

THE HIDDEN CHURCH OF THE HOLY GRAAL Its Legends
and Symbolism Considered in Their Affinity with Certain
Mysteries of Initiation and Other Traces of a Secret
Tradition in Christian Times

By Arthur Edward Waite

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BOOK NINE SECRET TRADITION IN CHRISTIAN TIMES

CHAPTER ONE PRELIMINARY TO THE WHOLE SUBJECT

Thought in the Middle Ages moved, like external science, through a world of mystery, and the Christ-light moved through the mist-light filling the bounds of sense with the shapes and symbols of vision. It follows, and this naturally, that most things seemed possible at a period when all things were dubious in respect of knowledge and apart from the power of religion, which tinged life itself with the lesser elements of ecstasy, there was the kind of enchantment which dwells always about the precincts of unknown vistas. Apart also from the shapes of imagination, there were the extravagances of minds seeking emancipation from law and authority, more especially in the matters of faith. The Books of the Holy Graal do not belong to the last category, but after their own manner they are like echoes from far away, because even as the secrets of the Greater Mysteries have not been written, and the Holy Assemblies do not issue proceedings, so the higher life of sanctity and the experiment towards that

term, whether manifested in books of mystical theology or in books of romance, reach only a partial expression. The value of the Graal legends is like the value of other legends—I mean, in the mind of the mystic at this day: it is resident in the suggestions and the lights which it can afford us for the maintenance of the great, implied concordat which constitutes the Divine Alliance. Having found that we are dealing with a body of writing which puts forth the rumour of strange claims and suggests concealed meanings, having found also that it is a literature which was acquired as if almost with a conscious intention to develop these particular interests, and being desirous of knowing the kind of intervention and the particular motives which were at work, if this indeed be possible, we are naturally disposed to ask whether there were other concealed literatures at the same period, and what light—if any—they cast upon these questions. The great school of Christian mystic thought within the official church was concerned wholly with a mystery of sanctity, the term of which was identical with the object that I have sought to put forward as the term of the Graal quest; but it had no secret claim and no concealed motive. We cannot, therefore, explain the one in a complete simplicity by the other, though we know in a general sense that it was from the other that the one issued. There were, however, independent schools of literature belonging to the same period which do give us certain lights, because, in the last resource, they did come, one and all, out of the same sanctuary; and it is obviously reasonable to suppose that so far as there are difficulties in the one path we may receive help from the collateral paths and thus attain some better understanding of the whole. If a particular spirit or secret mind, school or sodality, took over the old folk-lore legends, infusing a new motive therein, which motive is akin to the purpose discernible in coincident literatures, that which intervened in the one case was probably in relation with the others. I propose,

therefore, to consider these extrinsic schools shortly, and to show that throughout a number of centuries we can trace successively the same implicits, it being understood that they are always put forward in a different way. In this manner we shall come to see that there have been several interventions, but taking place under such circumstances that those who intervened may have been always the same secret school, on the understanding that this school does not correspond to a corporate institution and never spoke officially. It is necessary, however, to deal in the first place with one attempt to account for the Graal literature which has been already put forward, because there are certain directions in which it is idle to look and it is well to know concerning them. Prior to the settlement of this preliminary question in the section that next follows, there is a specific point that demands our attention at the moment, and it can be stated in a few words. On the assumption that there has been a Secret Tradition perpetuated through Christian times, the place of which is in the West, it seems desirable to understand what part of it matters vitally in respect of our own subject. There are several schools of secret literature, and each of them, under its proper veil, has perpetuated something belonging to its particular order. There are, for example, the schools of magic, and it is these precisely that embody nothing to our purpose; they constitute heresies of occult practice which find their strict correlation in the external heresies of doctrine, wherein also there is no light, as we shall see immediately. If the resolution has not been made already, and that definitely, it is time—and it is high time—that the whole domain of phenomenal occultism should be transferred to the care of psychological science, with the hope that it will pursue that path of research into the nature of man and his environment which less accredited investigations of the past have proved productive. They are no part of the mystic work and, having regard to the extent of our

preoccupations, it is fortunate that neither approximately nor remotely do they enter into the subject of those schools of thought, the remains of which may cast a certain light upon the greater implicits of the Graal literature.

CHAPTER TWO SOME ALLEGED SECRET SCHOOLS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Perhaps no Christian sect has been the subject of more foolish misapprehension than the Albigenses, and this on all sides, but more especially on the part of writers who represent the borderland of mystic thought. Against the iniquity of Albigensian persecution in the past, we have later the folly, not unmixed with dishonesty, of the Protestant apologists; but worse perhaps than the rest is that folly which has attempted to connect the sect and its exponents in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with the literature of the Holy Graal. The initial impulse in this direction is found in speculations, criticisms and modes of interpretation with which France made us familiar about the middle of the nineteenth century, and this leading has been followed by a few writers in England who scarcely know their subject, and offer reflections of opinion which has risen up in obscure and unaccepted places. For the purpose of this investigation I care nothing whether the Albigenses were pure Christians, as pure Christianity is understood according to sectarian canons, or whether they were Manichæans. The all-important question is the light under which they presented Eucharistic doctrine, and from this standpoint it is certain that they could have had no connection with the development of the Graal cycle. If they were Manichæans, they had a voided and tinkered Eucharist, from which nothing follows in connection with that mystery. If, on the other hand, they were the Protestants of their period, they would as such deny most of the sacraments, and in respect of doctrine, at least, they

would have tampered doubtless with the Eucharist. Setting aside for a moment some French speculations which have nothing to tell us regarding Albigensian teachings, and deal only, as we shall see later, with a particular construction of a great body of romantic literature, it may be said—and is necessary to note in order to clear the issues—that the Protestant standpoint in all matters of this kind has been naturally one of opposition to the Latin Church, and to the Church theory that the Albigensians, including the Paulicians, who were their predecessors, were Manichæans, while the connected sect of Waldenses, or disciples of Peter Valdo, were originally Donatists. With these questions in themselves we have no concern, nor yet with the old egregious contention that there was a line of succession in perpetuity from Apostolic times through the Waldensians. There is no reason to suppose that the hypothesis was true, and it matters little if it was. I place in the same category one not less preposterous supposition—that the Vaudois had been located in the Cottian Alps since the times of the Apostles, and that their system had never varied from the tenets and practices of primitive Christianity. It is not of necessity a seal or mark of favour if these facts are undoubted; actually, they are questionable enough, like the apologetical *pièce de résistance* which accounts for the smallness of the Vaudois community by inferring from the Apocalypse that the Church during a certain disastrous period would be reduced within very narrow limits, and that for this reason—among reasons not less logical—Vaudois, Waldenses and Albigenses constituted during such period the sole and truly Catholic Church. If majorities are usually in the wrong, it is not less true that some minorities are foolish and wild in their notions, as expressed by those who are their mouthpiece. Another contention connects the so-called Waldensian Church with the Church Primitive through the Albigenses, and if the last sect had really the Paulicians for their

ancestors they date back to a considerable antiquity, while, as regards distribution, it is said that the earlier heresy had its conventicles established all the way from Thrace to Gascony. They came from the East originally, or this is their legend, but their traces have disappeared, supposing that the story is true outside the imagination of apologists. However this may be, the Paulicians, so far as history is concerned, arose in Armenia, where they were founded by one Constantine about the middle of the seventh century. They were mixed up with the Miliesians, who made common cause with Constantine, but they were proscribed by the Emperors of Byzantium and the heretic was himself put to death. The same Paulicians have been identified with the Cathari, and these are said to have been in union with the Waldenses, whose first stronghold was among the Alpine valleys of Piedmont. On the other hand, the Paterins, whose chain of dissemination is affirmed to have extended from Bulgaria through Lombardy to the Atlantic, have been represented as a variety of the Albigensian sect, if not identical therewith. These views constitute a cloud upon the dubious sanctuary, in respect of its origin. Other accounts say that they appeared in Italy during the first years of the eleventh century, with which may be compared the counter-suggestion that their most probable founder was Peter of Lyons more than a hundred years later. Persecution may well have joined distinct elements of sect till they became merged in one another; it caused them also to move, like the Graal, westward, and thus they entered Southern France, where those who had pre-existed under more than one name received the title of Albigenses—as it is thought, from their headquarters at Albi. Here also they fell under proscription, and because at that period men believed—and never more strongly—that they were doing God's work by annihilating those who worshipped Him under another code of doctrine, we learn of Saint Dominic fighting the heresy with other weapons than the Sword of

the Spirit—in the belief that there also might be either the Word of God, or its convenient substitute. This was under Innocent the Third, who proclaimed the first crusade against the Albigenses, its leader being Simon, Count of Montfort. The crusade began about 1213, and Folquet—the troubadour Bishop of Marseilles—was one of its most violent partisans. It was in the course of this villainous business that the Castle of Montseques—or Mont Ségur—which a few zealous, indiscriminating minds have sought to identify with Mont Salvatch—was stormed and burnt with many of the Perfect Brethren, including the Lady Esclairmonde. So do official churches illustrate their construction of the mystic paradox concerning the Prince of Peace, who came with a sword. That the gates of hell do not prevail against the true Church seems without prejudice to the counter-fact that there are times and seasons when perdition itself rises up, as one might say, in the external sanctuary itself, and God knows that if ever there was a period when the mystery of all iniquity came from the deeps in its power, the time was the thirteenth century, and the places were Provence and Languedoc.

If we set aside every thesis of apologists, it is possible to obtain from documents a certain first-hand impression concerning Albigensian beliefs. On the basis of their own confessions they denied Manichæan connections and principles, claiming to follow primitive Christian teaching as they constructed it from the New Testament or certain parts thereof, since it does not appear that they accepted all the epistles. It is possible, however, that their real views were concealed even in their confessions, and though to us the question does not signify in either alternative, it is out of this view that the counter-hypothesis arises, which is that of the accusing voice testifying in the church that destroyed them. A Dominican missionary and inquisitor, who recounted, in a poem which has survived, his

controversy with an Albigensian theologian, accuses the sect (1) of denying baptism and regarding Satan as the creator of this world; (2) of rejecting confession and teaching that those who had sons and daughters were outside the pale of salvation; (3) of claiming inspiration from the Holy Spirit and making a traffic therein amongst its disciples; (4) of denying the resurrection and affirming that the souls of the redeemed would assume a new body, having a certain resemblance to the old and yet differing therefrom; and in fine (5) of maintaining that the souls of men are those of lost angels—the difficulty about this, in the mind of the Dominican, being apparently that we have no recollection of our past. The importance of this text is that although it embodies accusations included in the proscription of the sect it may also have reflected current fluidic opinions in orthodox circles at the period. Other accusations affirm (a) that the Baptism which was recognised by the Albigenses was that of Fire or of the Spirit, recalling the mysterious office of the Paraclete which is often a subject of reference in the Graal literature; (b) that the wandering preachers of the sect distributed nourishment for the body as well as the Bread of Angels—here recalling the twofold ministry of the Graal; (c) that they rejected the books of Moses; (d) that they regarded this sublunary world as the only hell; (e) that their subsurface working was that of a new and secret priesthood which was to dispossess and succeed the papal hierarchy, as if here also there was a special succession from the apostles having kinship with the super-apostolical succession of the Graal priesthood.

Such fantastic analogies notwithstanding, it is clear that the sects of Southern France—as presented by either hypothesis—offer nothing to our purpose. From eclectic Gnosticism, which took over from Christianity that which coincided with its purpose, to Vaudois and Lollards, there is

not one which sought to develop or exalt the sacramental teaching of the ancient Church. I know that, on the authority of Origen, the Marcionites taught the communication to the soul of man of a Divine and Sanctifying Spirit added by the Redeemer, Who imparted it in the Eucharist, and if this meant the descent of the Paraclete, the perpetuation of such a doctrine might help us to understand why the Voice of the Graal was that of the Holy Ghost and yet in some mysterious way was that also of Christ. But of such perpetuation there is no trace whatever. As regards the Albigenses, it is certain historically that they denied transubstantiation, though they accepted some qualified sacramental teaching concerning the Lord's Supper, which they commemorated in the woods and forests on a cloth spread upon the ground. It is worse than idle to suppose that they had any connection with the Graal cycle, and this would remain substantially true if, by a wild supposition, we elected to suppose that Guiot, with his Provençal connections, was a member of their sect, and—going still further—if we suggested that his poem conveyed, after some hidden manner, a part of Albigensian teaching. That it did nothing of the kind is clear on the evidence of Wolfram. The poem is lost, or at least withdrawn for a period, like the Graal itself, and though we cannot speak certainly on most matters which concern it, on this one matter there does not seem room for doubt.

For the rest, the Albigenses were a sect without a literature, except in so far as that of the Troubadours at the period may have been—and this is likely enough—an occasional spokesman among them. Contemporary chroniclers estimated that all the principal minstrels, except two, were on the side of the sect; these exceptions were Izarn and Fulke. The conquest of Toulouse extinguished the literature and even the language of Southern France, as also its chivalry.

I should now be justified in regarding the whole matter as determined in the negative sense, but a word must be said to dispose of that other claim to which I adverted at the beginning. It took, as I have hinted, all chivalrous romance for its province, and it claimed to have demonstrated that a vast European literature had been written by Albigenses for the edification of Albigenses and to put forth in a veiled manner Albigensian doctrine. There are certain precursors who do not prepare the way, but they open up issues which end either in a cul de sac or take the seeker through by-paths which can be followed interminably without leading to a true goal. The author of this demonstration was E. Aroux, who published in 1858 the *Mysteries of Chivalry and of Platonic Love in the Middle Ages*. Its inspiration in chief was derived from Gabriele Rossetti and particularly from the *Antipapal Spirit* which preceded the Reformation. Both works have exercised an influence on certain schools of occult thought in England; but Rossetti does not speak of the Graal, and hence there is no call that here I should speak of him. The monument of M. Aroux was preceded by other of his works designed to show that Dante was (a) heretical, revolutionary and socialistic; (b) connected with an alleged fusion between the Albigenses, Templars and Ghibellines for the creation of Freemasonry; (c) himself so far implicated in Freemasonry that the *Divine Comedy* is really Masonic in its purpose. In further support of these views Aroux had translated the whole *Commedia* into literal French verse and had commented on it "according to the spirit." Finally, he had instituted comparisons between Dante and the writers of the Graal cycle. It thus came about that the products of this cycle were included by his general ingarnering, but he shows little familiarity with his subject, and he wrote at a period when the literature was still practically unprinted. He affirms, absurdly enough, that the Holy Graal was a mysterious association and that the mission of its initiates was "to recover the vessel of

truth with luminous characters wherein was received the Precious Blood of the Saviour." According to his peculiar canon of criticism this signified the design of "leading back the Christian Church to apostolic times and the faithful observation of the Gospel precepts." M. Aroux wrote as a defender of the Roman Church, and, after all that has been said and done upon the whole subject, it has not occurred to any one—perhaps least of all to him—that the true mission of the Church may have been to get away from apostolic times and to put aside, like Saint Paul, in its maturity the things which belong to the child. For the rest, M. Aroux confused in a grotesque manner the Graal knights with those of the Round Table, and appeared to suppose that the Parsifal and Tituel are representative of the entire literature.

As regards chivalry, his thesis can be stated shortly: The actual, historical, feudal chivalry was an institution more or less savage, and the chivalry set forth in the romances had no existence on earth. This is equivalent to saying that the heroes and heroines of Mrs. Radcliffe, the modes and manners which she depicts, the spirit which characterises her episodes, perhaps even the scenes which she describes so graphically at hearsay, are never found in real life, though sentimentalism is always sentimentalism, mountains are always mountains, and as regards the Pyrenees in particular they are situated indubitably between France and Spain. The thing goes without saying in each case, for the romance, one would say, is—well, precisely a romance. But on the basis of this transparent fact, M. Aroux builds his theory that the books of chivalry were the corpus doctrinale and literary body-politic of the Protestantism of its period, reduced to this resource because of the intolerant powers that were. And this is just what appears to be so highly ridiculous, not because a literature cannot have concealed motives, or that of the

Graal among them, but because it could be shown in a still more conclusive manner that the Confessional of the Black Penitents was the final rescript of the followers of Manes. And this seems to be intolerable.

Speaking generally as to the canon of criticism, it is in all respects like that of the late Mrs. Henry Pott in the Bacon and Shakespeare controversy: he, as she, proves far too much for his own credit. If the canons of Mrs. Pott demonstrate that Bacon was the concealed author of the disputed plays, then the same canons show that he must have written the works of Marlowe, Massinger, Ford, and nearly all Elizabethan literature. In the same way, the evidences adduced by M. Aroux are either insufficient to prove his point, or alternatively a similar scheme has given us the Nights of Straparola, the Nibelungen Sagas, the Romance of the Rose, and the entire literature of the Troubadours, to say nothing of the Welsh Mabinogion, Reynard the Fox, and things innumerable of the German Minnesingers. This is indeed the express thesis of M. Aroux, and the only reason that he omitted the Latin literature of alchemy is because he had not come across it. There is no need to outline the nature of his evidences, but, to speak generally concerning it, the same canons might be applied with the same success to Mrs. Radcliffe's Romance of the Forest and to the Mysteries of Udolpho. The principle, in other words, repeats itself.

I should not have dealt with these fantastic matters except for the interest which they once raised in schools which draw from my own and because in the last resource they are an attempt, after their own manner, to show the hand of supposed secret schools in the development of the Graal literature. I now conclude as follows: (a) That the chivalry of all the romances was an ideal conception, corresponding as much and as little to the subject-matter of any other

cycle of romance; and (b) that the historical chivalry of the period corresponded to the idea which we obtain of the period by reading old chronicles, like those of Froissart. For the rest, M. Aroux's canon of interpretation is simple exceedingly: (a) any heroine of the romances signifies the Albigensian pseudo-church; (b) any hero signifies one of its apostles or teachers; (c) the enemies of both are the dominant, opposing Church; (d) the Holy Vase of the Graal is its divine and hidden doctrine. I can imagine, in byways of literature, the stories of Captain Macheath, Claude Duval and Richard Turpin interpreted along analogous lines—for example, as the records of a secret attempt to re-establish the Roman hierarchy in England.

CHAPTER THREE THE LATIN LITERATURE OF ALCHEMY AND THE HERMETIC SECRET IN THE LIGHT OF THE EUCHARISTIC MYSTERY

It will be understood that the sects of Southern France, holding various offices of protestation, testified by act and word that the gates of hell had prevailed against the Latin Church and that the efficacious doctrines, the plenary rights, were in their hands. In other words, they had a special office in religion, and, I must add, the fatality of a superior process—all which instructs us precisely and fully why the Mystery of the Holy Graal was beyond their horizon and why they form no part of the Secret Tradition in Christian times. Their exponents—it is all as you please—were kings or rebels in warfare; they were unaccredited and disputatious doctors; they were errant preachers of a new-fangled scheme for the improved spiritual housing of priest-ridden classes. They trafficked—if you please otherwise—in Brummagem wares of apostolic Christianity; they were pedlars, and they carried no licence; their goods were either contraband or they were put forward under false marks. But if you prefer an alternative—since nothing

in respect of them carries the least consequence—they handed down, diluted or otherwise, the remnants of some earlier heresy, gnosis, or occult concoction of dogma, and if in respect thereof they concealed their real beliefs, nothing which signifies in respect of our proper concern reposes behind the evasion. If I have any view on the subject—and honestly I have next to none—they were perhaps the Protestants of their period, dealing in poisonous nostrums of pure doctrine, simple faith, Bible Christianity, and they circulated uncorrupted interpretations of the Word of God—all horrors of that spurious simplicity which takes the wayfaring man into the first pit. We who know that omnia exeunt in mysterium have recited long since our Asperge and have turned aside from such blasphemous follies.

Outside these sects, there were two great concurrent schools of secret thought which were developing in Europe at the period of the Graal; there was the wonder and the rumour of alchemy and there was the great sacred mystery of Kabalistic Jewry. The first was scattered all over the western countries, and its reflection at the period in England was Roger Bacon, though, as it so happens, he signifies nothing for our purpose. The chief seat of the other was in Spain, but it had important academies coming into being in the South of France. I shall take my first illustration from Alchemy, and it must be understood that on the surface it claims to put forward the mystery of a material operation, behind which we discern—but this is not invariably—another subject and another intention. Speaking generally, the evidences of a Secret Tradition are very strong in alchemy and they are strong also in other schools of thought which will remain subsequently for our consideration. But seeing that it may strike the unversed student as not less than fantastic that I should choose the old and dubious science of metallic transmutation to cast light upon the Eucharistic side of the Graal Mystery, I must

in the first place explain that two governing motives will actuate the whole inquest which follows hereafter: (1) To ascertain whether the concurrent or succeeding schools of secret thought, which appeared in Europe before or after the canon of the Graal was closed, offered any analogies to the notion of an arch-national Eucharist, or—in other words—to the existence, prosecution and success of the Great Experiment; and (2) whether they offered anything which corresponds with the alternative notion of a voided House of Doctrine. The concurrence or competition which may subsist between the two theses will be mentioned at the term of the research. It is obvious, meanwhile, that we shall not expect to find secret words of consecration or some concealed form of the Mass, because we are investigating the analogies of intention which may be imbedded in distinct literatures. If we came across, for example—as we might, if we cared to seek—an occult requiem for the soul of a dead alchemist, we should set it aside simply as impertinent rather than relative. It will prove—and quite naturally—that such literatures will contain many secret verbal formulæ but not those which we should require if our zeal went before our discretion and we sought after secret words—as, for example, a super-efficacious version of the Epiclesis clause. The same counsels of prudence will teach us not to expect in the other schools a replicated claim regarding super-apostolical succession; it is sufficient—and it does not concern us either—that the epopts of these imbedded Christian and cognate mysteries were ordained specially and strangely in the paths which they followed for the proper term thereof—but this is of election to the mysteries. Lastly, we shall not look to find a plainer expression than we have met with already in the rumours of the Graal sanctuary, but though we are dealing in some cases with the most cryptic of all literatures and in others with elusive forms of initiation, we shall find as a fact that there is less room for misconception than—all things

considered—might be expected. I premise, therefore, that the great Eucharistic experiment, concealed under the supposition of a secret consecration formula, has its strict analogy in the second sense attributed to the doctrines and processes of alchemical transmutation; while the loss of the Graal—or its counterpart, the loss of the gracious and piteous words—has its analogy in the loss of the word in Kabalism and in the symbolical science of Masonry. We have seen already that the analogies of the Graal Quest are in the annals of sanctity and the present researches are the other side of the same annals. It follows that there is a super-incession between all the schools, but it is of the ideological order only and of the experience thereto belonging, and not of successive derivation. Perhaps I ought to add that the true interpretation of alchemy depends upon a construction of symbolism which has not entered previously into the heart of criticism.

At the period of the Holy Graal the books of the Hermetic Adepts were in a state of transition, or alternatively they corresponded to the elements of folklore before the Great Christian Hallow reigned in the Kingdom of Romance. In other words, the Secret School of alchemy began in an experimental operation pursued on material things, but the school was taken over subsequently, though at a time when the Graal literature was only a sacred memory. It is this mystery which was the next witness in the world.

Alchemy may not have originated much further East than Alexandria, or, alternatively, it may have travelled from China when the port of Byzantium was opened to the commerce of the world. In either case its first development, in the forms with which we are acquainted, is connected with the name of Byzantium, and the earliest alchemists of whom we have any particulars and any remains in literature constitute a class by themselves under the name

of Byzantine alchemists. The records of their processes went further eastward, into Syria and Arabia, where they assumed a new mode, which bore, however, all necessary evidence of its origin. In this form the texts do not appear to have had a specific influence upon the corpus doctrinale of later days. The records were also taken West, like other mysteries of varying importance, and when they began to assume a place in western history this was chiefly in France, Germany and England. In other words, there arose the cycle of Latin alchemy, passing at a later date, by the way of translation, into the vernaculars of the respective countries, until finally, but much later, we have original documents in various almost modern languages. It follows—but has not been noticed so far—that the entire literature is a product of Christian times and has Christianity as its motive, whether subconsciously or otherwise. This statement applies to the Latin Geber and even the tracts which are ascribed to Morien and Rhasis. The dubious and the certain exceptions which prove the rule are the colloquy of the Turba Philosophorum—about which it is difficult to speculate in respect of its source—and the Kabalistic Æsh Mezareph—which we know only by fragments included in the great collection of Rosenroth. I suppose that there is no labyrinth which it is quite so difficult to thread as that of the *Theatrum Chemicum*. It is beset on every side with pitfalls, and its clues, though not destroyed actually, have been buried beneath the ground. Expositors of the subject have gone astray over the generic purpose of the art, because some have believed it to be (a) the transmutation of metals, and that only, while others have interpreted it as (b) a veiled method of delineating the secrets of the soul on its way through the world within, and besides this nothing. We have on our part to realise that (a) there were two schools making use of the same language in a distinct sense, the one branch seeking the transmutation of metals and the art of prolonging life, the other branch

investigating the mysteries of arch-natural life; and that (b) more than one text-book of physical alchemy would seem to have been re-edited in this more recent, exotic interest. It is to the latter that I refer when I speak of an intervention in alchemy by which it was assumed, and—while preserving the same veils of language—was transformed in respect of its purpose. I deal therefore with the corpora spiritualia of the mystic school; we can leave to the physical alchemists those things of Cæsar which belong to them, retaining the things which concern the mysteries of divine symbolism.

The true philosophers of each school are believed to have taught the same thing, with due allowance for the generic difference of their term, and seeing that they used—as I have said—the same language, it would seem that, given a criterion of distinction in respect of the term, this should make the body of cryptogram comparatively easy to disentangle. But as one of the chief problems is held to reside in the fact that many text-books do not begin at the same point of the process, this advantage of uniformity is cancelled largely. There are affirmed to be experimental schools still existing in Europe which have carried the physical work much further than it is ever likely to be taken by an isolated student; but this must be accepted under some notable reserves, or I can at least say that, having better occasions than most people of knowing the schools and their development, I have so far found no evidence. But there are known otherwise to be—and I speak here with the certainty of first-hand acquaintance—other schools, also experimental, also existing in Europe, which claim to possess the master-key of the mystical work. How far they have been successful in using that key, and whether it opens all locks, I am not in a position to say, for reasons which those who are concerned will regard as obvious. It so happens, however, that the mystery of the process is one thing and that which lies on the surface, or more

immediately beneath the externals of concealed language, is fortunately another thing. And, as in this case it occurs for our salvation, the enlightening correspondences are offering their marks and seals, if not at our very doors, at least in the official churches. Among all those places that are holy there is no holy place in which they do not abide, a mane usque ad vespertinum, and the name of this correspondence is the Holy Eucharist.

Before entering further into this matter, I propose to tabulate certain palmary points of terminology which are common to all the adepts—including both schools indifferently, though we are dealing here, and this is understood fully, with the process of one school. By the significance of these terms we shall see to what extent the symbolism of the Higher Alchemy is in conformity with mystic symbolism and with the repose of the life of the Church in God. We shall see further in respect of the operations that some are in correspondence with that High Mass which was once said in Corbenic. It should be realised, however, that there is nothing so hard and so thankless as to elucidate one symbolism in the words of another, and this notwithstanding the identity which may be indicated as the term of each. It should be understood further, and accepted, that all alchemists, outside the distinctions of their schools, were actuated by an express determination to veil their mystery, and that seemingly they had recourse for this purpose to every kind of subterfuge.

At the same time they tell us that the whole art is contained, manifested and set forth by means of a single vessel which, amidst all manner of minor variations, is described with essential uniformity throughout the multitude of texts. This statement constitutes a certain lesser key to the art; but as on the one hand the alchemists

veil their was insigne by reference, in spite of their assurance, to many pretended vessels, so has the key itself a certain aspect of subterfuge, since the alleged unity is in respect only of the term final of the process in the unity of the recipient. This unity is the last reduction of a triad, because, according to these aspects of Hermetic philosophy, man in the course of his attainment is at first three—body, soul and spirit—that is, when he sets out on the Great Quest; he is two at a certain stage—when the soul has conceived Christ, for the spirit has then descended and the body is for the time being outside the Divine alliance; but he is in fine one—that is to say, when the whole man has died in Christ—which is the term of his evolution. So in the Graal Mystery there are three seekers who attain after their own measure—Perceval, Bors and Galahad—who are distinguished from the hereditary incapacity of Gawain, from the particular inhibition of Lancelot, and from the external election of the King.

The black state of the alchemical matter, on which the process of the art is engaged, is the body of this death —“the dedeley flesshe”—from which the adepts have asked to be detached. It is more especially our natural life. The white state of the Stone, the confection of which is desired as a chief term of the art, is the vesture of that immortality with which the epopts are clothed upon.

The Salt of the Philosophers is that savour of life without which the material earth can neither be salted nor cleansed. The Sulphur of the Philosophers is the inward substance by which some souls are saved, yet so as by fire. The Mercury of the Sages is that which must be fixed and volatilised—naturally it is fluidic and wandering—but except under this name, or by some analogous substitute, it must not be described literally outside the particular circles of secret knowledge. It is nearer than hands and feet.

Now, the perfect correspondence of these things in the symbolism of official Christianity, and the great mystery of perfect sanctification, is set forth in the great churches under the sacramentalism of the Holy Eucharist, behind which we see in the liturgies and ritual of the Graal a high rendering of the same subject under the same terms, as if there were secret wardens who were aware of certain insufficiencies and of the way in which they might be rectified. The same exalted mystery which lies behind the symbols of Bread and Wine, behind the undeclared priesthood which is according to the Order of Melchisedech, was expressed by the alchemists under the guise of transmutation; but it is understood that I refer here to the secret school of adeptship which had taken over in another and transcendent interest the terminology and processes of occult metallurgy. The confusion of distinct symbolisms signifying the same thing makes for no illumination; but because of the identity in the term, because both schools deal with the same thing, and because the same thing is everywhere, the natural analogy of these symbolisms, distinct as they are, can, by maintaining their distinction—that is, without mutation of the accidents—be made to elucidate each other. In the last resource, therefore, the physician heals himself; but I am speaking here of that which wise men have termed the Medicine.

The vessel is consequently one, but the matter thereto adapted is not designated especially, or at least after an uniform manner; it is said to be clay by those who speak at times more openly in order that they may be understood the less, as if they also were singing in their strange chorus:

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

It is most commonly described as metallic because on the surface of the literature there is the declared mystery of all metals, and the concealed purpose is to show that in the roots and essence of these things there is a certain similarity or analogy. The reason is that the epopt who has been translated again finds his body after many days, but under a great transmutation, as if in another sense the panis quotidianus ["daily bread"] had been changed into the panis vivus et vitalis ["living bread of life"], but—as I have just said—without mutation of the accidents. The reason is also that in normal states the body is—here and now—not without the soul, nor can we separate readily, by any intellectual process, the soul from the spirit which broods thereover, to fertilise it in a due season. There is, however, one vessel, and this makes for simplicity; though it is not by such simplicity that the art is testified to be a ludus puerorum ["children's game"]. The contradistinction hereto is that it is hard to be a Christian, which is the comment of the man born blind upon the light that he cannot see. It is the triumphant affirmation of the mystical counter-position, that to sin is hard indeed for the man who knows truly. The formula of this is that man is born for the heights rather than the deeps, and its verbal paradox is: facilis ascensus superno ["easy ascent to the top"]. The process of the art is without haste or violence by the mediation of a graduated fire, and the seat of this fire is in the soul. It is a mystery of the soul's love, and for this reason she is called "undaunted daughter of desire." The sense of the gradation is that love is set free from the impetuosity and violence of passion, and has become a constant and incorruptible flame. The formula of this is that the place of unity is a centre wherein there is no exaggeration. That which the fire consumes is certain materials or elements which are called recrementa, the grosser parts, the superfluties; and it should be observed that there are two purgations, of which the first is the gross

and the second the subtle. The first is the normal process of conversion, by which there is such a separation of components seemingly external that what remains is as a new creature, and may be said to be reborn. The second is the exalted conversion, by which that which has been purified is so raised that it enters into a new region, or a certain heaven comes down and abides therein.

It is not my design in this place to exhaust the sources of interpretation, because such a scheme would be impossible in this sub-section, and I can allude therefore but scantily to the many forms of the parables which are concerned with the process up to this point. The ostensible object—which was material in the alternative school—was the confection of a certain Stone or Powder, which is that of projection, and the symbolical theorem is that this powder, when added to a base metal, performs the wonder of transmutation into pure silver or gold, better than those of the mines. The Stone transmutes what is base, but in its own elements it has undergone transmutation itself, from what is base to what is perfect. In another form it prolongs life and renews youth in the adept philosopher and lover of learning. In this case it is spoken of usually as an elixir, but the transmuting powder and the renewing draught are really one thing with the spiritual alchemists. As it is certain that under any light of interpretation the Stone of the Graal is not actually and literally a stone—nor found in the nest of the phoenix—it may be held to follow as a reasonable inference that the Cup or Chalice is not a cup actually or literally, much less a vessel which contains blood, sang réal or otherwise. In like manner, if there is one thing which appears than another more clearly in the books of the Philosophers, it is that the Stone of alchemy is not a stone at all, and that the Elixir of alchemy is not a brew or an essence which can be communicated in ewers or basins. The Stone, on one side of its symbolism, represents more

especially the visible sign of the mystery, and it is spoken of as offering two phases—of which one is white and the other red.

It must be affirmed further that in virtue of a very high mysticism there is an unity in the trinity of the stone—or powder—the metal and the vase. The vase is also the alchemist, for none of the instruments, the materials, the fires, the producer and the thing produced are external to the one subject. At the same time the inward man is distinguished from the outward man; we may say that the one is the alchemist and the other the vessel; it is in this sense that the art is termed both physical and spiritual. But the symbolism is many times enfolded, and the gross matter which is placed within the vessel is the untransmuted life of reason, motive, concupiscence, self-interest and all that which constitutes the intelligent creature on the normal plane of manifestation. Hereof is the natural man enclosed in an animal body, as the metal is placed in the vessel, and from this point of view the alchemist is he who is sometimes termed arrogantly the super-man. But because there is only one vessel it must be understood that herein the Stone is confected and the base metal is converted. The alchemist is himself finally the Stone, and because many zealous aspirants to the Art have not understood this they have failed in the Great Work on the spiritual side.

The schedule which now follows may elucidate this hard subject somewhat more fully, if not indeed more plainly: There are (a) the natural, external man, whose equivalent is the one vessel; (b) the body of desire which answers to the gross matter; (c) the aspiration, the consciousness, the will of the supernatural life; (d) the process of the will working on the body of desire within the external vessel; (e) the psychic and transcendental conversion thus

effected; (f) the re-action of the purified body of desire on the essential will, so that the one supports the other, the will is again exalted, and therefrom follows this further change—that the spirit of a man puts on a new quality of life, becoming an instrument which is at once feeding and itself fed; (g) herein is the symbol of the Stone and the Great Elixir; (h) the spirit is nourished from above by the analogies of Eucharistic ministry—that is to say, the Dove descends from Heaven carrying the arch-natural Host to renew the virtues of the Stone; (i) the spirit nourishes the soul, as by Bread and Wine—that is, the Bread is taken from the Graal; (k) the soul effects the higher conversion in the body of desire; (l) it comes about thus that the essence which dissolves everything is still contained in a vessel, or alternatively that God abides in man.

This process, thus delineated exhaustively in the parables of alchemy, is put with almost naked simplicity by Eucharistic doctrine—which says that material lips receive the super-substantial Bread and Wine, that the soul is nourished and that Christ enters the soul.

The Eucharistic Bread signifies the super-substantial sustenance, and the Wine is arch-natural life. It is for this reason that the Alchemical Stone at the red has a higher tingeing and transmuting power than the Stone at the white. The first matters of the alchemical work, to make use of another language of subterfuge, are Sulphur, Mercury and Salt; but these are the elements of the Philosophers and not those of the ordinary kind. In other words, common Sulphur and Mercury correspond to the Bread and Wine before consecration, and the philosophical elements are those which have been transubstantiated by the power of the secret words. That which is produced is called Panis Vivus et Vitalis and Vinum Mirabile, instead of the daily meat and drink by which we ask to be sustained in

the Lord's Prayer. The Salt is that which is called the formula of consecration; it is that which salts and transmutes the natural earth. When Christ said: "If the Salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? "this can be understood of the super-excellent and extra-valid consecration; the removal of the Graal signifies that of a certain arch-natural salting, yet the salt of sufficing grace remains, like that of nature, and in its way also it communicates. Christ further said: "You are the salt of the earth"—and this is the true priesthood.

That which the text-books have agreed from time immemorial to term a Stone is that also which we find in greater Gospel books, where it is described as a Stone not made with hands, and the transmutation performed thereby is the work of inward conversion, resulting in the condition which one of the adepts recommends to his disciples when he exclaims: "Transmutemini, transmutemini à lapidibus mortuis in lapides vivos philosophicos" [Transmute, transmute from dead stones into living philosophical stones"]. The possession of the Stone is, in other words, the possession of the tingeing Christ.

It should be understood, therefore, that the First Matter in transcendence—that is, in the state of the Stone—must be taken to signify the elements after conversion has been operated by the secret words of consecration. But the words signify here the Divine Life, and the process which really takes place is represented by the most sacramental of all words: *Et verbum caro factum est* (And the Word was made flesh). In this new light of alchemy we may continue, if we please, to regard the elements of the Graal as the communication of the Eucharist in exaltation, of which our own Eucharist is only a shadow and substitute or we can do what is the same thing and is preferable in respect of finality, that is, we can transfer the entire symbolism to

man who is the recipient of the Eucharist, the vessel of reception, the subject of conversion, the container which in the outward order is less than the thing contained, the life which receives the life above all life that is manifest and known. Without man the conversion and transmutation of elements would be void of all office, since there would be no terminus ad quem [“the limit to which”].

Prior to the efficacious consecration we may assume that the simple elements are those substances, or, if we prefer it, are that one substance variously manifested, which, as the alchemists tell us so expressly, may be found everywhere. It is of no account till the Wise have introduced their mystical ferment therein. Having concealed it under a thousand names, they say in their strange manner that it is known by these; and so also some of them have declared in their derision, as against all the untutored material operations which involve a prodigal outlay, that he who spends upon the Great Work more than thirty thalers—not including the cost of personal maintenance—has already passed aside from the whole truth of the process. It follows from these elucidations that the higher understanding of the Eucharist and the mystic side of alchemy are concerned with the same subject, that is to say, with man, his conversion and transfiguration: the implicits are therefore the same, and of these things alchemy was the next witness in the world after the epoch of the Holy Graal.

But though it seems therefore within all reason and all truth to testify that the panis vivus et vitalis is even as the transmuting Stone and that the Chalice of the New and Eternal Testament is as the renewing Elixir, the witness is subject to the reserve of my previous indication; the closer the analogies between distinct systems of symbolism the more urgent is that prudence which counsels us not to

confound them by an interchangeable use. The priest as priest neither dealt in the symbolism of alchemy nor assumed its external offices; the alchemist as alchemist did not celebrate Mass. It is true notwithstanding that all Christian mysticism—whatever its vestures—came out of the Mass-Book, and it is true that it returns therein. But the Mass-Book in the first instance came out of the heart mystic which had unfolded in Christendom. The nucleus of truth in the Missal is: Dominus prope est [“The Lord is near”]. The Mass shows that the Great Work is in the first sense a work of the hands of man, because it is he, officiating as a priest in his own temple, who offers the sacrifice which he has purified; but the elements of that sacrifice are taken over by an intervention from another Order, and that which follows is transfusion.

Re-expressing all this now in a closer summary, the apparatus of mystical alchemy is indeed, comparatively speaking, simple. The first matter is myrionymous and is yet one, corresponding to the unity of the natural will and the unlimited complexity of its motives, dispositions, desires, passions and distractions—on all of which the work of wisdom must operate. The vessel is also one, for this is the normal man complete in his own degree. The process has the seal of Nature’s directness; it is the graduation and increasing maintenance of a particular fire. The initial work is a change in the substance of will, aspiration and desire, which is the first conversion—or transmutation in the elementary sense. But it is identical, even to the end, with the term proposed by the Eucharist, which is the modification of the noumenal man by the communication of Divine Substance. Here is the lapis qui non lapis, lapis tingens, lapis angularis, lapis qui multiplicatur, lapis per quem justus ædificabit domum Domini, et jam valde ædificatur et terram possidebit per omnia [“a stone that is not a stone, a dipping stone, a corner stone, a stone that

multiplies, a stone with which the righteous will build the house of the Lord, and it is already being greatly built, and he will possess the earth through all”], etcetera. When it is said that the Stone is multiplied, even to a thousandfold, we know that this is true of all seed which is sown upon good soil.

So, therefore, the Stone transmutes and the Eucharist transmutes also; the philosophical elements on the physical side go to the making of the Stone, which is also physical, and the sacramental elements to the generation of a new life in the soul. He who says Lapis Philosophorum says also: My beloved to me and I to him. Christ is therefore the Stone, and the Stone in adept humanity is the Union realised, while the Great Secret is that Christ must be manifested within.

Now, it seems to me that it has not served less than an useful purpose to establish after a new manner the intimate resemblance between the higher understanding of one part of the Secret Tradition and the fuller interpretation of one Sacrament of the Church. We are not dealing in either case with the question of attainment. The analogy would remain if Spiritual Alchemy and Christian Sacramentalism abode in the intellectual order as theorems only which have been never carried into experience. And further it is not affirmed that the Hermetic symbolism has attained a grade of perfection. When Christian symbolism took over the old legends and created out of them the literature of the Holy Graal, the work was not done perfectly, and it is the same with alchemical books. It remains that the doctrine of sanctity offered a Divine Experience, to those who entered the pathway of sanctity, as a foretaste in this life of the union which is consummated in eternity, or of that end beyond which there is nothing whatever that is conceivable. We know from the old books that “it hath not

entered into the heart of man," but the heart which has put away the things of sense may at least conceive it by representations and types. This is the great tradition of that which the early alchemists term Truth in the Art; the experience is representation after its own kind rather than felicity, but the representation is of that grade which begins in ecstasy and ends in absorption. Let no man say therefore that he loses himself in experiences of this order, for perchance it is then only that he finds himself, even in that way which suggests that after many paths of activity he is at length coming into his own.

The alchemical maxim which might be inscribed on the gate of the palais espritueus or any Castle of the Graal should be:

"Est in Mercurio quicquid quærunt sapientes."

[*"In Mercury is whatever the wise seek."*]

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

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

[*"And an ancient document Gives way to a new ritual: Faith is ready to supplement Lack of senses."*]

The maxim which might be written over the temples of the official churches is *Corporis Mysterium*—that the mystery of the body might lead them more fully into the higher mystery of the soul. And in fine the maxim which might and would be inscribed over the one Temple of the truly Catholic Religion when the faiths of this western world have been united in the higher consciousness—that is

assuredly *Mysterium Fidei*—the mystery which endures for ever and for ever passes into experience.

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

CHAPTER FOUR THE KABALISTIC ACADEMIES

We have now dealt with the testimony of the chief witness to the perpetuity and perfection of the Great Experiment, and if it be necessary—as it is at times and seasons—to conceal or re-express things in an artificial and evasive language, I do not know of a more convincing substituted terminology than that of transmutation by alchemy as a high analogy of God's work in the soul. Other analogies there are, but for the most part unrealised, as, for example, the sublime clause of the Apostle's Creed: "*Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi sæculi*," ["And I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of

the world to come,"] which, as it stands, is a testimony to the prospect and not the attainment. The motives which lead to the adoption of artificial language and the circumstances which may help to justify it belong to the term of our inquiry, of which this is the penultimate stage only. We have now finished for the present with the Mystery of Attainment—or why it was necessary to seek and find the Holy Graal in order that the spiritual knight might in fine be assumed into Heaven, carrying the Palladium with him into those stars whence it first descended; and we have next to determine whether there are other traces which may help us to understand better the Mystery of Loss, or the meaning of the Voided Sanctuary. It is admitted out of hand that the first indications are placed here in respect of the order of time, and that they are introductory and subsidiary only—a place of sidelights and incidental correspondences. The reason is that, although the root-matters must be identical when the term in finality is one, we are dealing in respect of the Graal with a manifestation in Christendom but here with a manifestation in Israel.

The schools of Kabbalism can scarcely be said to have done more than emerge partly into public existence when the canon of the Graal literature had already closed; in these schools there were great masters of mystic thought, though more especially on the intellectual side. Now, in its own way, the theosophical scheme of Jewry in exile is a story of loss like the Graal, though it is one which ends in expectation—or, as I should say, in certainty. The loss in external history and in national life was counterpoised by a loss in the sanctuary, as if the arch-natural Eucharist, the Graal which is of all things holy, had been taken therefrom. It was that which of old was written not only in one galaxy of stars but by the power of which the worlds themselves were made. The substitution which, according to the Graal

legends, was left with the Christian Church in place of the living sanctities is paralleled closely by that other legend which tells how the stress and inhibition of Israel is because the Divine Word has been withdrawn from the Holy Place, and instead of the true Tetragram, the voice of the priest only pronounces now the name Adonai. But the Eucharist, as I have said, is still the Eucharist, the House from which the Graal has departed is still the Holy House, and all sanctity attaches in like manner to the substituted sacred Name and to the cortex of those letters which now represent the Tetragram—יהוה. There was a time when this name in its true form was pronounced by the High Priest once annually in the sanctuary; it restored the people of God and maintained the Inmost Shrine, keeping open the channels of grace, even as the heavenly dove, descending on Good Friday, renewed the virtue of the Graal. Afterwards, as I have indicated, there came another time when disaster fell upon Israel, with the result that the essential elements of the Name, in which its true pronunciation was involved, became lost even to the sanctuary.

It should be scarcely necessary to say that I am not putting forward the hypothesis of a channel of communication by which something was derived into romance literature from implicits which about the same time or subsequently were developed into Zoharic books. I know that behind the Graal Castle—according to the Longer Prose Perceval—there was the Earthly Paradise, and that the House of the Holy Vessel was also the Castle of Souls. I know that, according to the Zohar, the Garden of Eden is placed in a position which corresponds to that of the Graal itself. I know that both were removed—the Graal into the heavenly regions and the Garden of Eden into that which is no longer manifest. The latter place was connected nearly in Kabbalism with the Great Sanctuary—truly a Castle of Souls—wherein all those

who are to come await incarnation in turn, for, according to Jewish theosophy, the creation of souls is not successive, or dependent on earthly generation, but eternal in the heavens. I know that there is nothing in literature so like the departure of Galahad as that of R. Simeon ben Jochai; and in spite of great divergences, of distinctions in the root-matter, the Mystery of the Holy Graal has its subsurface analogy with the Mystery of the Lesser Holy Assembly. I know that the Greater and Lesser Sanhedrim sound like oracular voices speaking in an unknown tongue concerning the Holy House, and we feel that behind the outward offices of religion there was an Inner Church of Israel. I know that, according to the involved scheme of the Sephiroth, the Waters of Life are in Knowledge, which is also the place of the Cup, and this is reserved always for those who are athirst. But these things, with others and many others, do not constitute the lightest shadow of transmission. No French poet could be expected to know thereof; no exponent of Christian legend, even when interpreted mystically, ever looked to Israel for light and leading in those internecine days—however much the name of Provence may suggest a certain difference in mind from the prevalent orthodoxy of the age. That there may be no mistake on this subject among those whom I address more especially, I note further that the peculiar presentation of Graal symbolism which is connected with the name of the reputed Provençal Guiot—who of all only might confess to some curious memories from a course of study at Toledo—is precisely that presentation in which the sanctuary is not voided and the Graal is not taken away.

It is a matter of common knowledge that at the period in question Spain was one place in the world where the Jews were not merely free from raging persecution but where worldly positions of importance were open to their competition. We know further that a great light of Moslem

learning shone forth in some Spanish academies. We know finally or may learn that another light had kindled therein among the chosen people themselves. Palestine and the East generally thereabouts may have contributed its portion, and did indeed do so, but the heart and marrow of Kabbalism was in Spain. The Jews of Cordova, the Jews of Toledo and of other places in the Peninsula look great figures in the literature, and so also do certain academies of Southern France, though there the Jews did not find the same peace in their abodes. For them the asylum was Spain, and that indeed must have been little less than a Terrestrial Paradise realised. And as between the South of France and Spain the channels of communication stood wide open, as Provence is the legendary place of the first Graal quest, as the Ideal Castle, the Holy Place, Mont Salvatch, had its abode unapproachable in the Pyrenees, so the imaginative mind may perhaps incline to say that behind the strange legend of the Jew of Toledo there is something undemonstrable of a lost Graal connection; yet this is the stuff only of which dreams are made, and it is well for my own case. The analogy between all the schools in succession is the testimony which they bear in common, and if after other manners they reflected one into another the witness would be weaker in proportion. There is no concert, there is no debt in literature, there is no result in fine, as by a course of development from cycle to cycle of books. The scheme of theosophical Kabbalism is distinct, and absolutely, from that of metaphysical alchemy; it is the evidence of two schools which did not know one another, and, although at the root their evidence is of the same kind, the relation between them is that of the pairs of opposites. So also when another and no less noteworthy voice began to speak within the body-legendary of symbolical Masonry, it said what Kabbalism had said, but it was not Kabbalism speaking behind a later mask. As I must look to be challenged in the gate over the thesis of this book, I assume

at this point so much harness as will suffice to dissuade the gentlemen of the counter-guard from considering that I am open to attack as one who seeks to explain that generic literature A is the concealed father of generic literature B, though I speak more seriously as a counsel to some of the confraternities with which I am affiliated in thought and the pursuit of a term in common. When it is said that God so loved the world, the counterpart in Kabbalism is that the Kingdom is in no sense apart from the Crown, and that the progression from Aleph to Tau is complete without break or intermission; but Saint Paul is not for that reason a precursor of the Zohar. So also when the Arabian Academies of Spain became the resort of Christian scholars —“men of curious inquiry,” as one has said concerning them—it does not mean that from such schools they brought back Sufic mysticism and translated it into romance. It does not mean that there also they met with the corpus materiale of the Kabbalah, a final receptacle of the dèbris and drift of all the old theogonies, theosophies and occult knowledge of many places and periods, or that learning there how the Daughter of the Voice was withdrawn from the sanctuary of Israel, they told in another tongue how, after the departure of the Graal, the dwelling of King Fisherman “began to fall,” though the chapel thereto belonging never “wasted nor decayed.” The voices say one thing, but they do not speak in concert. We know only and realise that Israel is waiting by the waters of Babylon, and it has come to pass that, though we draw from far other places, we are also beside her, remembering, perhaps more dimly and yet with deeper yearning, the glory that once was in Zion.

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

