as a member of that speech community. If we choose to assume that a schizophrenic esotericist (or any other esotericist; or any liar at all for that matter) has control over his actions, then we can think of our refusal to listen to what he has to say as punishment for his choice not to adhere to the necessary rules of discourse; or, if we choose to assume that the individual is *unable* to adhere to the rule against the

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[192] It is the combining of the overly metaphorical communication of esotericist schizophrenics (and others) with the making of truth claims of a factual nature that I consider to be especially dangerous. That is why I generally consider esoteric religion to be far more dangerous than symbolic visual art or fictional writing or ordinary poetry in which propositions are not made that assert facts and that are capable of being either agreed with or disagreed with by the viewer or reader—even if the creator of a particular piece of art or fictional writing or poetry was just as schizophrenic as the creator of a particular esoteric religious writing. (That is not to say, however, that symbolic art or fictional writing or poetry are necessarily innocuous, since they can still make truth claims even in the sense that I have in mind, but of a more implicit kind; historical fiction would be an example of this. Furthermore, symbolic art, fictional writing, and poetry can also be potentially problematic and even dangerous for reasons unrelated to the making of factual truth claims— reasons that I will not examine in this essay, but that deserve careful attention.)

   It should be noted that it cannot necessarily be assumed that the schizophrenic *originator* of an esotericist writing was entirely responsible for associating it with universal factual truth claims that would, whether in practice or only in theory, be binding on others; much of that may have come later, and been done by other persons—in which case those other persons would share responsibility for the deception involved, along with the schizophrenic author or editor of the writing who should have expected that a significant number of people might be deceived by the kind of language he was using.

[193] At the same time, it would be much more difficult for any single individual to maintain disordered or "peculiar" ways of thinking in his own mind if the rest of society, in practice, never permitted him to communicate with others in dishonest and deliberately confusing ways.

[194] The precise manner in which persons would, in the more distant future, be "penalized" for transgressing this rule is not my concern for present purposes. I do not advocate enacting any criminal laws against engaging in organized esotericist practices at the present time (even if it were somehow possible to get such laws enacted, which I strongly doubt it would be), as I think the laws would likely be abused, since I do not think that people in general are yet sane enough to know how to apply them intelligently; I only advocate that there be at least *some* kind of social penalty or disincentive for engaging in them. In the final section of Chapter 6 of the essay, concerning the proposal that "truth groups" be formed, I discuss one possible means by which a social "penalty" might be applied: essentially, that of "shunning"—that is, a progressive withdrawal of participation with, and support for, lying and liars.

   [I should note, however, that I am not opposed *in principle* to the application of criminal laws against organized esotericist practices, since I think esotericist organizations by their nature amount to a kind of criminal fraud and conspiracy, one in which the "uninitiated members," as well as the rest of society, are deceived by the "initiated members" into believing that the purposes of the organization are something other than what they really are.]

use of misleading or confusing language, then our attitude toward him might be more pitying and patronizing, with our aim being to help him learn, if possible, how to adhere to the rule. Perhaps it should be left up to the individual person to decide whether he would prefer to be regarded by others as wicked, or as helpless and pitiable. (But it is because neither of these two options is desirable—since in neither case can the person expect to be listened to or taken seriously by others—that he has an incentive to try to adhere to the rule.) In neither case, however, should we *respect* or make accommodations for an individual's deviance from this rule. The misleading and deliberately confusing use of language cannot be regarded by anyone who wishes to live in a sane society as "just another way of communicating"—much less "a more profound way of communicating"—with a status equal to or even higher than that of honest, straightforward, and direct forms of expression.

I include in this chapter excerpts from two books written by psychiatrists, R. D. Laing's *The Divided Self*[195] and M. Scott Peck's *People of the Lie*,[196] as well as excerpts from a paper by Gregory Bateson, Don D. Jackson, Jay Haley, and John Weakland, entitled "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia,"[197] to better illustrate the connection between mental pathology and religious esotericism (along with the practice of esotericist "initiation"). The passages written by Laing and by Bateson et al. involve schizophrenia, while the passage written by Peck involves what he calls "malignant narcissism," a term first coined by psychiatrist Erich Fromm. While schizophrenia and malignant narcissism ought to be distinguished, it must at the same time be recognized that, from what I can gather, there is in certain respects a substantial overlap between the two conditions, and they can in some cases blur together. One thing that schizophrenics and narcissists (and some parents of schizophrenics) often have in common are ways of thinking that can generally be described as "autistic"—possibly, in some cases and at least to some extent, in the clinical sense of the word—but also in the more literal sense of the word (that is, in the sense of indicating "self-absorption" or "self-involvement"). A schizophrenic may or may not be "selfish" in the way that the narcissist typically is—that is, in a way that directly harms others—but it seems safe to say that, like the narcissist, the schizophrenic is generally very *self-involved*, so that his thinking processes and the way in which he assigns meanings to the words and language he uses may be quite *idiosyncratic*. In the mind of someone with "autistic" ways of thinking, the words that other people use give rise to mental associations that would seem quite random and odd to others if they were made public. For example, one such type of mental association is that based on little more than the sounds of words; and this might help to explain why "punning" is so frequently found in esotericist writing. In an "autistic" mind (with the term "autistic" understood in its broader sense), while the words used by a speaker often do have *an* effect on the person, in many cases this effect will be that of stimulating or inducing some train of thought that is *not the one intended* by the speaker.[198] When this occurs, it is quite likely that the resulting train of thought will effectively involve delusion or

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[195] Pantheon Books, 1969.

[196] Simon and Schuster, 1983.

[197] In Milton M. Berger, ed., *Beyond the Double Bind: Communication and Family Systems, Theories, and Techniques with Schizophrenics* (Brunner/Mazel, 1978).

[198] An excellent illustration of "autistic thinking" or "autistic logic" can be found in Lewis Carroll's portrayal of "Humpty Dumpty" in Chapter 6 of *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There* (as well as elsewhere in Carroll's "Alice" writings).

fantasy of some kind, since it seems to reflect a refusal, for whatever reason, to participate in a *commonly shared* reality.[199] In such cases, there is an unwillingness by the person to be responsive to the other person's *intended meaning*; and he instead substitutes some other meaning that he would prefer to deal with, perhaps because he finds it less emotionally distressing, or perhaps for some other reason. The result is that he lives in an inner world in which the symbols and other mental stimuli that he perceives are often supplied with his own *private* meanings rather than with *common* or *public* meanings.[200]

The unwillingness to make contact and engage with the larger world of common meanings may be the result of feeling that this "shared" world is not a *trustworthy* place, and that the schizophrenic, narcissistic, or otherwise "autistic" person will be safer so long as he remains in his "private" world. Whether or not the person is "justified" in believing this is not my concern for present purposes; the point I wish to make here is that, even if we assume that he is perfectly justified in believing this from his own perspective, based on his own experiences, the rest of society cannot reasonably allow his or anyone's world of "private meanings" to become "mixed up" with the world of "public meanings" on an *ongoing* basis. The "private meanings" must either eventually *become fully public* through open attempts at persuasion, or they must *stay private*, remaining understood *by the individual alone* (and perhaps also by therapists or other persons, but then *solely* for the purpose of helping the individual to better express his private meanings *in terms of* the existing "public meanings" or "shared meanings" of the society). Above all, they cannot be allowed to become *semi-public*, so that the meanings are perpetually shared—or, rather, mistakenly *believed* to be shared—among some group of people larger in number than the single individual, but still smaller than the community composed of *all* of those persons who use the commonly shared conventional language. It is certainly understandable that the schizophrenic individual would want to escape his mental isolation by seeking out like-minded persons among whom he felt safe and understood, but society simply cannot permit him to escape from his mental isolation *in that way*. If the non-schizophrenic members of society wish to help the schizophrenic person escape from his mental isolation, they should instead closely examine the society that they expect him to share, and try to find ways to make its commonly shared world of public meanings *more sane*, and *more inviting* than it currently is in the eyes of a person contemplating whether to make the transition to a world of public meanings or to remain in his own world of private meanings—since it seems that in many cases it was the insanity he experienced in his family life, or in the wider society, or some combination of both, that led him to retreat into a world of private meanings in the first place.[201]

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[199] But, for this reason, such "divergent" or "independent" or "tangential" trains of thought can also potentially be the source of new and creative insights. So I do not necessarily intend to *denigrate* the world of "private meanings" per se, or to suggest that we should always be *satisfied* with our shared world of "public meanings." It might in fact be said that the desire to periodically "retreat" into an individual world of "private meanings" is the ultimate source of all human creativity. But I also believe that any person who makes these sorts of "retreats" has an obligation to find ways to responsibly *reintegrate* his newly created "private meanings" back into the already-existing world of "public meanings." And if he is unwilling or unable to do so, he should either keep his views to himself or seek help from others at learning how to make them public.

[200] This serves as a reminder of the centrality of the idea of "meaning" in understanding the nature of esotericism and all of the problems that flow from it.

I now include the excerpts that I mentioned. The following excerpt is from M. Scott Peck's *People of the Lie*. All italicizing and the underlining are my own, and have been included to help point out how, in the behavior of a malignant narcissist during a therapy session with Peck, one is actually watching an "initiator" at work:

"I wondered, for instance, whether [Charlene] might have an obsessive-compulsive neurosis, and I questioned her about all the possible symptoms of this neurosis, such as ritualistic behavior. Charlene understood perfectly. With considerable enthusiasm she described several minor rituals she had performed during her early adolescence … . 'But

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[201] And if anyone thinks that our shared world of "public meanings" is *already* sane, then he may have an even looser grip on reality than the typical schizophrenic (and I am not being facetious when I say that). Remember that, for example, the "outer meaning" or "public meaning" of the Gospel narrative is that Jesus literally walked on water. In other words, this is what has passed for the "reasonable" point of view in the general society of Western nations for many centuries, up until fairly recently; this is the sort of belief that a person was expected to accept—or rather, *pretend* to accept—if he hoped not to be marginalized by his society. On the other hand, those believing in the general existence of "inner meanings"—whether in cryptic esoteric writings and parables such as this one, or in the things people say in everyday conversation —have done so based on the assumption that a literal or outer meaning such as that of the "walking on water" parable was *not* a reasonable or rational one taken by itself; and, moreover, such persons were unable in their own minds to *pretend* to believe that it was. In order to be allowed to participate in the public discourse of the community in any way at all—while at the same time trying to *make sense* of what was being said in a way that allowed them to preserve their own *personal* moral integrity or authenticity— they would have felt the need to go "deeper," and develop alternative meanings for a society's (or an individual's) surface terms of reference: meanings that would have to be at least partially "hidden" or "concealed" from the general run of humanity.

We thus find a kind of "double bind" here: The individual can, to his way of thinking, lose *all* of his moral integrity or authenticity straightaway by *__pretending in his own mind__* that he believes palpable nonsense like just about everyone else is doing; or he can, to his way of thinking, surrender *less* of his moral integrity by developing "hidden meanings" that will, he believes, still be "somewhat" available to others, because they will be available to some more "select" and "deserving" part of the general audience; and in that case, the "pretense" adopted will "only" be a partial one. And so he chooses what seems to him to be the lesser of two evils—but the solution that he chooses actually *perpetuates* the true source of the evil, and does not reduce the *amount* of deception that occurs.

So in a society in which people were told that the "outer meaning" of the "walking on water" parable was the meaning that all "reasonable" or "right-thinking" people would be expected to accept, or at least, to *__pretend__* to accept—as, for a very long time, those living in Christian nations have indeed been told—the so-called "reasonable people" would be responsible for having made a split between an "inner meaning" and an "outer meaning" *necessary* in those people sensible and honest enough not to be *able* to take the "outer meaning" of the parable at face value in their own minds—that is, to *__fully internalize the pretense__*. The latter were never given the *option* of simply *walking away* from the parable and all such nonsense entirely, *so they were forced to make the best of it*—in *exactly* the same way that, according to Gregory Bateson's "double bind" theory of schizophrenia, a child who later goes on to develop schizophrenia is never given the option of simply walking away from a schizophrenogenic family—that is, the sort of family in which a high priority is never placed on "things making sense." I hypothesize that this absence of "reasonable escapes" or "sane escapes" is one of the primary forces that has helped to perpetuate both religious esotericism and schizophrenia.

Also, notice that it is not clear who is being less "straightforward": the esotericist schizophrenic who *sees* "inner meanings" or "concealed meanings" in communications, but then misleads others out of his fear of the punishment that revealing his insight into people's true, underlying meanings might bring; or the narcissist (i.e., pathological liar) whose own communications *contain* concealed meanings—that is, the person who engages in verbal duplicity even though he is speaking "non-esoterically" (i.e., without the use of cryptic metaphors)—but who refuses to *admit to* his duplicity or seek to overcome it, and will become

by the time I was fifteen,' she said, 'I realized these things were a silly waste of time, and I just stopped doing them. I haven't had any rituals since.'"

Later, after his patient described what he considered a "minor but repetitive interaction," Peck remarked to her that it sounded "like a bit of a ritual":

"'Yes, I suppose you could call it a ritual.'
"'But I thought you didn't have any rituals.'
"'Oh, I've got lots of rituals,' Charlene answered gaily.
"And she did. Over the next few sessions she told me of dozens of rituals. Almost every single thing she did was connected, one way or another, with a ritual. It became abundantly clear that Charlene did indeed have a form of an obsessive-compulsive disorder. 'Since you've got dozens of rituals,' I queried, 'how come when I asked you about rituals four months ago you told me you didn't have any?'
"'I just didn't feel like telling you. *Maybe I didn't trust you enough.*'
"'*But you were lying.*'
"'*Of course.*'

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angry at anyone who calls attention to the fact that his language does indeed have such "hidden meanings" that deviate from his "surface meanings": to admit, in other words, to the fact that he is engaging in ordinary, "non-esotericist" lying or self-deception. So the "surface meaning" (or "outer meaning") of such a person's communication might be something like "I love you," while the corresponding "hidden meaning" (or "inner meaning") might be something like "I hate you": a hidden meaning the existence of which a schizophrenic person may have learned from experience to discern lying beneath the surface meaning. (But my sense is that many non-schizophrenics have perhaps not had cause or opportunity to become as well attuned as schizophrenics to the existence of these sorts of "double meanings" at work in the world, because of having grown up in relatively more functional families, and so may be comparatively naïve regarding the nature and existence of evil in the world—which, I suspect, might help to explain—at least to some extent—why schizophrenics frequently get labeled as "paranoid.") The non-esotericist narcissistic liar might (in theory) say that the esotericist schizophrenic should not **talk about** or **recognize** "hidden meanings" or "inner meanings," but the latter might respond by saying that if the former did not **have** the sort of "inner meanings" that could be separated from their "outer meanings"—with such separation necessarily resulting in either deception or self-deception—the esotericist schizophrenic would have no **need** to talk about them or recognize them in his own mind.

So, as I said in a previous footnote, it is really a chicken-and-egg problem, since each "side" helps to give rise to the existence of the other "side," thereby maintaining this "esotericist dynamic" (which is also, at the same time, a "schizophrenogenic dynamic"): Esotericist religion, by fundamentally validating, at an institutional level, the practice of lying, encourages the development of self-deception and narcissism in individuals; and at the same time, narcissism, partly through the mistreatment or traumatizing of children by narcissistic or otherwise self-absorbed parents, produces schizophrenic religious esotericism—but also, at least as importantly, **the attraction to** schizophrenic religious esotericism among **supposed** "non-schizophrenics."

Incidentally, the very existence of the attraction to schizophrenic religious esotericism among supposed "non-schizophrenics" indicates that persons of the latter type actually have more "schizophrenic" tendencies than they would like to admit, and that they are effectively allowing the more **overtly** schizophrenic persons such as religious poets and prophets to speak in schizophrenic language **on their behalf**—meaning that many so-called "non-schizophrenics" might be more accurately thought of as "covert schizophrenics" or "secondary schizophrenics" than as "non-schizophrenics." The essential difference between the "primary schizophrenics" and the "secondary schizophrenics" would be that the former are less dishonest—at least with themselves—about the existence of the basic underlying problem of pervasive dishonesty and self-deception in the world than the latter are. (And this difference would help to account for the great insight shown by the authors of the Bible with regard to this matter, especially the authors of the Psalms.)

"'Why should you pay me fifty dollars an hour to help you and then lie to me so I didn't know how to help?" I asked.

"Charlene looked at me archly. '*I'm certainly not going to tell you anything <u>until I think you're ready to know it</u>,*' she replied.

"Now that she had 'confessed' her rituals, it was my hope that Charlene would become increasingly open in our work together and I, consequently, less confused. It was not to be, however. Only gradually did it dawn on me that she was a 'person of the lie.' Although during the months and years ahead she would, willy-nilly, reveal one aspect or another of herself, *Charlene remained largely <u>enigmatic</u>. And I remained <u>confused</u>. Which was the way she wanted it. She continued until the end to withhold information from me, if for no other reason than to keep control of the show. And while my understanding of her was to deepen, so was my awe of her basic <u>incomprehensibility</u>.*"[202]

The following is from R. D. Laing's *The Divided Self*:

"It is not uncommon for depersonalized patients, whether or not they are schizophrenic, to speak of having murdered their selves and also of having lost or been robbed of their selves.

"Such statements are usually called delusions, but if they are delusions, they are delusions which contain existential truth. They are to be understood as statements that are literally true within the terms of reference of the individual who makes them.

"The schizophrenic who says he has committed suicide, may be perfectly clear about the fact that he has not cut his throat open or thrown himself into a canal, *and he may expect this to be equally clear to the person whom he is addressing, otherwise that person is regarded as a <u>**fool**</u>. In fact, he makes many statements of this order, which may be expressly intended as <u>**snares**</u> for those he regards as idiots and the whole <u>**herd**</u> of the uncomprehending.* For such a patient it would probably be a complete *non sequitur* to attempt to kill his *self*, by cutting his throat, since his *self* and his *throat* may be felt to bear only a tenuous and remote relationship to each other, sufficiently remote for what happens to the one to have little bearing on the other. That is, his self is virtually unembodied. The self is probably conceived as immortal or made of nearly imperishable

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[202] Peck, *People of the Lie*, pp. 152-54; again, all emphases are my own. My purpose in including this passage is not to suggest that "Charlene" did not have the "right" to conceal information about herself from her therapist, or even to lie to him to protect her privacy. As I state in Chapter Six, I believe that a need to protect one's personal privacy and autonomy from intrusive questions or demands supplies the one (and the only) reason why lying to others can in some circumstances be justified. (And note that, according to Peck's account, the misleading response that "Charlene" gave was *in response to* his question; in other words, she did not initially *volunteer* to discuss the matter of her "ritualistic behavior.") My purpose is merely to show that the behavior that Peck is describing is strongly reminiscent of religious esotericism and the practice of "initiation," and points to a common mentality and to common motivations that may potentially be present in both types of situations.

An important difference between the two types of situations is that with religious initiation, unlike with psychotherapy, an "initiator" is in a position of power and authority over the "initiated" person (although, based on Peck's description, it sounds as if "Charlene" was trying to reverse the distribution of power and authority by her selective withholding of information); and so, if, in the context of religious initiation, an "initiator" in a particular instance is also a malignant narcissist, then the "teachings," mentality, and world-view that are passed down from teacher to student can be expected to have a quality that is at least somewhat narcissistic or otherwise self-involved.

non-bodily substance. He may call it 'life substance' or his 'soul,' or even have his own name for it, and feel that he can be robbed of it."[203]

…

"[The defence employed by the psychotic] is the ultimate and most paradoxically absurd possible defence, beyond which magical defences can go no further. And it, in one or other of its forms, is the basic defence, so far as I have been able to see, in every form of psychosis. It can be stated in its most general form as: *the denial of being, as a means of preserving being*. The schizophrenic feels he has killed his 'self,' and this appears to be in order to avoid being killed. He is dead, in order to remain alive."[204]

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[203] Laing, *The Divided Self*, pp. 160-61; the first set of italics is mine, and the underlinings and emboldenings are mine. Consider how the words that I have underlined are used in the Bible and in other esoteric writings; and consider also the possibility that, in the contexts in which these words are found in such esoteric writings, their authors may have meant for them to be given esoteric meanings that would, in fact, not be very different from the way in which Laing uses the words here.

[204] Ibid., p. 161; the emphasis is Laing's. Consider that this "denial of being, as a means of preserving being" might be seen to in some way correspond to the "ransom" paid in the form of Christ's "blood" (Greek *haima*) or his **psyché** (meaning "soul" or "life-essence"), as stated, for example, in Matthew 20:26-28 and 1 Peter 1:18-19.

Also see Matthew 16:24-25, in which Jesus says to his disciples, "If anyone wishes [*thelō*] to come [*erchomai*] after [*opisō*] me, let him reject [or deny, or refute, or disown, or refuse, or repudiate: *ap-arneomai*] himself and take up [*airō*] his cross [*stauros*] and follow [*akoloutheō*] me. For whoever should wish [*thelō*] to save [*sōzō*] his life [or soul: **psyché**] will lose it [or destroy it, or ruin it: *apollymi*], but whoever might lose [or destroy, or ruin: *apollymi*] his life [or soul: **psyché**] on my account [*heneka*] will find [or discover: *heuriskō*] it." I think the figure of "Christ" might in this case have been serving as a collective archetypal form onto which all those persons "taking up their cross" would have projected their own willingness to "deny being" in order to "preserve being," as Laing puts it; and I think these persons would have been thought by the author to correspond especially to those whom we would today call "schizophrenics," among others. And the Christ myth would have helped them to see their desire to make this sacrifice as an act of heroism (whether rightly or wrongly, or some mixture of the two). But I think the sacrifice that Laing describes as being made by schizophrenics might be seen as nothing more than an exaggerated form of the same general idea of sacrifice that can be found in most if not all traditional world religions: the sacrifice of "life" in exchange for "spirit," as it has sometimes been described by religious and philosophical thinkers. And thinking of the matter in this way helps one to discern the potentially close relationship between schizophrenia as a general phenomenon and traditional (i.e., esotericist) religion as a general phenomenon. (It should be noted, however, that the authors of the New Testament may have thought of the "Crucifixion" as symbolizing the *overcoming* of any such "denial of being" as a result of undergoing a metaphorical "death" of some kind: by "getting it over with," so to speak. In that case, the goal intended for the Christian would be—to modify Laing's expression—"the achievement of being through a denial of being." Since no "death" can be thought of as being anything other than a "denial of being" in its own right, the same confusing "paradox" can be found in either formulation.)

Incidentally, consider 1 Timothy 2:6, in which Paul writes, "(Christ Jesus) gave [*didōmi*] himself [*heautou*] (as) ransom [*anti-lytron*] on behalf of [*hyper*] all [*panta*], **the testimony** [*martyrion*] **(to be given) in (its) own** [or proper: *idios*] **times** [*kairos*]." This verse lends itself to a reading according to which the Crucifixion was meant to be understood as a prefiguration; and if that is correct, it would also suggest the notion that the "testimony" (*martyrion*) had been "hidden inside" the "ransom" (*anti-lytron*)— the "ransom" here signifying the sacrifice of "being" (or of "life," or of "truth") that had already been made —making it a sort of "Trojan horse," or a "time bomb" that would go off at some time in the future, once the "inner content" of the schizophrenic communication had been "decoded" (and thus once again "made alive" or "made true"). This is also suggested by the next verse, 1 Timothy 2:7, in which Paul says, "Unto this I (myself) [*egō*] was made [or appointed: *tithémi*] a herald [or messenger, or crier, or proclaimer, or preacher: *kéryx*] and an apostle [or messenger, or delegate, or ambassador: *apostolos*]—**I speak** [or tell: *legō*] **truth** [*alétheia*], **I do not lie** [*pseudomai*]—a teacher [*didaskalos*] of the Gentiles [or the nations:

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"One of the greatest barriers against getting to know a schizophrenic is his sheer *incomprehensibility*: the *oddity, bizarreness, obscurity* in all that we can perceive of him. There are many reasons why this is so. Even when the patient is striving to tell us, in as clear and straightforward a way as he knows how, the nature of his anxieties and his experiences, structured as they are in a radically different way from ours, the speech content is necessarily difficult to follow. Moreover, *the formal elements of speech are in themselves ordered in unusual ways*, and these formal peculiarities seem, at least to some extent, to be **the reflection in language of the alternative ordering of his experience, with splits in it where we take coherence for granted, and the running together (confusion) of elements that we keep apart**.

*"Y*et these irreducible difficulties are practically certain to be much increased, at least in one's first encounters with the patient, by his or her **deliberate use of obscurity and complexity as a smoke-screen to hide behind**. This creates the ironical situation that the schizophrenic is often playing at being psychotic, or pretending to be so. In fact, as we have said, **pretence and equivocation** are greatly used by schizophrenics. The reasons for doing this are, in any single case, likely to serve more than one purpose at a time. The most obvious one is that it preserves the secrecy, the privacy, of the self against intrusion (engulfment, implosion). The self, as one patient put it, feels crushed and mangled even at the exchanges in an ordinary conversation. Despite his longing to be loved for his 'real self' the schizophrenic is terrified of love. Any form of understanding threatens his whole defensive system. His outward behaviour is a defensive system analogous to innumerable openings to underground passages which one might imagine would take one to the inner citadel,[205] but they lead nowhere or elsewhere. The schizophrenic is not going to reveal himself for casual inspection and examination to any philandering passer-by.[206] If the self is not known it is safe.[207] It is safe from penetrating remarks;[208] it is safe from being smothered or engulfed by love, as much as from destruction [or] from hatred. If the schizophrenic is incognito, *his body can be handled and manipulated, petted, caressed, beaten, given injections or what have you, but 'he,' an onlooker, is inviolable*.[209]

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ethnos] in faith [or good faith, or honesty, or trustworthiness: *pistis*] and in truth [*alétheia*]." A possible implication is that the role of a "herald" and "apostle" was to try to **reveal** the "true message" hidden within the "ransom" that had been made—which "ransom" or "sacrifice" may have been understood to be equivalent to the **hiding**, or **concealment**, or **burial**, or **entombment**, or **encryption** of truth and life within misleading and obscure "prophetic" communications, in order that (according to the thinking of the persons involved in this enterprise) truth and life could be fully **vindicated** at some point in the future—by becoming truth and life "**in the spirit** [*pneuma*]."

[205] With the the metaphor that Laing uses in mind, consider the fact that it was a lofty "fortress," or "castle," or "tower" (Hebrew *migdal*) that the builders of "Babel" were trying to construct before "the Lord" intervened.

[206] Consider, for example, Matthew 16:20: "Then (Jesus) expressly charged the disciples that they should say to no one that he is the Christ."

[207] Consider that this desire for "safety" might be related to the longing for a "savior," who would provide a **means** by which the "inner self" or "real self" of the person might somehow become "known" or "revealed." Cf. Romans 7:22-25.

[208] That is to say, "piercing" remarks.

[209] With the last sentence of the paragraph in mind, consider Mark 9:30-32: "Having gone out [*ex-erchomai*] from there, (Jesus and his disciples) were passing [*para-poreuomai*] through Galilee, **and (Jesus) did not want that anyone should know (it)** [or 'be aware (of it),' 'recognize (it),' or 'discern (it),' or 'perceive (it)': *ginōskō*], **for** [*gar*] [!] he was teaching his disciples and saying to them, 'The Son of

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"The self at the same time longs to be understood; indeed, longs for one whole person who might accept his total being, and in doing so, just 'let him be.' But it is necessary to proceed with great caution and circumspection. 'Don't try,' as [Dr. Ludwig] Binswanger puts it, 'to get too near, too soon.'

"Joan [a schizophrenic patient] says, 'We schizophrenics say and do a lot of stuff that is unimportant, and then we <u>mix</u> important things in with all this to see if the doctor cares enough to see them and feel them.'"[210]

…

"A good deal of schizophrenia is simply **nonsense, red-herring speech**, prolonged filibustering **to throw dangerous people off the scent**, to create boredom and futility in others. The schizophenic is often making a fool of himself and the doctor. **He is playing at being mad to avoid at all costs the possibility of being held *responsible* for a single coherent idea, or intention**."[211]

…

"[Dr. Carl Jung said] that the schizophrenic ceases to be schizophrenic when he meets someone by whom he feels understood. When this happens most of the bizarrerie which is taken as the 'signs' of the 'disease' simply evaporates."[212]

…

"Julie [a schizophrenic patient] and her mother were at this time both desperate people. Julie in her psychosis called herself Mrs. Taylor. What does this mean? It means 'I'm tailor-made.' 'I'm a tailored maid; I was made, fed, clothed, and tailored.' **Such statements are <u>psychotic</u>, not because they may not be 'true' but because they are <u>cryptic</u>; they are often quite impossible to fathom without the patient <u>decoding</u> them for us.** Yet even as a psychotic statement this seems a very cogent point of view and it gives in a nutshell the gist of the reproaches she was making against her mother when she was fifteen and sixteen [that is, before she was deemed to be psychotic]."[213]

…

"We postulated that the basic split in the schizoid personality was a cleft that severed the self from the body:

self/(*body-world*)

"**Such a scission cleaves the individual's own being in two, in such a way that the I-sense is disembodied, and the body becomes the centre of a false-self system**.[214]

Man **is** given over [or delivered, or transmitted, or betrayed: *paradidotai*, a form of *para-didōmi* <u>in the present tense</u>] into (the) hands of men [*anthrōpos*], and **they will kill him**; and, (after) having been killed, with the third day **he will rise** [*an-istémi*] [think of Laing's word "inviolable"].' But they were **not understanding** [or 'were in ignorance (with regard to)': *a-gnoeō*] the saying [or utterance: *rhéma*], and were afraid to ask him [or 'were fleeing from asking him']."

[210] Laing, *The Divided Self*, pp. 175-76; all emphases are mine. Compare the use in Revelation 18:6 of the Greek word *kerannymi*, meaning "to mix."

[211] Ibid., p. 177; the emboldening is mine; the italicizing is Laing's.

[212] Ibid., p. 177. With regard to this notion of a desire by the schizophrenic person to "feel understood," again consider Mark 9:30-32, quoted in the footnote just above.

[213] Ibid., p. 209; the emphases are mine.

[214] In other words, ideas of an "inner body" and an "outer body" may begin to arise. At the same time, this inner cleavage might also contribute to a desire to be a mere "member" of some larger "body" (such as the "body of Christ") that a person could feel constituted his "real self," *in such a way that* his sense of identity

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"The totality of experience has been differentiated by a line of cleavage within the individual's being into self/body.

"When this is the primary split or when it exists along with the further vertical split of self/body/world, **the body occupies a particularly <u>ambiguous</u> position**.[215]

"The two basic segments of experience can be taken as

here   there

which are further differentiated in the normal way into

inside   outside
(*me*)   (*not-me*)

"The schizoid cleavage disrupts the normal sense of self by disembodying the sense of 'I.' The seed is thus sown for a persisting running together, mergence, or confusion at the interface between here and there, inside and outside, because the body is not firmly felt as me in contrast to the not-me.

"It is only when the body can be thus differentiated from others that all the problems involved in relatedness/separateness, between separate whole persons, can begin to be worked through in the usual way. The self does not need so desperately to remain bottled up in its defensive transcendence. The person can be like someone without being that other person; feelings can be *shared* without their being confused or merged with those of the other. Such sharing can begin only through an establishment of a clear distinction between here-me, there-not-me. At this stage it is critically important for the schizophrenic to test out the subtleties and niceties that lie at the interface between inside and outside, and all that is involved in the expression and revealing of what belongs truly to the real self. In this way does the self become a genuinely *embodied* self."[216]

A portrait of schizophrenia somewhat similar to that which Laing gives in these excerpts can be found in the paper by Gregory Bateson, Don D. Jackson, Jay Haley, and

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and freedom was obtained *at the expense of* having a sense of individual identity; with the result that, in the case of a Christian, he would conflate the ideas of "I" and "Jesus Christ" (and hence also that of "God")—as Paul often does in his writings (see, for example, Galatians 6:17 and Romans 6:5-8). It may be that this submergence of the individual self in some larger "body" would occur as a *reaction against* the sense that one's "real self" or "true self" was being forced to remain within the restrictive confines of one's "inner body," and from a desire to "break through" the "outer body" (signifying the false, socially-presented self) in order to "expand" and "liberate" what was felt to be one's "cramped" and "confined" real or true self.

[215] And I submit that the ambiguity of the position occupied by the body—such that the body might be viewed as either "inner" or "outer," and thus as either "self" or "not-self"—is *not at all unrelated* to the existence of the kind of ambiguity in speech that makes it possible for "inner meanings" and "outer meanings" to co-exist in a single communication. If the meaning is one that the author associates with the "outer body" or "outer self" (read: "not-self"), then it is a mere "outer meaning"; and the result is that even if readers are misled or confused by such "outer meanings," the "inner self" or "real self" of the author can always remain innocent, pure—and, above all, *not responsible*—for the fact that others have been misled or confused.

[216] Ibid., p. 189-90; the emboldening and underlining are mine; the italicizing is Laing's.

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John Weakland, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia."[217] The following excerpts are from that paper:

"**The peculiarity of the schizophrenic is not that he uses metaphors, but that he uses *unlabeled* metaphors**."[218]

…

"The convenient thing about a metaphor is that it leaves it up to the therapist (or mother) to see an accusation in the statement if he chooses, or to ignore it if he chooses.[219] … As an answer to the double bind situation, a shift to a metaphorical statement brings safety.[220] However, it also prevents the patient from making the accusation he wants to make. But instead of getting over his accusation by indicating that this was a metaphor, the schizophrenic patient seems to try to get over the fact that it is a metaphor by making it more fantastic. … **The indication that it is a metaphorical statement lies in the fantastic aspect of the metaphor,**[221] **not in the signals which usually accompany metaphors to tell the listener that a metaphor is being used.** It is not only safer for the victim of a double bind to shift to a metaphorical order of message, but in an impossible situation it is better to shift and become somebody else, or shift and insist that he is somewhere else. Then the double bind cannot work on the victim, because it isn't he and besides he is in a different place. In other words, the statements which show that a patient is disoriented can be interpreted as ways of defending himself against the situation he is in. **The pathology enters when the victim himself either does not know that his responses are metaphorical or cannot say so.** To recognize that he was speaking metaphorically he would need to be aware that he was defending himself and therefore was afraid of the other person. To him such an awareness would be an indictment of the other person and therefore provoke disaster."[222]

…

"The psychosis seems, in part, a way of dealing with double bind situations to overcome their inhibiting and controlling effect. **The psychotic patient may make astute, pithy, often metaphorical remarks that reveal an insight into the forces binding him. Contrariwise, he may become rather expert in setting double bind situations himself.**"[223]

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[217] In Milton M. Berger, ed., *Beyond the Double Bind: Communication and Family Systems, Theories, and Techniques with Schizophrenics* (Brunner/Mazel, 1978).

[218] Ibid., p. 8; the emboldening is mine; the italicizing is in the original.

[219] Observe that this use of metaphor functions in *exactly* the same way that an esoteric parable does, according to the rationale that one finds given in the Bible and other esoteric religious writings for their authors' use of an esoteric mode of discourse.

[220] According to the definition given on Wikipedia, "A double bind is an emotionally distressing dilemma in communication in which an individual (or group) receives two or more conflicting messages, and one message negates the other. This creates a situation in which a successful response to one message results in a failed response to the other (and vice versa), so that the person will automatically be wrong regardless of response. The double bind occurs when the person cannot confront the inherent dilemma, and therefore can neither resolve it nor opt out of the situation." (Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Double_bind; last checked May 16, 2016.) The hypothesis presented by Bateson et al. in their paper was that schizophrenia may be partly caused by the existence of many such "double bind"-type communications in the childhood family of a schizophrenic person.

[221] Such as 'walking on water,' or 'being raised from the dead,' or 'being born to a virgin,' perhaps?

[222] Ibid., pp. 12-13; the emphases are mine; the ellipses are mine.

[223] Ibid., p. 22; the emphasis is mine.

Consider in connection with the last paragraph that it may not be coincidental that the New Testament authors frequently use metaphors such as "binding" and "loosening"; and consider in particular the use of the metaphors "fetters" and "imprisonment" as used by Paul with regard to himself.

Also, these excerpts from Laing and from Bateson et al. help to show just how ***schizophrenic*** the author of Mark 4:33-34 makes the character of Jesus sound:[224]

And with many such parables [*parabolé*] (Jesus) communicated [or spoke: *laleō*] (his) meaning [or message, or word: *logos*] to them, in the degree that [*kathōs*] they were able [or "had the strength": *dynamai*] to hear [*akouō*]. **And apart from a parable he would not communicate** [or speak: *laleō*] **with them**; but in private [*kata idian*] he explained [or interpreted, or determined, or resolved, or solved; more literally, "loosened," or "untied," or "released," or "opened," or "set free," or "unlocked": *epi-lyō*][225] everything [*panta*] for his own [*idios*] disciples.[226]

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[224] Another possible example of specifically "schizophrenic" tendencies in the New Testament might be seen by comparing the following two passages. The first is from Matthijs Koopmans, **"**Schizophrenia and the Family II: Paradox and Absurdity in Human Communication Reconsidered" (found at http://www.goertzel.org/dynapsyc/1998/KoopmansPaper.htm): "A case discussion by Laing and Esterson (1964) illustrates the connection between conflicting self-definitions within the system, double bind interactions, and schizophrenic symptomatology. The discussion concerns the case of an eighteen year old girl who was admitted to the hospital completely mute, and, later, rambled about her mother loving her while also trying to poison her. (A clear example of perceiving things in double bind patterns!)"

Now, in the second of the two passages, Romans 7:8-12, Paul writes, "[F]or apart from (the) law, sin (is) dead. But I was once alive, apart from the law, but (with the) coming of the commandment, sin came back to life, but I died. And I found (that) the commandment that (I expected would lead) unto life, this (commandment) (in fact led) unto death. For sin, having seized an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it, killed me. So [or therefore: *hōste*] the law (is) indeed holy, and the commandment (is) holy and righteous and good." The final sentence in no way follows from what precedes it.

Consider that this tendency to perceive things in an inconsistent, contradictory, or "paradoxical" manner, so that one sees the ***same thing*** as ***simultaneously*** "good" ***and*** "evil," might be, at least in part, what the authors of the Bible meant to indicate by saying that mankind had "eaten" of the metaphorical "tree of the knowledge of good ***and*** evil." In other words, it might be seen as indicating that mankind had learned to perceive ambiguities of meaning or significance in symbols, and in other people's communication. (Or perhaps it is indicating, in mythical form, the learning of such a lesson by the individual child.)

[225] Compare the use in 2 Peter 1:20 of the noun *epilysis*, which is derived from the verb *epi-lyō*, and which in that verse has the meaning "interpretation, explanation."

[226] Notice how, according to this passage, the "parables" (*parabolé*) might be thought of as functioning as an "outer body" (or "covering," or "(outer) garment," or "sheath," or "husk," or "shell"), inside of which one would find the "meaning" (or "message," or "word": *logos*), corresponding to the idea of the "inner body" (or "kernel," or "pearl"). (Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:35-37,42-44.) Jesus—here representing the typical schizophrenic esotericist—would no sooner "communicate with them apart from a parable" than he would "go into public apart from his clothes." In other words, Jesus refuses to go about "naked" or "in his undergarments," and the "parables" are what allow him to avoid displaying his psychic vulnerability or "indecency" in public. The "loosening" or "untying"—comparable to the "taking off of his clothes"—is something that he will do only "in private."

Moreover, I think this fact helps to explain the significance of the Crucifixion. I believe the ***agony*** signified by the Crucifixion was understood by the authors of the New Testament to be found largely in the notion of a person's having had that "outer covering" or "outer body" ***taken away*** from him, and being left with ***no protection*** from the outside world. Prior to the Crucifixion, Jesus's communication would be delivered to "the multitude" ***only as a joined unit***, with the "kernel" hidden inside the "husk" or "sheath";

Chapter 6: How to begin to solve the problem of esotericism

A first solution: Symbolism databases

    I believe it is likely that all human beings, for better and for worse, have inherited the legacy of some earlier "primordial religion" (which may or may not have itself been esotericist in nature)—including the deteriorated and fragmented state in which we currently find it.[227] But to speak of a "primordial religion" is really to speak of some body of accepted *meanings*; so the notion that we find in the Book of Genesis of a "confusing of language" occurring sometime in the distant past (whether this was understood to refer to esotericist "languages," or conventional languages, or both) cannot be easily separated from the notion of the fragmenting of a primordial religion, since a "confusing of language" would have necessarily *caused* the fragmenting of any such religion; thus both notions are actually very closely related. Moreover, I doubt that it is

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but, with the culmination of the Crucifixion, <u>Jesus *finally does* communicate with them "apart from a parable"</u>—leaving him "rent asunder" or "torn apart." And it is this moment of fully *revealing* himself that is perceived to be a kind of "death"—but also understood to be *a necessary one*—for the schizophrenic esotericist.

    [In connection with this, consider Matthew 7:6, and its use of the Greek words *rhégnymi*, meaning "to rend asunder, to tear in pieces, to tear apart," and *ballō*, meaning "to cast, to throw," in light of the fact that from *ballō* are derived the Greek words *para-ballō*, meaning "to cast beside," and *pro-ballō*, meaning "to cast before"; and from these are in turn derived the words *parabolé*, meaning "**parable**," and *probléma*, which can mean "**riddle**"—but which can also mean "***hindrance, obstacle, barrier, defense***." (And the notion that the Greek word *rhégnymi* in Matthew 7:6 was meant to be understood with reference to Jesus is made more likely by considering the use of that word in Matthew 9:17, and then comparing the use in that same verse of the word *ek-cheō*, meaning "to pour out," with its use in Matthew 26:28. The "wine" corresponds to the "blood.")]

    Luke 23:45-46 says, "And it was now about [or 'as if': *hōsei*] (the) sixth hour, and darkness [*skotos*] came to be over all [or 'the whole of': *holos*] the earth [or land: *gé*] until (the) ninth hour, the sun having failed [or having been eclipsed: *ek-leipō*]. And the veil [*kata-petasma*] of the temple [*naos*] was **torn** [or split: *schizō*] **(down the) middle** [or center: *mesos*]. **Then Jesus**, crying out [*phōneō*] **with a loud voice** [*phoné megalé*], said, "Father, into your hands [*cheir*] I commit [or entrust: *para-tithémi*] my spirit [*pneuma*]!" And having said this, he expired [or let out his breath, or **gave out his spirit**: *ek-pneō*]." In John 2:19-21 Jesus associates his "body" (*sōma*) with the "temple" (*naos*) in Jerusalem—which suggests that it was the figure of "Jesus" himself whom the author of Luke 23:45-46 may have meant to be understood as being "torn" or "split" (*schizō*). That would tend to imply that it was only because of the accomplishing of that "tearing" or "splitting" that it *became possible* for the "inner meaning"—i.e., the "spirit"—to finally be released openly and publicly (that is, "with a loud voice," rather than "in a whisper"; cf. Luke 12:3).

    Consider that the interpretation of the episode of the Crucifixion that I am giving here would imply that in allowing himself to be crucified, Jesus had allowed himself to be "torn in pieces" (or "torn apart," or "rent asunder": *rhégnymi*)—which might mean that the parable told in Matthew 7:6 was meant to convey the idea that *with his Crucifixion*, Jesus had allowed even his "pearls"—that is, his "inner meanings" or his "kernels," those very things that would make it possible for others to gain a view of his naked "inner self"—to be "cast before the dogs and pigs" of "the multitude" *at the same time* that he made his "parables" and "riddles" (*parabolé* or *probléma*)—that is, the "husks," or "sheaths," or "shells" of the "kernels" or "pearls"—available to them. In other words, the symbol of the "Crucifixion" would once again be signifying the idea of *esotericism being brought to an end*, since the "outer" would no longer be used to *conceal* the "inner," or to keep it *secret*.

[227] Even if no single "primordial religion" ever in fact existed as an historical institution, I think the concept can still serve as a useful theoretical model that would, in effect, describe the workings of the collective unconscious human mind as they have been historically manifested.

merely coincidental that a fragmenting of language and religion of the kind I am describing seems to be reminiscent of the disordered and fractured state of the mind of an *individual* person in a state of psychosis. The resemblance between them helps one to see how the presence of both psychosis in an individual and the collective psychosis to be found in humanity can ultimately be traced back, at least in part, to the existence of the Lie—since the Lie is, by definition, the source of all deterioration, disordering, fracturing, and splitting apart of *meaning* in the world, by its tendency to create a *continuing* breach between *uttered* or *public meanings*, and *intended* or *private meanings*. A liar is not merely "unethical": To the extent that a liar lies—especially to himself—he is **not sane**. And any society that is willing to tolerate lying as a normal part of life among its members is not merely "corrupt": To the extent that a society tolerates lying by its members—which effectively makes it a *society* that is allowed to *lie to itself*—it is likewise **not sane**.

It follows from this that making an attempt to *reconstruct* or *reintegrate* the meanings of ancient religious scriptures might make some contribution toward weakening the power of the Lie and thereby promoting greater social sanity; so we might decide to see if it is possible to "knit back together" or "gather together" the fragmented meanings of the world's religions to some extent. We would do this not because we assumed that such meanings were necessarily good ones, or because we felt obligated to embrace them as our own; it would be because we had realistically acknowledged that many people will need to *make sense* of those meanings, to get some minimally accurate idea of what they even *were*, before they will feel that they are able to take any position with regard to them.[228] My own personal inclination would be to dispense with the old esoteric religious symbolism immediately, and simply start fresh with new, non-esoteric religious symbols or metaphors that would be immediately meaningful to those who used them;[229] but I doubt that most other people would yet be prepared to follow me in this, since I realize that most people have not yet learned to loathe esotericism as much as I have. However, I do think they *would* learn to loathe it if they had come to feel that they had been *betrayed* by it; and I think they would come to feel betrayed by it if persons opposed to religious esotericism were able to reconstruct the original "inner meanings" of ancient religious writings—and especially the New Testament—convincingly *enough* that members of esoteric religions—and especially Christianity—were left with no choice but to acknowledge that nothing close to the originally intended meanings, even the most

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[228] And, in a manner analogous to this, an individual person ought to be viewed as psychotic or "crazy" not because one disagreed with the beliefs he was expressing—and the common expression "You're crazy!" indicates that, as a practical matter, that is exactly what many people are inclined to think—but rather because one was unable to determine what his beliefs **were**, even after making reasonable efforts to do so. This is a very important distinction, because the first approach to making a determination that a person is "crazy" **encourages** mental inconsistency and evasiveness, as people attempt to keep their true beliefs unclear and undetermined (including in their own minds), precisely so that others will **not** be able to say to them, "You're crazy!" based on disagreement with their beliefs. The second approach, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that mental inconsistency and evasiveness **is itself the problem in need of solving**.

[229] In general, non-esoteric religious symbols are probably best thought of simply as "customary metaphors," so as to avoid some of the more "mystical" ways in which the nature and purpose of religious symbolism is sometimes described, which lead people to effectively "worship" the symbols themselves and make themselves subject to them, instead of regarding them as nothing more than potentially useful tools to help them arrive at meanings.

basic ones, had ever been communicated to them by those who had claimed for themselves the responsibility for doing so.[230]

Classics scholar Francis Cornford, in his book *From Religion to Philosophy*: *A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation*, offers some explanation of the ancient theory behind esoteric writing. In the case of esoteric writing, he writes, "[W]e should beware of charging [the esotericist writer] with inconsistency, and rather **look for cross-references**, characteristic of this method of writing … ." He also writes, "When the whole text had thus got into the mind [after having been memorized], one part of it would throw light upon another, and so the hidden meaning would gradually come out."[231] This method or approach should be kept in mind as anti-esotericists go about trying to decipher the intended meanings of esoteric writings; and I have already provided a number of examples of how the method can be used.

One of the reasons why positing the existence of a primordial religion can prove valuable—even if no single "primordial religion" (or "primordial language") ever in fact existed, and the concept is merely describing the workings of the collective unconscious human mind or of a continuous cultural diffusion—is that it allows us to extend this same process of cross-referencing beyond the confines, not only of a single text, but also those of a single culture; so knowledge obtained about the traditions of one culture might help to shed light on how we ought to interpret the cryptic symbolism of another, seemingly unrelated culture. For example, anthropologist Paul Radin tells us the following about the Polynesian Maori people of New Zealand:

> The knowledge imparted to the priests was … definitely classified.[232] There were two branches called respectively the **upper-jaw** and the **lower-jaw**. The first branch contained everything pertaining to the gods, the heavens, the origin of things, the creation of man, the science of astronomy, the record of time, etc., and the second dealt with the history of the people, their genealogies, migrations, terrestrial things, etc.[233]

In other words, the distinction being made seems to be equivalent to the distinction between "sacred knowledge," corresponding to the symbol of "heaven," and "profane knowledge," corresponding to the symbol of "earth." Now, regarding the events of "Ragnarok" in Norse myth—Ragnarok refers to the catastrophic end of the world-age,

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[230] But, as I indicate in a subsequent section concerning my proposal that "truth groups" be formed, even if current members of esotericist religions do **not** learn to hate esotericism as a result of such efforts, those persons who **do** come to hate it must no longer continue to think of it as something that is **acceptable** for other people to embrace if "that's their thing." In other words, the success of the anti-esotericist cause cannot itself **depend upon** whether or not anti-esotericists succeed in their efforts to reconstruct the original religious meanings, and convince others that they had done so. The purpose of this effort would be to **facilitate the transition** to non-esotericist forms of religion. But whether or not that transition was "facilitated" as much as anti-esotericists might hope for, we must nevertheless believe that the transition **will** be made—because it **must** be made.

[231] Dover, 2004 [1912], p. 225; the emphasis is mine. Cornford credits his understanding partly to D. S. Margoliouth, *The Poetics of Aristotle* (London, 1911), p. 22.

[232] To clarify, what Radin means by this is that the knowledge was divided into two classes, not that it was kept confidential. (But it so happens that at least some of that knowledge was in fact kept confidential.)

[233] *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (Dover, 2002 [1927]), p. 321; the italicizing is in the original.

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answering to the idea of "Apocalypse" or "Armageddon" in Christian thinking—
Icelander Snorri Sturluson in the 13th century *Prose Edda* relates the following account:

> Then something will happen that will be thought a most significant event, the wolf
> will swallow the sun, and *people will think this* a great disaster.[234] Then the other
> wolf will catch the moon, and he also will cause much mischief. The stars will
> disappear from the sky. Then there will take place another event, the whole earth and
> mountains will shake so much that trees will become uprooted from the earth and the
> mountains will fall, and all fetters and bonds will snap and break.[235] Then Fenriswolf
> will get free. … Fenriswolf will go with mouth agape and its ***upper jaw*** will be
> against *the sky* [understood to be equivalent to "*heaven*," I would assume] and its
> ***lower one*** against *the earth*. It would gape wider if there was room. Flames will
> burn from its eyes and nostrils. … The wolf will swallow Odin. That will be the
> cause of his death. And immediately after[,] Vidar will come forward and step *with
> one foot* on the ***lower jaw*** of the wolf. On this foot he will have a shoe for which the
> material has been being collected throughout all time: it is the waste pieces that
> people cut from their shoes at the toe and heel.[236] Therefore anyone that is concerned
> to give assistance to the Aesir [i.e., the Norse gods] must throw these pieces away.
> *With one hand* he will grasp the wolf's ***upper jaw*** and tear apart its mouth [perhaps
> meant to signify its ability not only to "devour," but also to "speak"] and this will
> cause the wolf's death.[237]

[234] Consider the text that I have italicized in connection with Revelation 21:23, which says, "And the (new
Jerusalem) has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, that they should shine upon [or in] it; for the glory of
God did enlighten it, and its lamp (is) the Lamb." In other words, perhaps, the enlightenment in the "new
Jerusalem" would come from the "center" of a person, not from "above" a person, because the former
distinctions that had been made between "above" and "below" would have been done away with.
[235] Incidentally, compare this to Luke 17:6, Mark 11:23, and Revelation 18:21; and compare especially in
the last two verses the use of the Greek words *ballō*, meaning "to throw, to cast," and *thalassa*, meaning
"sea." The comparison might be read to indicate that both the symbolic "tree" and the symbolic
"mountain" were intended by the authors of the New Testament to be equated with "Babylon"; and one
might speculate that the original author of the Norse myth may have assigned a similar significance to these
symbols.
[236] Might this "shoe" correspond to Jesus's "sandals" (*hypo-déma*, literally meaning "bound underneath")
that John the Baptist says in Matthew 3:11 he is not fit to "carry" (*bastazō*), and whose "straps" (*himas*) he
says in Luke 3:16 that he is not fit to "loose" (or "untie," or "release": *lyō*)? Might the "(waste) pieces" at
the "toe and heel" be referring to the "straps" or "bindings" of a "sandal"? If so, then perhaps what the
Norse myth is saying is that all "bindings" (i.e., concealment of meanings) must be "thrown away." (It
might also, incidentally, suggest that the idea of "binding" was generally meant to be associated with the
"lower jaw," or "earth.")
  Also, I wonder if the "upper jaw" and "lower jaw" spoken of in the myth might correspond to the "upper
cloud" and "lower cloud" implicitly spoken of in Job 26:8-9. (I discuss Job 26:8-9 in Part II of the essay.)
Might the "tearing apart" of the "mouth" correspond to the idea apparently found in Job 26:8-9 of "tearing
apart" (LXX: *rhégnymi*) the "lower cloud" for the purpose of releasing the "waters" contained in the "upper
cloud"? And consider whether either of these images might bear some relation to "spirit" or "water" being
released by Jesus as he dies (see, e.g., Luke 23:45-46, John 19:34, and John 19:37), as a result of his "body
of flesh" having been "pierced" (*nyssō* or *ek-kenteō*), or "torn apart" (or "broken apart," or "pulled apart,"
or "torn in pieces," or "burst": *lyō*: see Ephesians 2:14-16; or *rhégnymi*: cf. Luke 5:37). Also see
Revelation 1:7 for an association between "clouds" (*nephelé*) and "piercing" (*ek-kenteō*).
[237] Anthony Faulkes, trans., *Prose Edda*, pp. 53,54; all emphases are mine. Incidentally, it is conceivable
that the "Fenriswolf" of Ragnarok roughly corresponds to what the "beast" (Greek ***thérion***) was understood
by the author of the New Testament's Book of Revelation to signify.

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By no means does this definitively prove that the Norse and the Maori had similar meanings in mind with their respective "upper jaw/lower jaw" symbols—but if they had, it would help us in our attempts to make sense of the account given in the Prose Edda; it would suggest that the "upper jaw" may have been understood to correspond to what might be called "inner knowledge" or "inner meanings" (also corresponding to "heaven," "spirit," and the realm of "the sacred"), and the "lower jaw" may have been understood to correspond to what might be called "outer knowledge" or "outer meanings" (also corresponding to "earth," "flesh," and the realm of "the profane"). But whether or not initiated members of the two cultures did in fact assign similar meanings to these symbols, the comparison illustrates how the process of cross-cultural cross-referencing might be used to begin actually *answering* the question of what these symbols were intended to mean, so the matter can be (more or less) *settled* and humanity can finally move on from as much of the unnecessary "mystery" that surrounds the meanings of ancient religious symbols as possible. Esoteric religion must henceforth be regarded as *a problem to be solved*, rather than as the source of any solutions to our problems. Esoteric religion cannot help us advance in what characterizes all of us as human beings: our common search for a greater sense of meaning by which to guide our lives.

In going about solving the problem of esoteric religion, I believe that one of the more valuable things that could be done would be to create a symbolism database—or, even better, multiple databases, so that different methods could be experimented with. Such databases ought to be reasonably scholarly in nature, but also available to non-academics for editing—something like Wikipedia. Databases of this kind might help enable us to "crack the code" of esoteric symbolism (to the extent that it *can* be "cracked") by using the available documentary evidence from *all* religious cultures, and not only that culture in which a particular scholar specialized.[238]

Also, why would the myth bother to specifically mention that Vidar would grasp the wolf's upper jaw "with one hand"? (This may have been meant to suggest either that the entire act of "tearing apart" had to be done with "both hands," or that the more specific act of "grasping" was *not* done with "both hands.") I wonder if it might bear any relation to the following exchange in Plato's *Sophist* (226A; translation by Francis Cornford): "*Eleatic Stranger*: How true was the observation that (the Sophist) was a wily [or subtle, or complicated, or abstruse, or many-sided, or many-colored: *poikilos*] beast [*thérion*], and not to be caught with one hand or the other [or with the left hand, or off-handedly: *heteros*], as they say! *Theaetetus*: Then we must catch him with both [*amphō*]. *Eleatic Stranger*: Yes, we must, if we can. [More literally: 'Yes, we must—at any rate we must do so with the best of our power [*dynamis*]…'].") (By the way, the "Fenriswolf" was, like the "Midgard serpent," said to be a "child of Loki." *Prose Edda*, p. 26. I discuss the esoteric symbol of the "serpent" or "sea serpent," and its possible connections to the ideal-typical "Sophist" that is described by Plato, in Part II of the essay.)

[238] I stress the importance of experimentation in the design of such databases. It is extremely difficult to plan out in advance how a method such as this would be made to work without having a number of concrete examples to consider (although, for all I know, others have already made efforts to develop some sort of "deciphering" method along these lines). I also stress the importance of the databases being made "*reasonably* scholarly": the phrase "more scholarly" should not necessarily be read as "better." At some point, insisting on too much precision and too much specific background knowledge makes it impossible to make connections at a more general level that otherwise might have been made.

But again, it is hard to say in advance exactly how that theoretically ideal balance ought to be achieved. For example—following the examples I have given in the main text—it would, in one sense, be preferable if I had learned to read Old Norse and speak Maori before attempting to make a connection between the two passages that I provided. Realistically, however—assuming that there is in fact a relation between these two instances of the "upper jaw/lower jaw" symbolism (something of which I am by no means

For each symbol, as it was found in a particular *type* of context, various hypotheses could be presented as to what the meaning may have been that the authors using the symbol in that type of context understood it to have, with the *textual evidence* that supported each hypothesis being presented alongside it. When displayed in such a clear and summary fashion, in many cases it might be possible for an interpreter to roughly determine, with respect to his own purposes and concerns, the originally intended meaning of the symbol (again, listed in the database according to *type* of context) as used in the *individual* textual context in which he has encountered it. So these sorts of databases would not themselves declare "winners" by announcing the "true meaning" of a particular symbol in a particular type of context (much less the "true meaning" of the symbol *regardless* of the type of context in which it was found); but they would present the available evidence in such a way that the evidence could speak for itself concisely and convincingly for the individual researcher and interpreter. The reasons for offering a multiplicity of hypothetical meanings for each particular type of context are, first, that it is not always clear where the lines between different "types of context" should be drawn, or whether a specific text should be classified as belonging to one particular "genre" of literature or another; and second (and closely related to the first reason), there will often be reasonable disagreement over how to interpret the available textual evidence, even

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certain)—I would never have made the connection if I had waited to do that, or if I had heeded others' demands that I do so before they would give any serious attention to what I had to say. Now, I do not wish to diminish the importance of any would-be interpreter gaining a knowledge of the language in which a writing was originally written—and this is **especially** so in the case of an esoteric writing. I know from my (novice) attempts to translate the Bible that having at least some knowledge of the original language in which an esoteric writing was written is an absolute **necessity** if one holds out any hope of understanding its originally intended meaning. But having said that, a distinction needs to be made between merely calling attention to the existence of a possible "clue," and making a more substantial *claim*, even a tentative claim, that one had fully arrived at the originally intended meaning of the symbol in its context; and I think this distinction between a "clue" and a "claim" ought to be kept in mind in the designing of any future symbolism databases. However, even the mere "publicizing or sharing of clues" should be conducted in a reasonably careful way, and in a way that will prove helpful to others. The databases must, in other words, arrive at some reasonable balance between certainty and uncertainty, so that these sorts of possible "clues" might be recognized and shared, while, at the same time, ensuring that the "clues" that were shared had an adequate degree of "quality" by requiring that they be backed by minimally reliable textual evidence.

As another point, it seems to me that for such databases to be useful it would be necessary to first ensure that all participants shared the goal of ending esotericist religion. That means that participants would have to use their real identities, and would have to be active members of the kind of "truth groups" that I discuss in the final section of this chapter. Without a shared goal of opposing esotericist religion, I can easily foresee attempts to determine the meanings of the esoteric symbols getting lost in unending speculation. We do not need to reconstruct the original meanings of the symbols with **absolute** certainty; we need to reconstruct them with **enough** certainty to convince some requisite portion of the population that the meanings that have historically been disseminated to the public **probably differ** from the originally intended meanings; and we would do this **so that** the whole enterprise of esotericist religion and its promulgation of "hidden meanings" might lose its credibility and respectability. Of course, in order to make our arguments persuasive, we would have to be intellectually honest and use scholarly methods in our attempts to determine the originally intended meanings. But, at the same time, it would be dangerously easy for us to get caught in a mental quagmire if we were to develop an interest in determining those meanings out of purely "scholarly" motives, or "for the sake of knowledge itself," such that we lost sight of the pressing need to weaken the influence of esotericist religious institutions in order that new, non-esotericist religious institutions might be built up in their place (or, in order that existing esotericist religious institutions might see the desirability of converting to a non-esotericist approach to religion). Many people, including myself, would rightly lose patience with any such purely "scholarly" or "speculative" endeavors.

when the "type of context" (or "genre," or "sub-genre") of a specific text is more or less agreed upon. However, even though, for these reasons, I do not think a single "true meaning" should be announced for a particular symbol in a particul type of context, I see nothing wrong with listing the possible hypotheses in order of *likely* relevance or usefulness. And, hopefully, a general consensus would form around a fairly limited and thus manageable number of hypothetical meanings to be regarded as constituting the set of "most likely" meanings for a particular symbol as it was found in a particular type of context. The reason for making these decisions would not be to try to silence "incorrect interpretations" of the symbols for ideological reasons, but rather to make the database *as useful as possible* for those who were using it, keeping in mind that it cannot be predicted in advance what purpose a particular user might have for consulting the database. I believe that presenting the information in this way might facilitate the "translating" of symbols by interpreters as they found them to occur in the specific text they were reading (to the extent that such "translating" is in fact even possible).[239]

Of course, the use of such a method assumes that a particular symbol has been used in a consistent fashion over time and among different groups and individuals—which in some cases may be an unwarranted assumption, even with regard to a single religious tradition. However, I do get the sense from reading that I have done that various ancient

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[239] Building on the previous footnote, the need to avoid "ideological interpretations" is one reason why I think it would probably be necessary to exclude from involvement in the databases any person who did not share an anti-esotericist goal, so that those sorts of ideological disputes about what people think the inner meanings "ought to have been" can be *subordinated* to our own shared "ideological" interest in eliminating esotericism. To someone dedicated to opposing religious esotericism, one interpretation of a given passage of writing is really no better than another one—considered, that is, with respect to the "intrinsic value" of the "inner meaning" assigned to a symbol or parable—since we would not be committed to trying to prove the greater validity or value of any particular esoteric text or canon of esoteric texts as compared to others. Simply to arrive at a *convincing* "translation" of a particular symbol or parable, provided that it is significantly different from the customary (often literal) interpretation of that symbol or parable, advances our own "ideological" goal as anti-esotericists—a goal which we should never make any attempt to conceal. Inasmuch as our real struggle is against *meaninglessness* in all its forms, anything that helps us to approach the true, originally intended esoteric meaning (or meanings) of a symbol in a given type of context is to be considered desirable, since it helps to "firm up the terrain," so to speak, giving us more solid ground on which to do our persuading. To try to *impose* a supposedly "correct" interpretation even when it did not "fit" the evidence would prove illusory and would only undercut our own efforts.

Essentially, one might think of such databases as being comparable to ordinary dictionaries, all of which share the same goal of defining the words of a language; and, while they are not (one expects) trying to give misleading definitions of those words, they will still differ concerning precisely *how* those words should be defined. They must limit the number of definitions so that the dictionary is usable and not unwieldy, but they must at the same time be willing to provide multiple definitions for some words in order to anticipate the various possible contexts in which a person might encounter the word. This analogy is not a perfect one, since, unlike a dictionary, these references would also be used partly as the *means* by which we would try to arrive at the correct "definitions" of the symbols in the first place; but their *ultimate* purpose and the "spirit" in which they were undertaken would be the same as that of the dictionaries. The managers of such databases ought to be no more inclined to impose a particular meaning on a symbol found in a particular context, or to impose a single meaning on a symbol for all possible contexts, than one would expect the authors of a dictionary to be inclined to impose a single "ideal" meaning upon a single word, regardless of the various contexts in which a person might actually encounter it in his readings. (This is not to say that I think a single word *should* have a multiplicity of meanings, and *should* be used in a multiplicity of possible contexts—on the contrary, and as my opposition to esotericism ought to indicate, I believe the existence of multiple meanings for a single word or symbol can potentially be quite dangerous. My point is only that when this is how a word or symbol **is being** used in practice, or **has been** used in practice, total meaningfulness is increased by calling people's attention to the fact.)

cultures would often use the same symbols that others did, and that—at some point in the distant past, anyway—those who used them had a fairly definite understanding of what they were supposed to refer to, even if that cannot be said of "uninitiated" readers like ourselves (which in the present day includes almost all, if not all, people); and I also get the sense that in many cases initiates from one culture would have been (at least somewhat) able to understand the meanings of the symbols used by initiates of another culture. So I think an approach such as this does hold some promise, even if success is not guaranteed for every symbol. If we could establish a moderate degree of certainty regarding even a core handful of symbols by using a cross-cultural approach, it might be possible to "leverage" that certainty to obtain the likely meanings of other symbols within a single religious tradition (as found in the *specific context* of a particular document) by using a process of inductive and deductive reasoning.[240] And those newly discerned likely meanings might then in turn be used to shed light on any still-"undeciphered" symbols from other religious cultures, by serving as a source of testable suggestions. (But the "deciphering" of a symbol should always be thought of in relative terms. In this particular field of endeavor, there is no "right" or "wrong": only "better" or "worse," and "more" or "less.")[241]

    In addition to cross-referencing the meanings of traditional religious symbols, I would also recommend researching psychiatric and psychotherapeutic case histories, looking for examples of the occurrence of those same symbols as metaphors in the speech of persons in a state of psychosis. (This information would not necessarily be incorporated into the same symbolism databases designed to deal with religious or mythological symbols— although I would not see anything objectionable about it if someone were able to figure

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[240] However, even though I think we should be open to a cross-cultural approach to the interpretation of esoteric symbolism, I believe there is, in the specific case of the New Testament, a certain "hierarchy of textual authority" that ought to be observed when making interpretive decisions. The type of cross-references considered to be *most* valuable ought, I think, to be those found in the same book or epistle of the New Testament; then, the next most valuable type of cross-references would be those found in the New Testament as a whole; then, those found in the Old Testament (both the Hebrew Masoretic text and the Greek Septuagint); then, those found in ancient Greek writings, and in ancient Greek religion and myth, as well as in Jewish deuterocanonical or apocryphal writings and in the non-canonical Christian writings, both "gnostic" and "orthodox," that were produced in the early Christian era; and then, finally, those cross-references found in texts produced by all other traditional religious cultures.

  I make this recommendation in large part for the sake of making it easier to persuade Christians that Christianity's traditional interpretations of the Bible cannot reasonably be maintained. For instance, most Christians will not find a cross-reference between a canonical Gospel and a so-called "gnostic" Gospel to be as compelling as a cross-reference between a canonical Gospel and another canonical Gospel (and perhaps rightly so); and that simple fact ought to be accepted *and taken advantage of.*

[241] A random example of the sort of entry that I could imagine being listed in a symbolism database is "153"—which, according to John 21:6,11, was the the number of "fish" that Jesus's disciples caught in their "net" (*diktyon*) after the resurrected Jesus told them to cast their "net" on the "right side" of the "boat." It should be relatively easy to track down other instances of the number "153," or of small groups of numbers whose sum is 153, being used in world esotericist writings and myths (assuming there are indeed other instances to be found); and, because it is such an unusual number, by cross-referencing those sources it might be possible, not only to gain an understanding of the meaning that the authors of the New Testament originally intended the symbolic number "153" to have, but also, in the course of doing so, to get a better sense of what the symbols "fish," "net," "right side," and "boat" were understood to mean; and a better knowledge of any one of these symbols would help to shed additional light on the meanings of the others. That enhanced knowledge could then be leveraged to better understand other parts of the Bible, as well as esotericist writings from other traditions.

out a good way of doing so.) I think this would do much to shed light on the more *fundamental*, *psychological* meanings of these symbols as they are found in the kinds of situations in which they *initially* spring to mind in individual human experience, in persons in whom the significance and emotional import of such symbols and metaphors is felt to be more intense than in most other persons—perhaps because their suffering is more intense than that of most other persons.[242] In that sense, schizophrenics and other psychotic persons might be viewed as proverbial "canaries in the coal mine," so that by trying to better understand their minds and their thinking, especially in relation to obscure religious symbolism, we would be helping others to better understand their own psychological workings and motivations—and thus also to account for non-psychotic persons' own demonstrated attraction to the same types of symbolism. I think that doing this would likely help to convince people who are currently Christians or members of other esotericist religions that there are other, much more plausible explanations for the use of certain esoteric symbols—as well as for the *manner* in which the authors of esoteric writings such as the Bible have presented those symbols to the reader—than the explanations that they have generally so far received.[243] I suspect, in other words, that the work of "deciphering" the language of schizophrenics would be found to relate very

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[242] Also, one should not overlook the value of simply paying attention to the way in which we use metaphors and figures of speech in our ordinary discourse, since I suspect that these might shed a great deal of light on how the authors of the Bible meant for the esoteric symbols that they used to be understood.

[243] One example of a "hurdle" that such an approach might help people to get over or get past, is an initial incredulity at the suggestion that the New Testament's authors may have spoken of non-historical events, and even future events, as if they had already occurred in the historical past. The seeming improbability of this having been done is the result of the fact that, in most people's personal experience, this is not how other people express themselves. But the likelihood that such a thing might have actually been done by the authors of the New Testament seems to increase, for example, after one has encountered a statement made by one of Dr. Laing's schizophrenic patients that metaphorically expresses her current inner experiences as a statement of historical, physical fact (that is to say, as what *most people would ordinarily regard* as a statement of historical, physical fact): "The impression that she was killing herself came to be translated into the conviction that she **had** killed 'herself.' She maintained almost constantly that she had actually killed herself or sometimes that she had lost herself." (*The Divided Self*, p. 162; the italics are Laing's.) (Compare the quoted passage to, for example, Romans 6:4-8, even if in the latter passage that same past-tense "death" has been converted into a kind of "triumph" for Christians.) Knowing that such apparent "shiftings" in the way in which a person verbally expresses her meanings **can** sometimes take place in human experience makes it seem more plausible to think that the very same thing may have occurred in the writings of the authors of the New Testament: in other words, it provides evidence for the **possibility** of such a thing **actually** having happened. At the same time, it would help to explain why Christians who were contemporaries of the authors of the New Testament would not have **objected to** language being used in this way, even though they were not themselves the authors of the claims. Similarly, it would help to explain why Christians living in later times would have been **eager to believe** that these were historical and not "merely" existential facts, since the example in the passage that I quoted seems to suggest that the "historicizing" of an "existential fact" by the patient was serving as a way for her **to emphasize or insist upon the overwhelming reality for her** of that existential fact or inner experience, in the hope that its reality would not then be dismissed or brushed off (but, at least in the case of an individual schizophrenic patient, such a manner of expression probably in most instances has the opposite of the hoped-for result). A Christian who did not himself actually **invent** historical facts that expressed "existential facts," but who **readily believed**, on the flimsiest of evidence or contrary to the evidence, that these same "existential facts" would, as a result of the workings of "divine providence," **be likely to have been** expressed as historical facts—or, to put it another way, that it was "fitting and proper" that they **should have been** expressed as historical facts—is, in terms of his mental state, not necessarily very far removed from the person who, in his speech or in his esoteric writings, actually **did** invent historical facts out of "existential facts"; and so the analysis of both types of persons should be approached in a similar manner.

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closely to the work of "deciphering" the traditional esotericist writings, such that the doing of the one would help to facilitate the doing of the other.

<u>A second solution: Practical philosophical communities (i.e., non-esoteric religious communities)</u>

It should be emphasized that the main purpose of the kind of "symbolism databases" that I am describing would be to "break the spell" of esotericist religion, rather than to give new life to it. It is true that, if at all successful, the "deciphering" effort made using these databases would make the esoteric symbolism somewhat more meaningful than it now is; but it should not be forgotten that, all other things being equal, an esotericist religion will *always and necessarily* be less meaningful than a non-esotericist religion; and a sense of meaning by which to live one's life can be obtained with far less effort simply by pursuing a non-esotericist approach to religion. The primary benefit to be obtained from "symbolism databases" created along the lines that I am suggesting would be to eliminate *the aura of mystery* that currently surrounds religious symbols, so that religion might be rid of its current tendency to encourage unreflecting obedience and submission before arbitrary human authority, at the same time as its tendency to encourage dreamy self-absorption and solipsism in the individual—both of which (perhaps seemingly contrary) tendencies the esoteric nature of traditional religion makes inevitable.[244]

For this reason, the work of draining esoteric symbolism of its mystery shares a common purpose with the work of building up alternative religions of a non-esoteric nature. In the type of "non-esoteric religious communities" (a.k.a. "practical philosophical communities," or "moral communities," or "belief communities") that I believe we desperately need, a person would effectively be *required* to take responsibility for assenting to or rejecting any proposition that claimed authority in that person's life; but, of course, this could only happen if the person were first *allowed to understand* what the proposition even was—something that esotericist forms of religion (to the extent, that is, that the beliefs of the religion have their source in esoteric writings) effectively make

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[However, it ought to be noted that the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, many of the prophecies are related in the past tense of the Greek language. And there is other evidence to be found in the New Testament that the mere use of the past tense by an author was not necessarily meant to imply that any historical event was being described. So, in the specific case of a suggestion that the New Testament's authors did not necessarily mean to speak of historical events simply because they used one of the Greek past tenses, the incredulity that many people might feel in response would actually be misplaced for other reasons in addition to the one that I described in the previous paragraph.]

[244] It should be noted that a substantial part of that "aura of mystery" is the result of the fact that for most people, the authoritative writings of their religion require translation from one or more foreign languages. This puts a great deal of power into the hands of the scholars or "scribes" of the religion, and permits them to set themselves up as an intermediary standing between the author's original meanings and the reader of the translation, so that they are in a position to substitute their own desired meanings for the author's originally intended meanings. And in the case of the Bible in particular, I have (in my opinion) seen this done over and over again. Moreover, the mere passage of time inevitably introduces an element of "mystery" in its own right. I strongly believe that no future non-esoteric religion should *ever* have as an "authoritative" writing anything requiring translation from a foreign language (although I certainly do want to discourage people from taking an interest in foreign languages and foreign cultures).

impossible. In short, members of non-esoteric religions would be encouraged to think more like philosophers—in the best and widest sense of that word.[245]

However, for a person to truly "assent to" or "reject" the type of proposition that I have in mind, he would have to choose whether or not to integrate it into his life and actions: I do not consider a person who claims to have "accepted" a certain philosophical proposition, but then fails to live his life in accordance with it, or advocate that his social institutions be designed in accordance with it, to have truly accepted it. So philosophical or theoretical discussion that did not *ultimately* and *finally* result in the putting into practice of the theoretical propositions that had been developed would not involve propositions that had ever actually been "assented to," since there would have been no positive *commitment* made with regard to those propositions. And I consider discussion of philosophical propositions that are not *capable of* being either "assented to" or "rejected" in this *practical* sense, to be—at best—a waste of time.[246]

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[245] To speak in terms of "propositions" of course implies that the "authoritative" writings of such non-esoteric religions would not—because they should not—take the form of fictional, allegorical, or poetic writings. All of us have become so accustomed to the notion that religious scriptures will inevitably take one of these forms that the *fundamental* defectiveness of any arrangement in which writings of this kind are assigned an authoritative role in a religion simply does not occur to most people. Fiction and poetry practically *invite* people to think in widely varying ways. And this is true even if the fictional or poetic works are not themselves "esoteric" per se. They are still too uncertain in meaning and "open to interpretation" to effectively unite and mentally direct the thoughts and actions of a community of people. And I believe that the *primary* purpose of a religion is—or at least ought to be—not to "evoke a mood" or give rise to some vague feeling of "reverence," but to clearly guide and direct the thinking and behavior of the members of a religious community in ways that are beneficial to them (even though this guidance and direction might, and I believe should, be rooted in a metaphysical view of the world).

Lest anyone get nervous when I speak of "uniting" and "directing thoughts," wondering if I am trying to promote the development of totalitarian religious cults, I emphasize that the uniting of a group of people and the directing of their thinking is in no way incompatible—or, at least, it does not *need* to be incompatible—with teaching people how to think for themselves and to question authority. Individual freedom does require that people be able to *escape* from a religious community in the event that it degenerated into a totalitarian religious cult; and that is why it is necessary that there be a multiplicity of religious communities available to people. But to give an unclear writing (especially one taking the form of *a fictional story*) to a group of people, letting each person in the group interpret it according to his own whimsy, while it may give the superficial appearance of promoting "individual freedom," I strongly believe that it actually undercuts it in the long run. There are necessary constraints on thinking (namely, those that promote sanity and logical thought), and there are arbitrary and harmful constraints; and it is necessary to make a distinction between the two.

[246] And it is because of the fact that it has been taken out of a "religious" (i.e., practical) setting that I consider much of academic philosophy, as it is currently practiced, to be either a waste of time or else fraudulent in its essence. The main theoretical propositions that are developed should be ones both that **can** be put into practice (directly or indirectly), and also that **are** put into practice by those advancing and defending them and by those claiming to accept them. (I realize that some propositions must be advanced and entertained on a tentative or speculative basis, but there is a significant problem when these constitute virtually *all* of the propositions that are ever advanced, since it indicates a fundamental lack of moral *seriousness* about the whole enterprise.)

This is not to say, however, that I do not think that much of academic philosophy and other contemporary academic scholarship **could** prove very valuable if it were applied in a more practical and direct way. On the contrary, I think much of it would be—more of it, in fact, than what might currently appear to be the case. (Nor do I necessarily mean to suggest that the lack of practical usefulness of many academicians' work is entirely by their own choice.) For example, I unfortunately know quite little about analytic philosophy, but it seems to me, based on what I do know of it, that its concerns relate closely to the problems involved in esotericist religion, and that it could make a valuable contribution to the building up of new, non-esotericist religions on firmer mental ground.

I believe that to establish a society suffused with meaning requires the existence of numerous "***practical philosophical communities***" (a.k.a. "non-esotericist religious communities," or "moral communities," or "belief communities"), communities in which the virtues of ***practical usefulness*** and ***honesty*** would be assigned *equally* high value: the type of communities which, amazingly to me, our society does not currently have. What we now generally find is that academic philosophy and scholarship is not seriously interested in making itself practically useful, and esotericist religion is not seriously interested in honesty and clear thinking. A split currently exists between two sets of values or goals: on the one hand, those of scholarship, intellectuality, honesty, clarity and precision of thought and expression, and the desire to seek out truth and knowledge; and, on the other hand, those of practical usefulness, the sharing of a sense of common meaning and purpose, the giving of life guidance, and the giving of mutual support and protection. This split can no longer be maintained. In fact, I think there is a close relation between the historical legacy of esotericist religion and the sterility of much of academic philosophy and scholarship in its current state (such that modern-day academicians might well be considered the "secularized" successors of the "holy class" found in traditional religious societies—but if anything, showing even less interest in their work being of practical benefit to the "laity" than their predecessors showed). The kinds of esotericism found both in traditional religion and in modern academia are expressions of the same basic lack of a spirit of *commitment*, the same unwillingness to first make a *rational* and *socially useful* decision, whether through personal reflection or through discussion with others, and then to *take action* in conformity with that decision; and both are also expressions of the same fundamental split between the "inner" and the "outer," between theory and practice—the overcoming of which split I believe constitutes *the* central concern of the New Testament (albeit one often presented in implicit and obscure form).[247]

I think a major reason why this split now exists is that currently there are few *opportunities* to put a theoretical decision ***directly*** into practice ***within a functioning community***, doing so in such a way that it took into account the welfare of the ***whole***

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[247] The values of "commitment," "responsibility," "accountability," and "decisiveness" are closely connected. The absence of these can be the result (and the cause) of the absence of a reasonable amount of ***certainty of meaning***—which can in turn be the result, at least in part, of the refusal of esotericist writers to be ***logically consistent*** in their writings, such that a reader might ***rely upon*** a particular word-symbol or verbal figure to refer to a certain idea. But, related to a lack of certainty of meaning, the absence of responsibility can also result from the absence of a reasonable amount of ***comprehensibility of meaning*** to the average person. Academic specialization and religious esotericism are thus shown to potentially bear strong similarities to one another; and the "technical jargon" of the academic specialist—in which certain words might be used in ways in which even educated persons outside the specialty (i.e., that particular "context") would not use those same words—is thus shown to be not so very different from the "technical jargon" of the religious esotericist, since in the case of neither type of jargon is "the multitude" expected or encouraged to understand it by those who use it.

I once again repeat what Dr. Laing wrote: that, at least in some cases, "The schizophrenic is playing at being mad to avoid at all costs the possibility of being held ***responsible*** for a single coherent idea, or intention." Ultimately, it is this desire to ***flee from responsibility*** that must be overcome, *wherever* it might present itself: whether in a schizophrenic person, or in a member of an esotericist religion, or in an academic specialist, or in any other kind of "expert" (or in an entire profession composed of such "experts"), or in a public policy-maker, or in anyone else. And, although my focus in this essay is primarily on lying, it should be kept in mind that lying is really just one particular way in which a more basic desire to flee from responsibility and commitment is found to manifest itself.

community (at the same time as that of the larger society, to the extent that individuals were able to attain an understanding of what would further it). Because of the lack of such opportunities, people's actions get "siphoned off" or "rechanneled" in such a way that the split between theory and action, between "inner" and "outer," becomes self-perpetuating, as people come to no longer even expect that such opportunities ought to be available to them to directly put theory into practice within a functioning community—and, at the same time, opportunities to develop or study theory in such a way that it was always done first and foremost *with an eye toward practice within a person's community and toward the benefit of the community*—and so they do not insist on access to such opportunities. Instead, they become accustomed to believe that—to the extent theory has any usefulness at all—its usefulness must always be made manifest **indirectly**, either through state action (accompanied by political activism), or through profit-seeking or individually acquisitive action—either of which type of action is effectively premised on a blind faith that some vague abstraction, whether it go by the name of "the democratic process" or "the market process," can be relied upon to *automatically* attend to the needs of the whole without any individual human being ever needing to do so **consciously**.

As an alternative to this state of affairs, the members of non-esoteric religious communities would, while being generally dedicated to the development of theory, make a point of directly working theoretical insights and understandings into the actual functioning of their own religious communities; indeed, they would make this their chief focus in life, giving it a higher priority than any matter with which the mass media or any other remote social institution might prefer that people concern themselves. Those who were developing theory at the more abstract and holistic levels of thinking would thus be expected to **take responsibility** for ensuring that their theoretical insights were actually **realized** in the social systems and institutions of whichever community they chose to affiliate with; and also to take responsibility for **the effective dissemination of the theoretical knowledge and information within their possession** to those individual members of their community who were expected to especially benefit from and be in need of that specific knowledge or information.[248] This would replace the current widespread assumption that it is the sole responsibility of the individual person (even, increasingly, the individual child) to find the information and knowledge that he needs in order to protect himself from harm and to succeed in life.[249] It would thus replace the

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[248] Demanding "practical usefulness" from a society's theoreticians actually goes hand-in-hand with the creation of an honest society, for the reason that the less-theoretical members of society would never give their financial support to the more useless activities of theoreticians *unless* the theoreticians were in some way or another *misleading* them about the sort of work they did, or working to keep them *ignorant* about what they did (which amounts to the same thing); or trying to *conceal* exactly how the mechanisms and systems operated by which the non-theoreticians were being made to pay for theoretical activity from which they received little or no benefit. If it is correct to claim that a separation between theory and practice could never survive in a *fully* honest, informed, and transparent society, then we must strive to eliminate that separation as part of our effort to *create* a fully honest, informed, and transparent society. A corollary of this, however, is that the less-theoretical members of society have an obligation to become more theoretical than they now are (assuming they have the native ability to become so—which the vast majority of people do have).

[249] I do not mean to encourage any kind of "paternalistic" attitude in the religious communities; in other words, I do not envision that their attitude would be that they were "protecting their members **from themselves**"—although I certainly **do** envision that they would see themselves as being protectors of their members. The purpose of the communities would be to educate, inform, and guide their members, in order to protect them from those who would try to prey on their ignorance and confusion, after first having

"*caveat emptor*" and "not my problem" attitudes that now characterize, not just the business marketplace, but to a large extent our entire society. There is a sense in which these new, non-esoteric religious communities would, by interposing themselves as a barrier or shield between their individual members and business corporations or the state, do what the Christian churches *used to* do for their religious communities, but no longer seem able to do in the modern world—which is especially unfortunate given the fact that now, in the age of the massive state and the massive business corporation (the two of which are frequently interwoven), there is greater need than ever for just such a type of "barrier" or "shield" to protect individuals from predation and manipulation by power-

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cultivated that very ignorance and confusion. The pursuit of **enlightened** self-interest among its members would always be the goal of the kind of religious communities that I have in mind. (By "enlightened self-interest," I have in mind partly an individual's **long-term** self-interest; partly his **genuine** self-interest; and partly his capacity to take satisfaction in and derive pleasure from the success or increased welfare of some **whole** larger than himself, of which he forms a part—including the success of each of the **other individual parts** of that same whole.)

In fact, I believe quite strongly that the "paternalistic" attitude has itself been one of the prime sources of human evil and suffering, partly because it has been used to justify the sacrifice of truth and honesty—supposedly so that the phantom, evanescent gain of "goodness" or "love" or "godliness" could be obtained in exchange. I believe that honesty must be held onto even at the cost of all else; but if this were everyone's attitude, I believe what we would find is that a fully honest society would be a **more** compassionate society than a dishonest society, because the compassion that emerged would do so spontaneously and naturally, instead of being forced and feigned (and also because less mutual **fear** would exist in an honest society; and it is in the absence of fear that compassion is able naturally to arise). I believe that—as regards an entire community or society—when one aims for honesty before compassion, one ends up getting both; but when one aims for compassion before honesty, one ends up getting neither. (Much of the reason for this has to do with the role played by self-deception in confusing people about whether an action is *genuinely* and *objectively* "compassionate"—that is, *genuinely beneficial* to the recipient of the alleged "compassion"—or if it is merely an action that makes the actor "feel like a good person" or "feel like a godly person," one in which the focus is only on the *subjective feelings* of the actor alone, and on his own narrow and superficial sense of self-approval.) In fact, I believe that **the most compassionate thing that one can do for others is not to mislead them**; moreover, there is a close relation between the sharing of *meanings* in common (i.e., the practice of honest communication), and the sharing of *feelings* in common (which is what is suggested by the literal meaning of the word "compassion").

I am not opposed to all compulsion as a matter of principle, but I am unalterably opposed to the principle of compelling other adults "for their own good." (And I am generally hostile to that principle even in the case of children. While I recognize that there are times when children do need to be compelled "for their own good," this should **always** be seen as the **less** desirable or ideal approach to take—one that should be avoided if at all possible. And parents should be in the habit of always being suspicious of their own motives whenever they claim that what they are doing is "for the child's own good.") When force or coercion is used against others, I want those who use the force or coercion to be forthright and clear in their minds that they are trying to advance their **own** (enlightened, hopefully) self-interest. If everyone thought in this manner—and if, **at the same time**, everyone were also required to be honest with each other, leading to more effective communication between people—people would then gain the ability to discover ways of advancing the true self-interest of both "sides" at the same time. (Of course, this assumes that such ways existed at all; if they did not exist, then there would simply be no way to avoid violent conflict, and people in such a situation would be better off if they faced that fact squarely. However, I am not certain that it is ever actually **impossible**—that is, when a **fully** honest communicatory environment exists—to find ways of advancing the interests of both "sides" without either of them resorting to the use of violence or compulsion against the other.) But when it is considered permissible to use compulsion against others "for their own good," the person or group that is using force effectively forfeits the opportunity to ever make that discovery. A **false** concern for others makes it easier for people to "tune out" what those others have to say, and to barricade themselves within their own self-delusions; and such self-delusions are both self-

and control-hungry bureaucratic organizations that are effectively governed by no overarching moral framework that characterizes them *as organizations*.[250]

The basic purpose of a non-esoteric religious community would be to provide each of its members with an overall world-view, to help them understand how the world works, and to tell them how they ought to go about succeeding in that world, *in view of the religion's own ideas about what "success" means*. And, beyond merely telling them how to succeed, they would also help give them the tools, skills, information, tutoring, direction, and guidance that would actually *enable* them to succeed. For such "practical philosophical communities" or "non-esoteric religious communities" to carry out their missions, it seems to me that their entire *general memberships* would have to concern themselves primarily with the following subject areas (in no particular order): philosophy (including metaphysics and logic); psychology and psychotherapy (considered as a subject matter, that is: I am not necessarily advocating that large numbers of people take part in *individual* psychotherapy); grammar and communication skills; parenting skills; and education, of both children and adults—that is, to the extent that education can be considered distinct from these other subject areas—or, for that matter, from the fundamental mission of the community itself. An interest in any one of these subject areas would be considered valueless without understanding its relevance to all of the other areas. The primary goal of such a community would not be to produce "scholars" in these areas, but to be effective at **diffusing** and **communicating** existing knowledge in these areas (as well as others) among an entire community of ordinary non-specialists so that the knowledge could be put to its best possible use. More specialized areas of knowledge might be pursued, but these would be considered to be of value to a community only *after* these more fundamental areas of concern had been properly attended to—that is, attended to in a holistic and integrated way, and in accordance with the overall shared religious world-view that defined the community as a community. It is implied in the foregoing that ***the division that is now generally made between education and religion, and the sort of sharp divisions made between specialties within academia, would have to be rejected***, at least in certain areas and to a certain extent. A community of such kind would of course require the knowledge of scholars who were also members of the particular community (at least some of whom would serve in a "ministerial" role in the community); but none of the scholars affiliated with any particular community could be permitted to be indifferent to the practical effect (or *lack* of practical effect) that their own scholarship had, either directly or indirectly, on the life of the community with which they were affiliated.[251]

For example, a successful practical philosophical community would not award Ph.D.s in logic so that some small group of highly "logical" people could serve as the entire general society's designated "specialists" in logic, allowing a majority of people to be as illogical as they pleased, on the assumption that "thinking logically" was the primary

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destructive and destructive to other people.

[250] As such, one might describe each of these non-esoteric religious communities as eventually incorporating the functions (among others) of a church, a consumer advocate, a psychotherapist, a media institution, and an adult education program.

[251] I do not mean to suggest that such a scheme ought to be ***imposed upon*** any religious community by those who were not members of it; only that it seems to me that the chances for the successful functioning of any religious community would be maximized if its members chose to follow the approach that I have laid out.

concern of "those logic people," and that "those logic people" would be sure to attend to it on everyone else's behalf, and the fruits of their mysterious labor could be counted on to indirectly make their way to everyone else. For academic logicians to think that such an arrangement is socially sustainable *itself* demonstrates an inability to think in an even minimally logical manner—and then *take action* accordingly—***regarding the problems that need to be addressed most urgently***. (And again, trying to find *rational* solutions to problems that *actually matter* to an *actual community* of people, and then *taking action* in accordance with the conclusions that have been reached, would invariably be the approach taken by ***all*** members of a practical philosophical community, even its more theoretically inclined members.) Or, to take another example, for a psychotherapist to think that personality disorders or mental illnesses can be corrected or treated in the absence of logical and honest thinking—in an individual, *and* in a family, *and* in a community or society—is similarly myopic. But logical and honest thinking cannot be promoted if an individual—*or* fellow members of a family, *or* fellow members of a community or society—are indifferent to the importance of grammar and of clear and precise expression, whether written or spoken, as well as that of cultivating the ability to listen to others.

A third solution—and the most urgently needed one: The formation of "truth groups"

Unlike the creation of "symbolism databases," the creation of "practical philosophical communities" or "non-esoteric religious communities" or "moral communities" is a somewhat more long-term goal. However, there is another solution that, like the symbolism databases, can be implemented almost immediately: the formation of what might be called "truth groups" (or "honesty groups," to be more precise). And, as valuable as I think the symbolism databases might potentially prove to be, I think that the formation of truth groups would be of far greater importance, thus making the work of doing so more urgently needed. In fact, I envision that truth groups might potentially constitute the nuclei or beginning cores around which the moral communities that I describe in the previous section could come to form (with each of these communities practicing a non-esoteric religion or practical philosophy of its choice).

I propose that members of truth groups would make four pledges, the first three being the most important to stress. <u>First</u>: They will ***never lie***, either to each other or to outsiders—***not even to those who have lied to them***. (There would be ***a single exception*** to this blanket "never lie" rule: a kind of "self-defense" or "self-protection" exception that would apply in cases in which an individual's personal privacy or autonomy was being unreasonably threatened—for example, by being asked intrusive and impertinent questions.)[252] <u>Second</u>: ***To the extent that they are reasonably able***, they will ***never***

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[252] When I say "they will never lie," what I more specifically mean is that they will ***never deliberately or recklessly mislead or confuse other people***. By incorporating the single "self-protection" exception into this rule, the basic principle that results is: A person will ***never try to introduce more confusion into the world than there was when he found it***—not even for a supposedly "good cause." It is essentially a "<u>**do no harm**</u>" principle. It does ***not*** entail any ***affirmative*** obligation to *tell* the truth (as a person understands "the truth"), <u>regardless of whether the person wishes to tell it—or whether other persons wish to hear it</u>. If, in situations in which a person's personal privacy or autonomy was <u>not</u> being threatened, he ever felt that he was not reasonably able to say something true, then ***he should say nothing at all***. And if he were threatened with punishment for <u>not</u> lying to innocent <u>third parties</u>, then he must accept the punishment—

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tolerate lying by others. <u>Third</u>: **To the extent that they are reasonably able**, they will **never tolerate the condoning** (or promoting, or endorsing, or enabling) by others of lying by others. <u>Fourth</u>: They will strive to reduce how much they lie to themselves (at least to the extent they are able to do so, given that some degree of self-deception in every person is inevitable, and one must fight a never-ending battle against it).[253]

A particular truth group could be formed around any interest that its members shared in common, or any mission or goal that they wished to jointly pursue. Any currently-existing group or association, including a small business, a non-profit organization, or an informal club, could always choose to *additionally* identify as a "truth group." Members

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however harsh it might be. (Unless—perhaps—the threatened punishment was something extreme like the person's own death or maiming, or the death or maiming of some other individual. And even then, the harm that the deception would cause to the third party or parties, as well as whether the person expected that he would have an opportunity in the near future to retract or correct the deceptive statement, would also have to be taken into account. But such situations would be very rare. The only examples I can think of would involve hostages, P.O.W.s, and kidnap victims.) However, because of the "self-protection" exception, it would in that case be permissible for the person who was being threatened to lie to the person threatening him—for example, by promising that he would lie to innocent third parties even though he had no intention of keeping his promise, if telling this lie was necessary to avoid punishment.

It is implied in the foregoing that **any lying done by a person as part of his employment duties or as part of his occupation would <u>never</u> fall under the "self-protection" exception**. However, it would still be permissible for a member of a truth group to <u>work for</u> or <u>work with</u> persons who lied, even while on the job, or <u>do business</u> with persons who lied, if he was not reasonably able to avoid doing so.

Also, it should be noted that the "self-protection" exception would be applicable only in <u>some</u> instances in which an individual's personal privacy or autonomy was being unduly threatened. If the person asking the question—even if it were a personally embarrassing question, the honest answer to which would be incriminating—had the right to expect that he would receive an honest answer, then the person answering the question would have a moral obligation to give an honest answer. I have no desire at this point to try to determine with exactness the sorts of situations in which a person would have a "right" to expect to receive an honest answer to an admittedly personally embarrassing question. (I will do no more than offer a single example of a situation in which I think a person would probably have the right to receive an honest answer to what is potentially an embarrassing question: when one spouse asks the other, "Are you cheating on me?") I only wish here to emphasize the point that the "self-protection" exception <u>might</u> apply when embarrassingly personal questions are being asked, and not that it necessarily <u>will</u> apply in all cases. In determining when a person had a "right" to receive an honest and non-misleading response, the most important consideration would be to make certain that everyone had more or less <u>the same</u> conception of the sorts of questions and demands that would be considered unreasonably violative of a person's privacy or autonomy, so that if they did choose to ask those sorts of questions or make those sorts of demands, they would not be <u>surprised</u> if they received responses that they later discovered to have been misleading in nature.

[253] It is worth clarifying at this point that while I do not consider honesty to be the <u>only</u> virtue, I do consider it to be the one really *crucial* virtue. That is because if a person—or a society—is not honest with itself, it cannot "think straight"; and if it cannot "think straight," it cannot know how to make decisions about how it ought to conduct itself in such a way that it will best advance its own enlightened self-interest. If <u>everyone</u> in a society were required to be thoroughly honest with others, then all of the other virtues could be arrived at through a process of rational persuasion, combined (in certain cases) with avoidance or exclusion of those who had not been similarly persuaded. (And so while the generally applicable criminal law would continue to be enforced under such a scheme, it would not be based upon "virtue"—at least not in the sense that I have in mind as I am using the word here.)

I believe a variety of moral communities ought to be free to arise, with the variations among them due in part to the different ways in which their respective memberships chose to define "virtue." But this would be a desirable state of affairs only so long as <u>all</u> of those memberships accepted honesty as the one *common* virtue that every person in society would be required to accept as the non-negotiable starting point for <u>any</u>

of different truth groups wouldn't need to have anything in common with one another except a shared desire to promote the development of a thoroughly honest society.[254]

It is impossible to predict the exact manner in which the process would unfold, but my general expectation is that over time the various truth groups would "link up" and associate with each other more and more closely and exclusively, giving them a growing ability to "shun" individuals and organizations not associated with any recognized truth group network. Eventually, all of the truth groups would collectively come to constitute a broad and inclusive "honesty culture." Any person who was a member of _at least one_ truth group would _ipso facto_ be a member of the honesty culture. But any person who was not a member of _any_ truth group could not be regarded as a member of the honesty culture; in fact, he would be regarded as a member of the "dishonesty culture" that would be composed of all those persons who were not recognized members of the honesty culture. As it grew in size and strength, this honesty culture would progressively "secede" from the surrounding dishonesty culture and operate as independently of it as possible, continuing to focus on its own growth and on expanding its own social influence, until the honesty culture was eventually able to supplant the dishonesty culture entirely.

What would it mean for the honesty culture to "secede" from the surrounding dishonesty culture? For one thing, it would imply, whenever reasonably possible, patronizing businesses owned by members of the honesty culture before patronizing businesses owned by members of the dishonesty culture. In other words, there would be a _partial boycott_ of economic actors that had not yet made the choice to locate themselves within the honesty culture (_regardless_ of how honest and trustworthy any one of those particular economic actors happened to be, since, by itself, merely _being_ honest is not enough to build up an honesty _culture_). Members of the honesty culture would

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kind of discourse or interaction between the members of one moral community and the members of any other. The members of each of the moral communities would be free to conduct their affairs by the moral code that they had accepted for themselves and their children—_and then "sink or swim" accordingly_. (This relates to the goal of promoting _commitment_ and _responsibility_.)

If persons found through their experience that they had in fact judged poorly when choosing a moral code for themselves—or that they had been born into a bad one—they could either try to change the beliefs held by their moral community, or they could leave and join a different one, or form a new one, depending on which of these options they thought would be the easiest for them to pursue. And bad moral codes would not, by means of deception or deliberate ambiguity, be able to receive an artificial and undeserved immunity from rational scrutiny by outsiders (as well as members). Whether good or bad, everyone else in the wider society would be able to _know_ what the moral values of a particular moral community were, so that people would be able to _associate_ certain moral codes and belief-systems _with their practical outcomes_. (Since the "self-protection" exception to the rule against lying would apply only to individuals, not groups or organizations, any moral community that chose to lie in response to inquiries about how it was conducting its affairs or what it was teaching its members could expect to receive some sort of appropriate penalty for having lied—a penalty severe enough to deter it and others from lying about such matters in the future. One conceivable penalty might be some set period of ostracism of that community by an assembly of other communities. However, I leave as open the question regarding the circumstances under which it would be permissible for a group of people to simply refuse to respond to inquiries from outsiders, assuming the group did not mislead anyone in the course of doing so.)

[254] Such truth groups could exist both online and in the real world; however, it seems to me that to work, online truth groups would have to require the use of real rather than anonymous identities in order to ensure accountability. In any event, I think online truth groups should at most be adjuncts to real-world truth groups, since to be consistently honest and intolerant of dishonesty often takes some courage, and so will require the _real-world_ moral support of other people.

also be given preferences in other ways, such as in social interactions. Whenever there was a direct conflict between the two, a fellow member of the honesty culture would always be given _preferential treatment_ as compared to someone still located outside the honesty culture.

The ultimate goal would be to create a completely parallel culture—and eventually, a dominant culture—that was simply devoted to honesty; and that's it. There would be no "angle." Organizing the truth groups would not be used as a pretext for pursuing some other political or social agenda that its members were _really_ interested in pursuing.[255] As a result, members of different truth groups would be free to continue to disagree with each other over every question _except_ the question of the importance of insisting upon honesty in society. Persons who did not want to actively associate with the members of one truth group would always be free to form another truth group; but, so long as both groups required honesty from their own members—honesty toward _both_ those inside and those outside their own truth group, as well as those outside the entire honesty culture— each group would still recognize the validity of the other _as_ a truth group (meaning that the members of each of the two truth groups would give preferential treatment to members of the other truth group as compared to persons located outside the honesty culture).

By this point, a question may have arisen in the minds of some readers: How can one be so sure that by "seceding," members of truth groups would succeed in "freezing out" dishonest persons and enablers of dishonesty from mainstream society, and not just succeed in freezing _themselves_ out of mainstream society?

There are several good reasons to believe that through the use of a _progressive_, _incremental_ "shunning" or "boycotting" strategy, an honesty culture movement would _not_ keep itself in a permanently marginalized position, but rather, would gradually become more and more dominant in society.

First, the fact that the honesty culture would take an inclusive stance toward _all_ persons who sincerely held a single belief—namely, a belief in the importance of creating a thoroughly honest society—would prevent the honesty culture from ever being perceived as, or ever degenerating into, some sort of "weird cult" on the outskirts of social respectability. _Every_ individual who was currently located in the dishonesty culture could for that reason always be seen as a _realistic_ "convert" to the honesty culture as a whole (though not necessarily to any particular truth group, since the truth groups would be quite diverse in nature).

Second, the "reasonableness" standard found in the second and third rules would allow truth group members to continue interacting with and extracting benefits from the dishonesty culture to the extent that they found it excessively difficult to avoid doing so. Truth group members would not be asked to make an "all-or-nothing" decision, at least not in the early stages of the honesty culture movement when it was still in a weak position vis-à-vis the dishonesty culture; and they would never be asked to make any drastic sacrifices to advance the movement. (However, they would be reminded that the greater the sacrifices they were willing to voluntarily make, the more rapidly the honesty culture would grow.) Members of the honesty culture would always have the flexibility

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[255] Speaking for myself at least, I am content in the belief that in a society in which fully honest discourse existed (but _only_ in a society in which fully honest discourse existed), rational and mutually agreeable solutions to our commonly shared problems _would_ be found; so I have no desire to make an "end-run" around those solutions in advance by way of any "plotting and scheming."

to decide the extent to which they felt reasonably able at any particular time and in any particular situation to withdraw from the dishonesty culture and do without the immediate benefits of interacting with it—the sort of flexibility that members of the dishonesty culture would see no reason to practice in their own dealings with members of the honesty culture. For example, when making a purchase, members of the dishonesty culture would *invariably* look for the best combination of price, quality, and seller reliability for the purpose of advancing their own individual, immediate self-interest; while for members of the honesty culture, price, quality, and seller reliability would certainly be taken into consideration, but the membership status of the seller would also play a role in determining their final purchasing decision. (In fact, to the extent that seller reliability was an issue, members of the dishonesty culture would actually tend to be more inclined to buy from members of the honesty culture than from members of their own.) By the failure of dishonesty culture members to *discriminate against* honesty culture members in their dealings, especially their economic dealings, they would be helping to build up, expand, and strengthen the honesty culture without even realizing it —but they would not be harmed by their unwitting failure to discriminate, since in the long run, they, like everyone else, would be beneficiaries of the final victory of the honesty culture.

Third, and related to what I was just saying, members of the honesty culture would not need to fear economic retaliation or reciprocal discrimination from persons located outside the honesty culture.[256] It is impossible to imagine members of the dishonesty culture engaging in a boycott of members of the honesty culture in any way comparable to the one being engaged in by the latter, because any systematic boycott by the former would require that the dishonesty culture first take cognizance of itself *as* a "dishonesty culture," and then organize itself along those lines—since there are no other lines along which the members of the dishonesty culture would be able to organize themselves if their goal was indeed to "retaliate." And the notion of any substantial number of people organizing themselves around the "ideal" of dishonesty (accompanied by the closely related "ideal" of disloyalty) is a fundamentally incoherent and therefore inconceivable one.

Fourth, and most importantly, the strategy I am proposing actively takes advantage of the fact that groups of people who are required to be honest with each other will, on the average and in the long run, and all other things being equal, necessarily and inevitably *be more overtly successful* than groups of people who are not required to be honest with each other. To put it very simply: Honesty ***works***; dishonesty ***does not work***.[257] It is the social benefits—including economic benefits—that flow from group honesty and trust that would *more than "pay for" the costs* that truth group members would incur in

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[256] I am here referring to the *total* "honesty culture"—including both the *genuine*, anti-esotericist honesty culture, as well as the pro-esotericist "honesty culture." As I discuss below, there *would* be a real risk of (temporary) retaliation against an anti-esotericist honesty culture by a pro-esotericist "honesty culture" in the event of a "schism" between the two. (But since Christians, for example, already sometimes give preferential treatment to other Christians, including in their business dealings, one might reasonably ask who would really be "retaliating" against whom in the event of such a schism.)

[257] In connection with this idea, consider the following line from the 2015 movie *The Big Short*: "We live in an era of fraud in America. Not just in banking, but in government, education, religion, food, even baseball... What bothers me isn't that fraud is not 'nice.' Or that fraud is 'mean.' For fifteen thousand years, fraud and short-sighted thinking *have never, ever worked*. Not once."

gradually seceding from, and increasingly foregoing the immediate benefits of interacting with, the dishonesty culture; and it is this perpetual "profitability" of the movement that would permit the honesty culture to keep growing steadily and without impediment. By means of the consistent, principled, impartial, and deliberate _exclusion_ from the honesty culture of dishonest persons and persons who were willing to tolerate, enable, or promote dishonesty (as opposed, that is, to the exclusion or inclusion of persons merely on the basis of visceral personal antipathy or attraction), it would become possible to _capture and retain the social benefits of honesty_—instead of allowing those benefits to _dissipate_ throughout the entire society in such a way that they could be enjoyed also—or rather, even more so—by the dishonest members of society. This "capturing and retaining of benefits" is what would allow the honesty culture to gradually outcompete, outgrow, and ultimately supplant the dishonesty culture—resulting in _the entire society_ being made a thoroughly honest one.

Fifth, and finally, a "ratchet effect" would be at work in the growth of the honesty culture movement. The growth of the movement would be gradual, but it would also be inexorable. That's because while it would always be possible, through outreach efforts, to find additional recruits for the honesty culture, it is difficult to imagine many existing truth group members ever leaving the honesty culture to rejoin the dishonesty culture.[258] Members of the honesty culture would, on average, be more honest, trustworthy, loyal, rational, sane, and financially successful than members of the dishonesty culture. So the typical member of the honesty culture, once he had become familiar through first-hand experience with the advantages of belonging to the honesty culture, would realize that he would in no way benefit by relocating to the dishonesty culture.

In the initial stages of the movement's development, I expect that the truth group members would tend to consist mainly of idealists, long-range planners, and strategic visionaries. They would be the persons who were able to appreciate that once the growth of the movement had reached a certain point, _the logic of the strategy_ would make the movement's ultimate success inevitable—regardless of how dramatically the type of society created by it would differ from anything human beings have ever seen before; they would understand that just because a certain state of affairs has never been seen by human beings, does not mean that the creation of that state of affairs is not feasible—provided there is solid logic arguing in favor of its feasibility. They would recognize that the successful creation of a fully honest society would in no way rest upon vain hopes that human nature would undergo _spontaneous_ changes, unaccompanied by changes in people's economic and other incentives (although the eventual success of an honesty culture would of course lead to changes in people's habitual ways of thinking), since they would recognize that, according to the proposed strategy, the successful creation of a fully honest society would _in no way depend upon_ large numbers of people being _verbally persuaded_ of the merits of honesty in the abstract. These early truth group members would also be the persons who were willing to make moderate short-term sacrifices for the sake of advancing the movement, partly out of their confidence that the long-term benefits made possible by those sacrifices would far outweigh the sacrifices;

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[258] I say "many truth group members" rather than "any truth group members" because I can imagine the occasional member "selling out" by getting a highly lucrative job that required him to lie as part of his job duties, which would make it impossible for him to remain a member of any truth group. But relatively few members of the honesty culture would be presented with such opportunities, so the general "ratchet effect" would still be at work.

but also partly due to a realization that even in the earliest stages, if a member had _already_ been a generally honest person before joining a truth group, the immediate benefits he would obtain by associating to a greater extent than before with other honest, trustworthy, rational, and loyal persons might well exceed the amount of sacrifice he would be making, since the amount of "boycotting" or "shunning" expected of the average truth group member at any given time would always be in proportion to the size of the honesty culture at that time.

But at some point, once the honesty culture had become large enough, a great many non-members—whose notions of self-interest were not quite as "enlightened" as those of the early truth group members—would finally come to _perceive_ that it was in their own _immediate_ self-interest to become members of the honesty culture, _regardless_ of how honest or dishonest they were by nature. Once that "tipping point" had been reached, when perceived immediate self-interest had become _fully aligned_ with an ideal vision of society's future—so that new members no longer perceived there to be any inconsistency between maximizing their own individual welfare and maximizing social welfare, and little if any rational foresight, or selflessness, or intellectual appreciation of the logic of the honesty culture strategy was still required of new members—the growth of the honesty culture movement would from that point on be literally unstoppable. But it would be the responsibility of the more idealistic and visionary early members of the honesty culture to see to it that, by means of ongoing outreach efforts, the movement grew just enough to reach this crucial "tipping point"—and then allow the intrinsic logic of the strategy to continue working itself out from there.

In addition to the "four rules" proposed above, I furthermore propose that there be an initial "transition period" for each truth group or truth group network during which members of truth groups would not be penalized for violating any of the "four rules." In other words, during this initial transition period, as members were coming to learn exactly what would be expected of them as truth group members, and as they were getting into the habit of acting in accordance with those expectations, the "four rules" might be better thought of as "four aspirations." Each truth group or truth group network would be free to decide for itself when it felt it was ready to "get more serious" by moving to the next stage, at which point penalties would be assessed for violations of the rules. (And when I speak of "penalties," these might involve nothing more than giving the violator a dirty look or a frown, or just calling attention to the violation—if the members of a particular truth group found that this was enough to generally deter future violations. Otherwise, more severe penalties might be required.)

Of course, a particular truth group might decide to forego such a transition period altogether; but I think that would be an imprudent decision, since, especially at first, I can envision truth group members having sincere disagreements with one another about whether or not a particular type of communication in a particular type of situation ought to be regarded as indeed constituting lying or dishonesty. Ultimately, the identifying of a particular instance of "dishonesty" or "misleading communication" is something that cannot be done except by making reference to the reasonable understanding of the person or persons to whom the particular communication was made. But determining what a "reasonable" understanding is, as well as helping to ensure that a person's understanding _be_ "reasonable," both require that people already know something—and also be willing to learn something—about the thinking processes of other persons, including the

particular individual or individuals by whom and to whom the particular communication was made, and also the members of society in general. An initial transition period for a truth group or truth group network would help give a jump-start to that needed "learning process," during which members would be working toward achieving a rough general consensus as to what they would or would not consider to constitute "lying," or "dishonesty," or "misleading communication," in various types of situations.[259]

During this transition period, members of traditional, esoteric religions would be welcome to join truth groups, because there would not yet be any basis for excluding them, since members of these religions—at least, the ones who would be interested in joining truth groups—do not regard _themselves_ as promoting, condoning, endorsing, or enabling dishonesty by their being a member of their religion. But _after the transition period comes to an end_, I believe that anti-esotericists in the honesty culture must strenuously insist upon the position that religious esotericism constitutes one very important type of intolerable dishonesty, so that anyone who is a voluntary member of a traditional, esoteric religion must _ipso facto_ be regarded as unreasonably promoting, condoning, endorsing, and enabling that dishonesty—and must therefore be excluded from the honesty culture—no matter how admirable the person's character might otherwise appear to be.[260]

For the most part, I would be content to accept the general consensus regarding what people did or did not consider to be dishonest or misleading in a particular type of situation, so long as their judgments were sincere, principled, and carefully considered; and I also believe that an honesty culture movement should strive to achieve as much unity within its ranks as it possibly could, provided it never compromised its fundamental mission by doing so. But I believe religious esotericism is the one specific form of dishonesty that is so dangerous—partly because its dishonest nature is so _non-obvious_ to most people—that truth group members would need to recognize it as intolerable dishonesty _regardless_ of whether a consensus, even a consensus within just the honesty

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[259] However, the "learning process" would of course continue even after the initial transition period had come to an end, since this learning process is necessarily one without end: We can always be improving our knowledge of how other individuals will likely interpret, or make sense of, or react to, the communications that we make to them; and also improving our knowledge of how other individuals likely meant for us to interpret, or make sense of, or react to, the communications that they make to us. This ongoing learning process is the means by which we move toward increasingly effective _communication_—thus giving rise to an ever-closer or ever-tighter "meeting of minds" or "coming together of minds" or "gathering of minds" (which is, in fact, more or less what the words "communicate" and "commune" and "community" literally mean according to their etymologies).

[260] As a general matter, keep in mind that a person's exclusion from an (anti-esotericist) honesty culture would never be something that the excluded person ought to "take personally"; and members of truth groups would be wise to strive never to do or say anything that might generate hatred or ill-will toward individual members of the traditional, esoteric religions—especially since, according to the proposed strategy, _each and every one_ of these persons is to be regarded as a future convert to the (anti-esotericist) honesty culture. And so, on those occasions when members of the honesty culture did choose to interact with members of the dishonesty culture, the members of the honesty culture would be wise to be just as courteous and friendly toward members of the dishonesty culture as they would be toward members of their own culture. The members of the traditional, esoteric religions should always be thought of as _competitors_, not _enemies_. The excluding of individuals would be done solely for the reason that the logic of the honesty culture strategy demands that it be done, and not because anyone felt personal animus toward the individuals being excluded; in fact, it is quite probable that each of the members of the anti-esotericist honesty culture would personally enjoy the company of some of the persons being excluded from the anti-esotericist honesty culture more than that of some of the persons being included in it.

culture, had yet formed around that conclusion. For that reason, I take the position that **truth group members who were anti-esotericist would have to be willing to _allow a schism_** in the honesty culture movement to the extent that members of the traditional, esoteric religions had not yet been brought around to the anti-esotericist position by the time their own truth group or truth group network made the decision to end the initial transition period and begin assessing penalties of some kind against its members.

It is an inescapable fact that at the point when penalties of any kind began to be assessed, truth group members would no longer be able to "agree to disagree" about what they believed constitutes "dishonesty" in a particular type of situation; at that point, they would need to _know with certainty_ whether a truth group member _would_ or _would not_ be regarded as unreasonably promoting, condoning, endorsing, and enabling dishonesty merely by that person's being a voluntary member of one of the traditional, esoteric religions. According to the strategy I am proposing, the honesty culture movement would not recognize any such thing as "harmless lies" (since if a particular communication was deemed to be truly "harmless," it would not be regarded as a "lie" at all); and that means members of those traditional, esoteric religions would have to take one of three positions: 1) Religious esotericism is not in fact a type of dishonesty; 2) Religious esotericism is indeed a type of dishonesty, but their own religion is not in fact esoteric; or 3) They have no choice but to take leave of their religion, at least in its current form. But even if they refused to take leave of their religion in its current form, they would be forced to give serious consideration—probably for the first time in their lives—to the question of whether religious esotericism is intrinsically dishonest, as well as to the question of whether their own religion qualifies as "esoteric"; and the very instigating of such questioning would itself be highly desirable.

The likely result I anticipate would be a division of the "honesty culture" into two (or possibly more) rival camps or factions; and each would be vying for the support of the _entire_ "honesty culture" in order that the schism within the movement might be ended. According to the logic of the proposed strategy, for the honesty culture movement to succeed in finally displacing and supplanting the dishonesty culture, it would _require unity_. As long as _multiple_ supposed "honesty cultures" co-existed—competing with each other for the public's support—the dishonesty culture would _necessarily_ continue to exist, since the presence of thoroughgoing honesty in society requires that everyone in society be more or less _in agreement_ as to what will be considered "honesty" or "dishonesty" in any given type of situation. If the recipients of a certain type of communication _feel_ that they have been lied to or misled by it, the fact that the persons doing the communicating do not _believe_ that they were lying to or misleading anyone when they made the communication does not make the problem disappear; in fact, it only highlights the existence of the problem, since it indicates a mental "disconnect" between the communicators and the recipients that makes it quite likely the recipients will continue to feel lied to or misled by future communications. As long as the communicators and the recipients do not agree on what constitutes "dishonesty" or "misleading communication," the recipients can never know when they might feel misled, and so will feel forced to metaphorically (and perhaps also literally) "keep their distance" from the communicators—and the maintaining of any such mental and communicatory _division_ in society makes it impossible to defeat the dishonesty culture. **As long as _multiple_ supposed "honesty cultures" co-exist, the dishonesty culture is in**

effect able to continue to operate by <u>hiding within</u> at least one of those supposed "honesty cultures."[261]

Moreover, at least one of those supposed "honesty cultures" might try to do the "retaliating" against the *genuine* honesty culture that the dishonesty culture would like to be doing—but is logically unable to do—*on behalf of the dishonesty culture*. And this would be possible because, *in actual practice*, the supposed "honesty culture" doing the retaliating—specifically, one of the traditional, esoteric religions—had chosen to make the chief principle (or idea, or value, or belief) around which it organized, not *dishonesty*, of course, but something ***other than*** honesty (such as, for example, the sanctity of a certain scripture supposedly inspired by God). It is this elevation of some principle (or idea, or value, or belief) *above* the value of honesty that has made it impossible to extirpate the dishonesty culture that pervades the entire world, including all of its religions. This devaluation of honesty also has the effect of maintaining arbitrary and harmful divisions between different peoples, since, in order to "define" itself and maintain its unique "identity," each of the traditional religions has chosen to have as its most highly cherished principle or idea something *different from* what each of the other traditional religions has chosen to be *its* most highly cherished principle or idea. If each of the traditional religions had instead chosen to make *honesty* its primary and most highly cherished principle or idea—and in theory they all could have done that, since each of those religions claims to place a high value on honesty—then all of the world's religions could have organized around the ***same*** chief principle or idea; with other, more *variant* principles or ideas being, not unimportant, of course, but of *secondary* importance. And it would be appropriate to make honesty in particular the single chief unifying value for all world religions and all peoples, for the very basic reason that *all* human beings are able to agree that they do not like to be lied to or misled. I have no objection to the existence of a multiplicity of religions (in fact, I think it's a very good thing); but *all* of the members of those (non-esoteric) religions ought to think of themselves as being members of a *single* honesty culture—eventually, a worldwide one —that would be able to *embrace* and *include* all of those various non-esoteric religions. **Honesty must be recognized as the only possible basis for true peace**—peace among different religions, and among different individuals, and among different nations.[262]

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[261] Consider that the situation I am describing is actually the situation that we *already* have, in that each of the traditional, esoteric religions claims to be opposed to dishonesty—making each of them a *supposed* "honesty culture" that *competes with* the other *supposed* "honesty cultures" for members—which is what has made it possible for the "dishonesty culture" to survive by "slipping through the cracks," so to speak. And that's because any "honesty culture" that does not make the promotion of honesty its absolute *highest priority* is not a *genuine* honesty culture.

[262] I generally avoid citing Bible scripture as support for my arguments, at least in this type of context, but I feel compelled to quote Mark 3:22-26:

> And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said (of Jesus), "He has Beelzebul," and, "By the prince [*archōn*] of the demons he casts out the demons." And having called them to him, he said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided [Greek *merizō*] against itself, that kingdom cannot stand [*histémi*]. And if a house [or household: *oikia*] be divided [*merizō*] against itself, that house [or household: *oikia*] will not be able to stand [*histémi*]. And if Satan has stood up [or risen up: *an-istémi*, derived from *histémi*; compare Mark 8:31 and its use of the Greek word *an-istémi*] against himself, and has been divided [*merizō*], he cannot stand [*histémi*], but is coming to an end."

If a schism within the "honesty culture" movement did in fact occur, the members of the pro-esotericist faction would, of course, simply deny that religious esotericism is dishonest, or that their own religion is esoteric, and so argue that the anti-esotericists ought to be driven out of the movement due simply to the unreasonableness and wrongheadedness of their destructively divisive and schismatic demands. Meanwhile, the members of the anti-esotericist faction would advocate that the pro-esotericists likewise be driven out of the movement—for the simple reason that they were unreasonably promoting, condoning, endorsing, and enabling an intolerable (albeit an admittedly subtle) form of dishonesty. And the schism within the movement could not be ended—one way or the other—*except* as a result of various people giving serious thought

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I don't assume that the connection between this passage and the subject matter that I am discussing in the main text is entirely coincidental; rather, I think it is quite possible that some of the same *intrinsic logic* that I am discussing in the main text is being reflected in the quoted passage—which should not be especially surprising if the logic is indeed sound, since in that case it would be accurately describing the fundamental nature of things, which can be independently observed by different persons living in different places at different times. I think the "division" that is being referred to in the passage can fairly be read to correspond to the "division" that must sooner or later be made *within* the *pro-esotericist* "honesty culture" in our society (which is the *supposed* "honesty culture" that *already* exists)—that is, a division between those persons who would eventually opt for the *genuine*, anti-esotericist honesty culture, and those persons who would still cling to a pro-esotericist "honesty culture" that would increasingly approximate a full-blown and overt dishonesty culture, in all of its terrible (and short-lived) "glory." And this *temporary* division is what would bring about the end of "Satan," that is, the *ultimate source* of all division, since Satan is "the Father of the Lie" (see John 8:44); and, for the reasons I describe in the main text, the Lie is itself the ultimate source of all division and mutual hostility among persons and peoples, since it is the source of all mental and communicatory division and discord. As soon as "Satan"—"embodied" or "incarnated" in the "members" of the dishonesty culture (cf. John 8:44 and Revelation 20:2-3)—is forced to *actively retaliate* (that is, "stand up" or "rise up"; or, more figuratively, "raise troops" or "rouse to action": *an-istémi*) in his desperate attempt to preserve his existence, "Satan"—by way of his "members"— will become *revealed* as "a Liar and the Father of the Lie." The more the dishonesty culture (together with the pro-esotericist "honesty culture" within which the dishonesty culture has for so long remained *hidden*) tried to actively assert and protect itself by means of retaliation against the *genuine*, anti-esotericist honesty culture, the more that members of the pro-esotericist "honesty culture" would be forced to see the practice of religious esotericism for the dishonesty that it actually is, and be led into the welcoming arms of the *genuine*, anti-esotericist honesty culture—which would force the increasingly *exposed* dishonesty culture to make even more frantic efforts to preserve its existence (partly by making frantic efforts to preserve its long-familiar form of *concealment*; think of the exposure of "the Wizard" toward the end of the movie *The Wizard of Oz*). In other words, the more the dishonesty culture tried to retaliate, the more it would *lose the ability* to retaliate. And it is because of this accelerating death-spiral of the dishonesty culture that the reign of "Satan" would necessarily come to an end.

Furthermore, note carefully that when Jesus asks, "How can Satan cast out Satan?", his question is *not* rhetorical; in other words, he is *not* saying that Satan *cannot* cast out Satan. Rather, he is saying that the way in which "Satan can cast out Satan" is by Satan's "*standing up*" or "*rising up*" (*an-istémi*)—which I believe may be somehow related to the symbolic significance of Jesus's "Resurrection" or "Rising-up" (*anastasis*, derived from *an-istémi*). (Again, consider the use of the Greek word *an-istémi* in passages such as Mark 8:31, in addition to Mark 9:9-10, Mark 9:25-32, Mark 10:34, Mark 14:56-60, and Mark 16:9.) Jesus may be saying that to induce "Satan" to "cast out Satan" requires that one find some way of *instigating* "Satan" to "stand up" (or "rise up"; or, more figuratively, "rouse to action," or "raise troops": *an-istémi*) in such a way that he would be "divided against himself," so that he would no longer be able to "stand" in the same way in which he had always been "standing" (cf. John 8:44, which seems to suggest that it is *the Lie* in which Satan has always been "standing," rather than *the Truth*). If that is correct, then one might think of an anti-esotericist honesty culture as functioning as a sort of "gadfly" that would work to *instigate* "Satan" to "rise up" in his own defense by retaliating against the anti-esotericist honesty culture

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to the question of whether religious esotericism is in fact a type of dishonesty, and to the question of whether the traditional religions are in fact esoteric in nature. But once the debate had been framed in that manner, *anti-esotericists would win*, since the dishonesty of religious esotericism has endured for as long as it has *only by avoiding notice*. Once the subject of religious esotericism had been seriously and critically considered and discussed for the first time ever, it would not be able to withstand close scrutiny.

In the long run, if the *genuine*—that is, non-esotericist or anti-esotericist—honesty culture is to succeed, the contrast between it and the dishonesty culture *hidden within* the pro-esotericist "honesty culture" (or "honesty cultures") would have to be displayed as starkly as possible. Traditional, esoteric religious organizations could not be allowed to

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—thus ensuring Satan's defeat. (Or perhaps the anti-esotericist honesty culture might be better analogized to "Satan" himself in his act of "rising up," if "Satan" be understood to signify the principle of "division," rather than that of "falsehood.")

Observe that the scribes say of Jesus, "By the prince [*archōn*] of the demons he casts out the demons." So if Jesus's question "How can Satan cast out Satan?" is in fact not a rhetorical one, then Jesus would *not be denying* that "By the prince of the demons he casts out the demons." Consider that the Greek word *archōn*, meaning "prince" or "leader," is closely related to the Greek word *arché*, which can mean "principle" or "first principle." If one assumes that "Satan" was a symbolic figure, that is, the literary personification of an idea, and not an *actual person*, then I think what the author actually meant to indicate by speaking of a "prince" or "leader" of the demons was the particular *unifying principle* that they all shared in common— which would presumably be the principle of *division*. In other words, if it's true that Jesus is not denying that "by (use of) the (unifying principle) of the demons he casts out the demons," and if it's also true that that unifying principle is "division," then the message meant to be conveyed by the passage would be that Jesus was turning "division" against "division," presumably for the purpose of creating greater "unity."

That the figure of "Jesus Christ" was understood by the authors of the New Testament to be associated with the instigation of this "division of Satan against himself" is also strongly suggested by Luke 12:51-53, in which Jesus says,

> Do you suppose that **I have come to give** peace [*eiréné*] on earth? No, I say to you, but rather **division** [*diamerismos*, derived from the verb *dia-merizō*, meaning "to divide," which is in turn derived from the verb *merizō*, also meaning "to divide"]. For from now on there will be five in **one** [*heis*] **house** [*oikos*] **divided** [*dia-merizō*]: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided [*dia-merizō*] against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

Recall what Jesus says in Mark 3:25: "And if a **house** [or household: *oikia*] be **divided** [*merizō*] against itself, that house [or household: *oikia*] will not be able to stand [*histémi*]." So *Jesus* seems to be claiming to be *the source of the division* that in Mark 3:26 Jesus says would result in Satan's downfall. If Jesus causes the "house" to be "divided against itself," then Mark 3:22-26 seems to imply by analogy that he also causes "Satan" to be "divided"; and since Satan becomes "divided" as a result of his "rising up" or "resurrecting" *against himself*, there is a possible suggestion that the figure actually understood to be doing the "rising up" or "resurrecting" *at Satan's expense* was "Jesus." *Jesus* is claiming responsibility for somehow causing "Satan to cast out Satan," presumably by "taking on the role" of "Satan" in some way— perhaps by Jesus's choosing to act as a source of *division*—which would appear to be antithetical to the association made elsewhere in the New Testament between "God" and "peace" (or "wholeness," or "concord," or "rest": *eiréné*). (See, e.g., Romans 15:33, 1 Corinthians 14:33, and 1 Thessalonians 5:23, focusing on their use of the Greek word *eiréné*, which closely corresponds in meaning to the Hebrew word *shalom*. Also consider Ephesians 4:3, in which the apostle Paul exhorts the church members to "endeavor to keep the unity [or "oneness": *henotés*, derived from *heis*, meaning "one"] of the Spirit, in the bond of peace [*eiréné*].")

indirectly and parasitically benefit from the success of the honesty culture that would be created by anti-esotericist truth groups; and truth groups would have to avoid providing a social service to members of traditional religions that would have the effect of blurring over or masking the evils and harm that are *inevitably* caused by the esoteric nature of their religions. If the truth groups did provide such a social service, the result would be to enable traditional religions to keep limping along indefinitely because people for sentimental reasons were unwilling to make a total and final break with them in their current forms.

If Christian churches, say, were succeeding in their self-appointed task of providing people with communities in which they were given proper mental guidance in life and

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And so to the extent that Jesus was being depicted as deliberately acting as a source of division, the authors of the New Testament may have thought of him as temporarily acting in a "Satanic" capacity—which might help to explain how "Satan" could "cast out Satan"—in which case we would have the solution to the "riddle" posed by Jesus in Mark 3:23. Consider that the Hebrew verb *satan*, from which the proper noun "Satan" is derived, means "to oppose, to accuse, to resist, to attack, to be an adversary." In other words, to be "Satan" is to be *the precise opposite of a "peacemaker"*—exactly as Jesus describes himself in Luke 12:51-53, the passage quoted above, as well as in Luke 11:23 and Matthew 12:30. Also consider that in Matthew 5:9 Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers [*eiréno-poios*], for they **will** [!] be called sons of God." It may be that the authors' understanding was that the "peacemaking" or "unifying" could take place only *after* the "opposing" or "resisting" or "dividing" was already well underway.

What distinguishes "Jesus" from the *actual* "Satan" would presumably be that "Jesus" promotes division or hostility for the sake of ultimately bringing about *a state of unity* (perhaps signified by "the kingdom of God," i.e., "the new Jerusalem"—to be distinguished from "the kingdom of Satan," i.e., "Babylon"), whereas "Satan" promotes division as an end in itself, with no desire to finally *overcome* it. (Cf. Matthew 12:28, Luke 11:20, Matthew 12:25, Luke 11:17, and Revelation 18:17,19—in the last three passages focusing especially on the use of the Greek word *erémoō*, meaning "to make desolate, to lay waste." Also compare Revelation 16:19 with Matthew 13:33 and Luke 13:20-21; a possible suggestion is that "Babylon," the "kingdom of Satan," is characterized by "division"—which in the end is what destroys it— while the "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of the heavens" is characterized by an all-pervading "unity" or "wholeness" made possible by the workings of the Holy Spirit [perhaps signified by the "leaven" in the Parable of the Leaven].) In relation to the idea of a final "overcoming" of division, consider Revelation 21:7, in which Jesus, speaking of those persons residing in the "new Jerusalem," says, "He who overcomes [or conquers, or is victorious, or prevails, or subdues: *nikaō*] will inherit all things, and I will be God to him, and he will be son to me." The Greek word *nikaō* has often been used in a "martial" or "warmaking" context to describe what an army or a general might do with respect to physical territory or another army. So I think the author may have intended for the reader to pick up on some irony here, if what is to be "overcome" or "conquered" is actually *division* and *discord* and *hostility*—which would make the person who had successfully "overcome" or "conquered" a *peacemaker*—and thus a "son of God," just as Jesus says in Matthew 5:9.

(In connection with my suggestion that Jesus was being depicted as in some way temporarily "serving as Satan" in order to bring about Satan's ultimate downfall, please see my blog post, "The 'spirit of Jesus' viewed as a substitute for the 'unclean spirit'.")

Finally, consider that this same idea of "unification only made possible by division or separation" can be found elsewhere in the New Testament, for example in Revelation 21:24-27, which says that "the kings of the earth" would bring "the glory and the honor of the nations" into the "new Jerusalem"—suggestive of the idea of unification or *inclusion*—but which at the same time emphasizes that *excluded* from the "new Jerusalem" would be "anything defiling, and anyone who does that which is detestable *and false*." Incidentally, notice the use of the conjunctive connector "and," rather than the disjunctive connector "or"— which suggests that it was *falsehood itself* that the author considered to be inherently "detestable" or "vile" or "loathsome" or "abominable" (as well, perhaps, as "defiling" or "unclean" or "profane" or "common").

encouraged in their aspirations to become more virtuous, then it would not be necessary to form truth groups at all; if that were the case, my recommendation would simply be that everyone should join a local Christian church (or something analogous). ***The forming of truth groups—and, out of them, non-esoteric moral communities—would be in direct response to the <u>failure</u> of traditional, esoteric religion***; and traditional, esoteric religion has failed because it did not consistently adhere to the unalterable moral law against lying and dishonesty. In fact, truth groups (in the Western world, anyway) would have to view Christian churches as their chief "competition" (<u>not</u> "enemy")—at least until a particular Christian church agreed to reject the esoteric aspects of Christianity and move to a rational and honest scheme of religion in which encoded, deliberately ambiguous, or otherwise deceptive or misleading language would <u>never</u> be used in its authoritative writings. At that point, however, I would no longer think of the religion that it professed as "Christianity," even if the church figured out a way to incorporate a great deal of Christian theological and moral teachings into its belief-system purely on philosophical or rational or intuitive grounds—and that is something to which I would personally have no objection whatsoever. In any event, I would expect that by whatever name the church chose to call itself, it would be one that made clear to the public that the members of the church had decided to make a distinction between themselves and traditional, Bible-preaching Christians.[263]

Again, my hope is that eventually truth groups would themselves come to serve as the foundations for the new moral communities, or "churches," of our society, and take over the responsibilities of the existing churches (to the extent, that is, that the existing churches refused to abandon the use of esoteric word-symbols and verbal figures in their authoritative writings). But until that happens, it is necessary that a line be drawn, and that people be required to <u>make a choice</u> to stand on one side of that line or the other—and then abide by the consequences of their decision. A member of an esoteric religion must—as an objective matter—be seen as <u>necessarily</u> condoning, endorsing, promoting, and enabling dishonesty, even if he is currently doing so in relative good faith. That fact should not stop opponents of religious esotericism from showing kindness toward him, or continuing to communicate with him—and this especially so in the early stages of the development of the honesty culture, as both members and non-members of the traditional religions are still getting used to these new ideas. But if one rationally reaches the conclusion that members of the traditional, esoteric religions are persons who—objectively speaking—condone dishonesty merely by their being voluntary members of those religions, then it is necessary that members of truth groups also <u>think of them</u> and <u>treat them</u> as persons who—objectively speaking—condone dishonesty by their actions. That condoning of dishonesty may well be in relative good faith at the moment due to ignorance; but as time goes on, it will become increasingly difficult for members of esoteric religions to make that claim. In any event, a refusal by members of truth groups to tolerate dishonesty or the condoning of dishonesty in any particular instance does not depend upon anyone's lack of good faith; indeed, the (polite) insistence that others detach themselves from all religious esotericism would <u>itself</u> be one of the primary means by

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Also see Revelation 22:15.

[263] I distinguish between "Bible-preaching" and "Bible-reading," since I am not necessarily opposed to the mere <u>reading</u> of the Bible by a religious congregation; what I am opposed to is treating the Bible as an <u>authoritative</u> religious writing (rather than merely as a work of literature)—which is what the term "preaching" implies.

which people of good faith might be *alerted* to the objectively harmful nature of their actions. As the result of consistently pursuing this approach—and if, at the same time, members of esoteric religions were finally offered attractive and realistic alternatives to those religions as sources of meaning, purpose, guidance, and fellowship in their lives—I do not believe that it is unreasonable to suppose that members of those traditional, esoteric religions might eventually decide to leave them in large numbers (unless, of course, traditional religious communities decided to reject the esoteric elements of their religions while at the same time preserving the non-esoteric elements—at least in their authoritative writings).

The only thing about a program of forming anti-esotericist truth groups that could even be claimed to be "controversial" would be its opposition to all esotericism in authoritative religious writings, and to any religion and religious sect that refused to abandon those esoteric elements. A demand that all esotericism in authoritative religious writings be rejected will undoubtedly strike many people as "intolerant," at least when they first encounter it. But over time I think more and more people will come to understand and accept that such a position is really required—like it or not—by a consistent devotion to the principle of honesty. So eventually, the only "controversy" that would remain would be whether our society, and each of us individually, will opt for Truth or the Lie. And that is exactly how the "controversy" ought to be framed.

The simple purpose of truth groups would be to win people over to a culture of honesty and away from a culture of dishonesty—*by insisting that they make a choice*, one way or the other. The overall strategy can be very briefly summed up as: *Isolate and quarantine*. Or, to use a slightly different analogy, all of the honest people in society might be thought of as representing a host body besieged by parasites; and truth groups would be the means by which the host body could gradually, but systematically, one by one, either detach the parasites from itself, or else force the parasites to stop their parasitic ways and rejoin the host body as honest and fully constructive members of the greater organism. It is important never to forget that *every liar*—to the extent that he is a liar—*is a parasite* who benefits from the honesty of others, since it is their honesty that holds society together and makes it work.

In essence, the message delivered by the truth groups to liars and apologists for lying would be something along the following lines: "We're not trying to force you to be honest against your will; whether you are to be an honest person or not is entirely your decision—at least for the time being. But we *are* going to force you to *choose* which party you want to be a member of: the Party of the Lie, or the Party of Truth. If you choose not to join our party, we're going to minimize our contact with you, and eventually—when we have the ability to do so—cut it off entirely. You will be left to fend for yourself in a ruthless culture of liars and lunatics and backstabbers, a culture made up solely of other people whom, like you, we have *required* to effectively 'go on record' as *knowingly and deliberately rejecting honesty in society as something that is unimportant to them*. Your culture of liars will get progressively smaller as time goes on, as we continue our outreach efforts and as more people find out about us. And, as it gets smaller, you can expect that the people remaining with you will, on average, keep getting more and more toxic, as fewer and fewer decent people will still be around to dilute the toxicity. Now, as this process unfolds, periodically ask yourself if lying—by yourself and by others—is still as much fun, and as funny, as it used to be, and whether the

benefits you get from lying and putting up with lying are still able to offset all of the increasing unpleasantness in the same way that they used to. After all, wasn't that the reason you embraced the Lie in the first place—the benefits? So, there's no need for you to become defensive or hostile towards us. We won't try to attack you for accepting dishonesty in your life. But we will let you stew in your own juices until you wise up; and in the meantime, we're going to attend to our own affairs as free of your interference and harmful influence as possible."

Truth groups could be designed in a variety of ways, and I would encourage them to experiment with different forms of organization—provided they adhered to the basic core rules that I described at the beginning of this section; otherwise, they could not be considered to be truth groups "in good standing" by other truth groups. As I already indicated above, truth groups would not have to be nothing _but_ "truth groups"; I certainly do not envision that most truth groups members would do nothing but, say, discuss books about alethiology (the technical name for the philosophical study of truth). I would encourage them to pursue other common interests, and so have overlapping identities. For example, one could form a fishing club that also happened to be a truth group, or a golf league that also happened to be a truth group, and so on.

But at least some truth groups would need to focus more on engagement with outsiders for purposes of winning new recruits to the movement as a whole: partly in a (politely) "destructive," or "negative," or "confrontational," or "combative" way, by relentlessly (but always politely) criticizing the weak intellectual foundations and downright absurdities of esotericist religion whenever its apologists put forth their arguments; and partly in a more "constructive" or "positive" way, by engaging in educational "outreach" geared toward encouraging outsiders to "convert" to habits of clear thought and communication, and with that, away from their habitual awestruck respect for religious mystification, meaningless "profundity," and hopelessly obscure and inaccessible "ancient wisdom." But pursuing this sort of "intellectual activist" approach is not what would _characterize_ a truth group; any such combination would be based solely on the interests and temperaments of the members of a particular group. In other words, "intellectual activism" would not be required of the members of all truth groups. The sincere desire to be honest and to live in an honest society would be the only requirement.

The idea of truth groups is especially appealing because people cannot defame them —at least, not without making themselves look bad. Everyone _claims_ to simply adore truth and honesty—in public, anyway—and, by definition, any defamation of truth groups would also have to be done in public. Moreover, for the same reason, truth groups could not be suppressed by the use of legal processes. So the only alternatives available to any opponents that the truth groups might have would be to infiltrate or subvert or harass them; but, as a practical matter, I do not see how it would be possible to counter them in any of these ways either. For one thing, they would be too numerous (since if they were not numerous, no one would take any interest in them); and it would not be possible to "make an example" of some small number of them, since, by definition, this would involve attacking them in public—which, as I have just indicated, is not a viable option. For another thing, exactly how does one "infiltrate" or "subvert" a fishing club or golf league (or whatever) that is simply made up of people who want to be honest and promote honesty, given that it has no other political or social "agenda"? I

suppose that the so-called "deep state" could conceivably send out secret paid agents to join fishing clubs and golf leagues all across the country, who would then act in a highly disruptive manner to induce all of the other members to quit. But this could not realistically be expected to happen; much more likely, the group would simply expel the disruptive new member.

So "they"—whoever "they" happen to be in the mind of any particular person—are not standing between us and truth. The only thing that stands between us and the realization of a fully honest society is the possibility that *individual* people might *individually* decide that they just do not want to give up lying—at least, not badly enough to risk giving up the supposed "perks" of being dishonest in a dishonest society. But I do not think most people would make that decision—*once they had been pressured to make one*. I think most people would choose to be *fully* honest if they knew that doing so would eventually entitle them to the *benefits* of living in a *fully* honest society. To put it another way, I believe a great many people would choose to be more honest and to make greater efforts to promote honesty—but only if they knew that they would get support from others around them if they were to make that choice. Truth groups are what would provide the needed beginning support for these people.

No matter how corrupt the dominant social institutions become, people *always* have the option of creating little havens of honesty for themselves through the creation of truth groups. Once in existence, their power is theoretically impossible to stop; but to bring theory into realization, there must at the outset be some relatively small but still sizeable number of people who sincerely *want* and *demand* truth and honesty in their own lives— and are willing to make efforts to bring that about. The very idea of truth groups puts into dramatic relief the existential choice that all persons have to make about how important truth *really* is to them. With truth groups, it's put-up or shut-up time. No more complaining about lying politicians, or lying news reporters, or lying used car salesmen, or lying whoevers. No more big talk about how you are going to take up arms and fight a revolution against the government. All you have to do is *consistently* not lie and not laugh off or make mental excuses for the lying of others when you encounter it. That's it. If you're unwilling to do even that much, then you've essentially forfeited any right you may have had to get upset about any other person's lying—because that other person has apparently done nothing more than come to the same conclusion that you've come to: that insisting upon truthfulness and honesty in people's communication is just too much trouble, that there are more pressing things in life to worry about, and that practicing and putting up with some dishonesty is just "how the world works." Well, if you take pride in being such a "hard-nosed realist" about such matters, then you should stop whining and getting in a huff whenever you discover one of your fellow "hard-nosed realists" engaging in his own "hard-nosed realism" in some way that's not to your liking. It is often (and rightly) said that "the truth will set you free," but when push comes to shove the typical person has thus far proven to be more devoted to the maintenance of his own shabby little world of lies—to his own actual detriment—than to the great goal of attaining his own freedom along with everyone else's. It is possible to imagine henceforth taking a very different and far more promising course.

I am not exaggerating when I say that I believe this world would be a veritable paradise if humanity—or even some small portion of humanity—could just summon up the resolve to put all of its lying ways behind it once and for all. People could choose

paradise at any time—and they could _achieve_ paradise, step-by-step, by _consistently_ making the choice never to lie, and never to treat lying by others—_any_ lying—as something trivial in nature. The really _crucial_ moral choices are actually quite simple to identify (though not necessarily easy to make, at least not at first); but, taken as a whole, people have never even begun down the road of making them. I believe that this is largely because traditional, esoteric religion has historically had the effect of making the _identifying_ of our most crucial moral choices seem much more complicated and confusing than it needed to be. If people were able to rid themselves of that mental burden, it is likely that they would be able to see, with considerably more clarity than they now can, what those really crucial moral choices are. And, once they had clearly recognized the path that they would need to go down, I think it would be possible for them, by joining with other people who desired the same goal and who would be there to provide mutual encouragement and support, to actually traverse that path and arrive at a fully honest society.

But before people can be expected to provide that encouragement and support to others, they must first desire the goal for themselves. People must learn to passionately _want_ truth and honesty more than anything else in life—regardless of what anyone else might now _seem_ to want. They must be determined to create a new state of mind in themselves; followed by a new mode of action in the world.

Appendix: Readings

1. Sociologist Georg Simmel on truthfulness and lying
2. Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, "Live Not By Lies"
3. From "On Giving the Lie," from Montaigne's *Essays*

Sociologist Georg Simmel on truthfulness and lying (1908)

Truthfulness and lie are of the most far-reaching significance for relations among men. Sociological structures differ profoundly according to the measure of lying which operates in them. … ***[I]n very simple circumstances the lie is often more harmless in regard to the maintenance of the group than under more complex conditions.*** Primitive man who lives in a small group, who satisfies his needs through his own production or through direct cooperation, who limits his intellectual interests to his own experiences or to unilinear tradition, surveys and controls the material of his life more easily and completely than does the man of higher cultures. To be sure, the innumerable errors and superstitions in the life of primitive man are harmful enough to him, but far less so than are corresponding ones in advanced epochs, because the practice of his life is guided in the main by those few facts and circumstances of which his narrow angle of vision permits him to gain directly a correct view. In a richer and larger cultural life, however, existence rests on a thousand premises which the single individual cannot trace and verify to their roots at all, but must take on faith. ***Our modern life is based to a much larger extent than is usually realized upon the faith in the honesty of the other***. Examples are our economy, which becomes more and more a credit economy, or our science, in which most scholars must use innumerable results of other scientists which they cannot examine. ***We base our gravest decisions on a complex system of conceptions, most of which presuppose the confidence that we will not be betrayed. Under modern conditions, the lie, therefore, becomes something much more devastating than it was earlier, something which questions the very foundations of our life.*** If among ourselves today, the lie were as negligible a sin as it was among the Greek gods, the Jewish patriarchs, or the South Seas islanders; and if we were not deterred from it by the utmost severity of the moral law; then the organization of modern life would be simply impossible; for, modern life is a "credit economy" in a much broader than a strictly economic sense. [From *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, translated and edited by Kurt H. Wolff (Free Press, 1950), pp. 312-313; the emphases are mine.]

<u>Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, "Live Not By Lies" (1974)</u> (*written while Solzhenitsyn was living in the Soviet Union*)

At one time we dared not even to whisper. Now we write and read *samizdat*, and sometimes when we gather in the smoking room at the Science Institute we complain frankly to one another: What kind of tricks are they playing on us, and where are they dragging us? Gratuitous boasting of cosmic achievements while there is poverty and destruction at home. Propping up remote, uncivilized regimes. Fanning up civil war. And we recklessly fostered Mao Tse-tung at our expense—and it will be we who are sent to war against him, and will have to go. Is there any way out? And they put on trial anybody they want, and they put sane people in asylums—always they, and we are powerless.

Things have almost reached rock bottom. A universal spiritual death has already touched us all, and physical death will soon flare up and consume us both and our children—but as before we still smile in a cowardly way and mumble without tongues tied. But what can we do to stop it? We haven't the strength.

We have been so hopelessly dehumanized that for today's modest ration of food we are willing to abandon all our principles, our souls, and all the efforts of our predecessors and all the opportunities for our descendants—but just don't disturb our fragile existence. We lack staunchness, pride and enthusiasm. We don't even fear universal nuclear death, and we don't fear a third world war. We have already taken refuge in the crevices. We just fear acts of civil courage.

We fear only to lag behind the herd and to take a step alone—and suddenly find ourselves without white bread, without heating gas and without a Moscow registration.

We have been indoctrinated in political courses, and in just the same way was fostered the idea to live comfortably, and all will be well for the rest of our lives: You can't escape your environment and social conditions. Everyday life defines consciousness. What does it have to do with us? We can't do anything about it.

But we can—everything. But we lie to ourselves for assurance. And it is not they who are to blame for everything—we ourselves, only we. One can object: But actually you can think anything you like. Gags have been stuffed into our mouths. Nobody wants to listen to us, and nobody asks us. How can we force them to listen? It is impossible to change their minds.

It would be natural to vote them out of office—but there are not elections in our country. In the West people know about strikes and protest demonstrations—but we are too oppressed, and it is a horrible prospect for us: How can one suddenly renounce a job and take to the streets? Yet the other fatal paths probed during the past century by our bitter Russian history are, nevertheless, not for us, and truly we don't need them.

Now that the axes have done their work, when everything which was sown has sprouted anew, we can see that the young and presumptuous people who thought they would make our country just and happy through terror, bloody rebellion and civil war were themselves misled. No thanks, fathers of education! Now we know that infamous methods breed infamous results. Let our hands be clean!

The circle—is it closed? And is there really no way out? And is there only one thing left for us to do, to wait without taking action? Maybe something will happen by itself? It will never happen as long as we daily acknowledge, extol, and strengthen—and do not sever ourselves from—the most perceptible of (the encirclement's) aspects: Lies.

When violence intrudes into peaceful life, its face glows with self-confidence, as if it were carrying a banner and shouting: "I am violence. Run away, make way for me—I will crush you." But violence quickly grows old. And it has lost confidence in itself, and in order to maintain a respectable face it summons falsehood as its ally—since violence can conceal itself with nothing except lies, and the lies can be maintained only by violence. And violence lays its ponderous paw not every day and not on every shoulder. It demands from us only obedience to lies and daily participation in lies—all loyalty lies in that.

And the simplest and most accessible key to our self-neglected liberation lies right here: Personal non-participation in lies. ***Though lies conceal everything, though lies embrace everything, we will be obstinate in this smallest of matters: Let them embrace everything, but not with any help from me***. [The emphasis is mine.]

This opens a breach in the imaginary encirclement caused by our inaction. It is the easiest thing to do for us, but the most devastating for the lies. Because when people renounce lies it simply cuts short their existence. Like an infection, they can exist only in a living organism.

We do not exhort ourselves. We have not sufficiently matured to march into the squares and shout the truth out loud or to express aloud what we think. It's not necessary.

It's dangerous. But let us refuse to say that which we do not think.

This is our path, the easiest and most accessible one, which takes into account our inherent cowardice, already well rooted. And it is much easier—it's dangerous even to say this—than the sort of civil disobedience which Gandhi advocated.

Our path is not to give conscious support to lies about anything whatsoever! And once we realize where lie the perimeters of falsehood, each sees them in his own way.

Our path is to walk away from the gangrenous boundary. If we did not paste together the dead bones and scales of ideology, if we did not sew together the rotting rags, we would be astonished how quickly the lies would be rendered helpless and subside.

That which should be naked would then really appear naked before the whole world.

So in our timidity, let each of us make a choice: Whether consciously, to remain a servant of falsehood—of course, it is not out of inclination, but to feed one's family, that one raises his children in the spirit of lies—or to shrug off the lies and become an honest man worthy of respect both by one's children and contemporaries.

And from that day onward he:

- Will not henceforth write, sign, or print in any way a single phrase which in his opinion distorts the truth.

- Will utter such a phrase neither in private conversation nor in the presence of many people, neither on his own behalf nor at the prompting of someone else, neither in the role of agitator, teacher, educator, nor in a theatrical role.

- Will not depict, foster or broadcast a single idea which he can see is false or a distortion of the truth, whether it be in painting, sculpture, photography, technical science or music.

- Will not cite out of context, either orally or written, a single quotation so as to please someone, to feather his own nest, to achieve success in his work, if he does not share completely the idea which is quoted, or if it does not accurately reflect the matter at issue.

- Will not allow himself to be compelled to attend demonstrations or meetings if they are contrary to his desire or will, will neither take into hand nor raise into the air a poster or slogan which he does not completely accept.

- Will not raise his hand to vote for a proposal with which he does not sincerely sympathize, will vote neither openly nor secretly for a person whom he considers unworthy or of doubtful abilities.

- Will not allow himself to be dragged to a meeting where there can be expected a forced or distorted discussion of a question.

- Will immediately walk out of a meeting, session, lecture, performance or film showing if he hears a speaker tell lies, or purvey ideological nonsense or shameless propaganda.

- Will not subscribe to or buy a newspaper or magazine in which information is distorted and primary facts are concealed.

Of course, we have not listed all of the possible and necessary deviations from falsehood. But a person who purifies himself will easily distinguish other instances with his purified outlook.

No, it will not be the same for everybody at first. Some, at first, will lose their jobs. For young people who want to live with truth, this will, in the beginning, complicate their young lives very much, because the required recitations are stuffed with lies, and it is necessary to make a choice.

But there are no loopholes for anybody who wants to be honest: On any given day any one of us will be confronted with at least one of the above-mentioned choices even in the most secure of the technical sciences. Either truth or falsehood: Toward spiritual independence, or toward spiritual servitude.

And he who is not sufficiently courageous even to defend his soul—don't let him be proud of his "progressive" views, and don't let him boast that he is an academician or a people's artist, a merited figure, or a general—let him say to himself: I am in the herd, and a coward. It's all the same to me as long as I'm fed and warm.

Even this path, which is the most modest of all paths of resistance, will not be easy for us. But it is much easier than self-immolation or a hunger strike: The flames will not envelope your body, your eyeballs, will not burst from the heat, and brown bread and clean water will always be available to your family.

A great people of Europe, the Czhechoslovaks, whom we betrayed and deceived: Haven't they shown us how a vulnerable breast can stand up even against tanks if there is a worthy heart within it?

You say it will not be easy? But it will be easiest of all possible resources. It will not be an easy choice for a body, but it is only one for a soul. No, it is not an easy path. But there are already people, even dozens of them, who over the years have maintained all these points and live by the truth.

So you will not be the first to take this path, but will join those who have already taken it. This path will be easier and shorter for all of us if we take it by mutual efforts and in close rank. If there are thousands of us, they will not be able to do anything with us. If there are tens of thousands of us, then we would not even recognize our country.

If we are too frightened, then we should stop complaining that someone is suffocating us. We ourselves are doing it. Let us then bow down even more, let us wait, and our brothers the biologists will help to bring nearer the day when they are able to read (that) our thoughts are worthless and hopeless.

And if we get cold feet, even taking this step, then we are worthless and hopeless, and the scorn of Pushkin should be directed to us:

"Why should cattle have the gifts of freedom?

"Their heritage from generation to generation is the belled yoke and the lash."

The first stage in the corruption of morals is the banishment of truth; for, as Pindar said, truthfulness is the beginning of a great virtue, and is the first item that Plato demands of the governor of his Republic. Our truth of today is not what is, but what others can be convinced of; just as we call "money" not only that which is legal, but also any counterfeit that will pass. …

Thus I have often pondered what could be the source of that custom, which we observe so religiously, of feeling more bitterly offended when taxed with this vice, which is so common among us, than with any other; and that it should be the worse insult that can be given us in words, to accuse us of lying. My findings on the matter are that it is natural to defend ourselves most for the defects with which we are most tainted. It seems that in resenting the accusation and growing excited about it, we unburden ourselves to some extent of the fault; if we have it in fact, at least we condemn it in appearance.

Would it not also be that this reproach seems to involve cowardice and lack of courage? Is there any more obvious cowardice than to deny what we have said? Worse yet, to deny what we know?

Lying is an ugly vice, which an ancient depicts in most shameful colors when he says that it equals giving evidence of contempt for God, and at the same time of fear of men. It is not possible to represent more vividly the horror, the vileness, and the unhealthiness of it. For what can you imagine uglier than being a coward toward men and brave toward God? Since mutual understanding is brought about solely by way of words, he who breaks his word betrays human society. It is the only instrument by means of which our wills and thoughts communicate, it is the interpreter of our soul. If it fails us, we have no more hold on each other, no more knowledge of each other. If it deceives us, it breaks up all our intercourse and dissolves all the bonds of our government. [Michel de Montaigne, *Selected Essays*; translated by Donald M. Frame (Walter J. Black, 1943).]