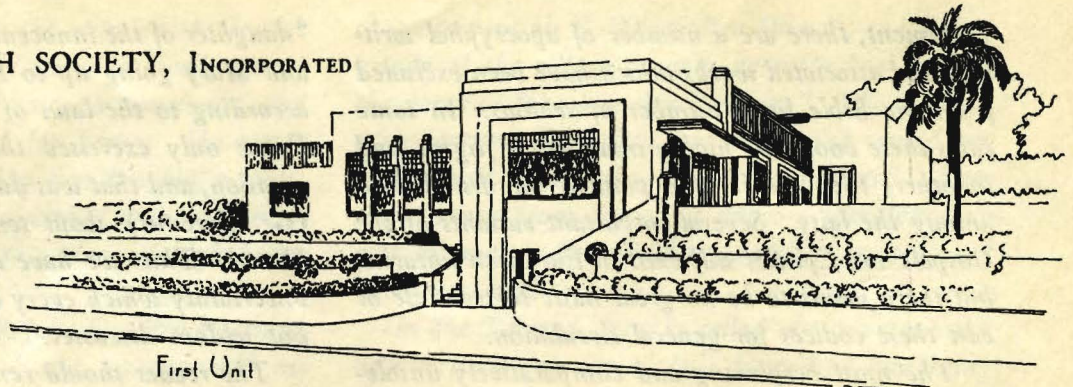


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First Unit

BIBLE COURSE SERIES

BY MANLY P. HALL

FOURTH YEAR

THE STUDENTS MONTHLY LETTER

Letter No. 7

THE SECRET DOCTRINE IN THE BIBLE

Dear Friend:

The New Testament

With this letter we begin the study of the New Testament. The twenty-seven books of the New Testament are concerned principally with the life and teachings of Christ and the ministry of his apostles. The exception to this is the book of Revelation which derives its inspiration from the metaphysics of the Egyptians.

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and belongs particularly to the tradition of the Jewish people. The New Testament was written originally in Greek, although no manuscripts of the first or second centuries A. D. are known to exist. There was a wholesale destruction of these early manuscripts during and after the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325).

The gravest doubts exist as to the authorship of the gospels of the New Testament. The ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA acknowledges not only these doubts, but admits that there is no proof of any kind that the Gospels were written by the men whose names have been affixed to them in more recent time.

The oldest existing codices of the New Testament reveal considerable change and amendment. The King James version omits a number of passages of a controversial nature, particularly such as would

cause doubt to arise concerning the uniqueness or the infallibility of the Christian faith. The King James Bible was published first in 1611 under the patronage of James I of England. The actual translations were made by a number of scholars from leading universities. They were elderly men many of whom died before the book of Psalms was reached. The work was undertaken during the most corrupt period of English education. The principal university records of the time consist of the amount of beer drunk by the student body. There is a story, possibly apocryphal but with a ring of truth about it, that King James' final instructions to the translators were in substance as follows: Where the new translations agree with accepted tradition, use them; where they do not, conform to the popular tradition.

When the manuscript was completed, it was given into the hands of Lord Bacon who is responsible for its present literary excellence. He achieved the impressiveness now evident in the book largely by taking liberties with the text. As a result, the Bible student is not justified in accepting the King James version as an infallible production, or in believing that the divine dictates were revealed originally in the King's English.

In addition to the accepted books of the New

Testament, there are a number of apocryphal writings and associated works which have been excluded from the Bible for a number of reasons. In some cases these books are highly imaginative flights, and in others they are far too pointed for distribution among the laity. Several important variants of the Gospels and Epistles still exist in European libraries, but there seems to be no great haste to translate or edit these codices for general circulation.

The most perplexing and comparatively unsolvable mystery with which the Christian theologian is faced is the almost complete lack of historical evidence concerning the life of Christ. If we except a few palpable forgeries, our knowledge of the life of Christ is based principally upon the accounts given in the Gospels. It is safe to say that thousands of books dealing with the life of Christ have been published since the invention of printing, but only on rare occasions do the authors attempt a critical scholarship.

The Bible itself contains a number of discrepancies on the subject, some of which we shall point out as we proceed. It is not our intention to state that Jesus Christ never lived, but we are forced in the cause of honesty to affirm that there is no adequate contemporaneous evidence to support the Gospel stories. We feel, therefore, that the true significance of the Gospels lies, not in their historical parts, but, in their mystical parts. The Jesus of Galilee may or may not have lived, but we agree entirely with St. Paul that this is not of first importance, rather it is the "Christ in you" that is the hope of glory.

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

The life of Jesus as given in the Gospels is so familiar to every class of reader that it seems unnecessary to summarize this account. We shall devote our space entirely to a consideration of problem and interpretation.

There is great controversy concerning the actual date of the birth of Jesus. Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee, died B. C. 4. This is embarrassing because it is quite evident that he could not have ordered the

"slaughter of the innocents." The account of Joseph and Mary going up to Bethlehem to be registered according to the laws of Rome also is unfortunate. Rome only exercised the law of registry on one occasion, and that was during the reign of Quirinus, (Gr. Cyrenus) about ten years after the death of Herod. Thus we have an interval of ten years of uncertainty which every educated theologian knows but seldom discusses.

The reader should remember that the Fathers of the early Church were themselves in considerable discord over the time of the birth of Jesus. Various years were suggested in an attempt to reconcile theology and history. This finally was given up as hopeless and the debate narrowed itself to the consideration of the winter solstice and the vernal equinox as possible birth dates. The Church fought for five hundred years to decide which date was right. The decision was handed down in the end by a process of balloting. It is evident that the problem was astronomical. Was the sun born at the winter solstice or the vernal equinox? These were the most sacred dates of the pagan world.

There is an early Christian system of reckoning by means of the lunar cycle of nineteen years. This is called the EPACT. Its calculations are based upon the birth time of Jesus. Tracing back through the epact, it would appear that Jesus was born at the conjunction of the sun and moon on the 24th of March at 1:30 in the morning, at the meridian of Jerusalem.

Necessity entered into the problem of commemorating holy days. Meetings of the Christians were forbidden in the city of Rome. One of the principal feasts of the Romans fell near the winter solstice. The Christians met at this time because the vigilance of the Romans was relaxed during the celebration of their feast. This seems to be the origin of the observance of Christmas on the 25th of December. Problems of this kind would confound any system of theology. In simple fact and substance, no one knows either the day, month, or year of the Nativity.

Searching in this maze of theological oratory and historical discrepancies, we arrive at the probable date of the historical Jesus. In the Talmud of the Jews we learn that Jehoshua Ben Panthira was born

about the year B. C. 120 in the reign of the Jewish King Alexander Jannes. This man lived, was a rabbin of considerable influence, a reactionist, and was finally stoned to death for heresy. He was a disciple of the great Jehoshua Ben Prachia, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, a man who had arisen from the state of a rabbin to a place of high honor among the orthodox Jews.

About the year B. C. 100, Jehoshua Ben Panthira, then about twenty years of age, accompanied his master Ben Prachia to Egypt to escape King Alexander's persecution of the rabbins. The statement that Jesus studied with the Egyptian priests is to be found not only in the Talmudic writings, but in certain early manuscripts of the Christian Gospels. The Talmud states that this Jesus, or Jehoshua, travelled to Egypt with Ben Prachia to study sorcery, so that he became a miracle worker, gained the power of healing the sick, and practised illusions.

There is an old manuscript which dates from the revision during the Byzantine Period, centuries before the King James version, which was for a time in the possession of the secret order of the Knights Templars of Jerusalem. The sixth chapter, 42nd verse, of St. John intimates the journey of Jesus into Egypt. In the King James version verse 42 reads: "And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then he sayeth, I come down from heaven?" The manuscript reads: "And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he sayeth, I came down from heaven? Is it because he has dwelt among the Greeks that he comes thus to speak with us? What is there in common between what he has learned from the Egyptians and what our fathers have taught us?"

By leaving out the last part of this verse, the life of Jesus between his thirteenth and his thirtieth years have been left empty and mysterious. Also, his connection with the great pagan systems of learning has been withheld from his followers by an unworthy stratagem.

In the Talmud, in the Hebrew gloss upon Ecclesiastes, (midraskohelath) there is another mention of Jehoshua or Jesus as follows: "It happened

that a serpent bit R. Eleasar Ben Damah, and James, a man of the village Secania, came to heal him in the name of Jehoshua Ben Panthira." The Talmud adds further: "Jehoshua was bewitched, raised up, and turned Israel away from her fathers." After their return from Egypt, it appears that Jehoshua and his master Ben Prachia quarreled, parted, and never met again.

In the Talmud, Jesus is called also Hammassiah as a prefix or forename. It is derived by combining the Egyptian word Ammon and Messiah. It also is said that Jehoshua, the son of Panthira and Stada was stoned to death as a wizard in the city of Lydda, and afterwards his body was hung on a tree. His death occurred about B. C. 70.

The attitudes of the early Church Fathers may be summarised in the words of two of the proudest pillars of the faith, Tertullian and St. Augustine. Tertullian was one of the three great North African bishops. He is the great authority of the Church, unquestioned upon any ground whatever. He is the very stuff from which orthodoxy is made. To quote him: "I maintain that the son of God died; well, that is wholly credible, because it is monstrously absurd—I maintain that having been buried, he rose again; and that I take to be absolutely true, because it is manifestly impossible." From this fine example of Tertullian logic we pass to St. Augustine who says: "I would never have believed the Gospels unless the authority of the Church had induced me to do it." In the presence of such illustrious company, we feel that our doubts on certain matters are no less reasonable than theirs. From extensive research I am convinced that regardless of the historical controversy, our true Christian mysticism lies not in the acceptance of historical facts, but in the inward spiritual perception of certain divine truths.

THE MYSTICAL CHRIST

In the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. John it is written: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It is further written: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

It is universally acknowledged that the Gospel attributed to John is the most mystical of the four. It omits the genealogies and the account of the Nativity, and assumes that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, the incarnation of the divine FIAT. From the first chapter of John we gain a profound knowledge of the metaphysical elements in the Christian Mysteries. It is almost certain that this work was influenced by the Gnostic tradition which flourished in both Syria and Egypt during the first century A. D. Gnosticism derived its authority directly from the Gospels and the apostles, and maintained that it possessed the secret key of esoteric Christianity. Several mystical groups flourished in Syria at the same time. The Cabalistic Sect was arising among the Jews, the Nazarenes and the Therapeutae were represented by itinerant teachers who wandered up and down the countryside. The Essenes had monasteries along the shores of the Dead Sea and by the lakes of Upper Egypt. Each of these schools had its prophet, its dogma, and its arcana. The Syrian orders were mostly Messianic. They were waiting, one and all, for a king to be born in Israel according to the prophecies and the Scriptures. He should be born of the house of David, and should rescue Israel from bondage to Rome.

The Roman governors of Syria considered their appointments to this barren country little better than political exile. There were constant uprisings, rebellions, and intrigues. Rome held on to Syria principally from motives of pride. Rome never relinquished anything. Financially, their military occupation was a wasteful expense bringing no return. The local Jewish princes toadied to both Israel and Rome, attempting to maintain their own positions at all costs. Rome never was able to subdue their Jewish colonials and left most of the administration of local affairs in the hands of Jewish tetrarchs.

It was in the midst of this general disorder and dissatisfaction that the Christian ministry was announced, or at least, such is the modern story. There is much mystery concerning the origin of Christianity. The Fathers of the Church of the second century seemed to be no better informed on the matter than those of the twentieth century, the general consensus of opinion being that the "King of Kings"

was born to the Jews, preached along the sea of Galilee, died on Calvary, and in the person of his apostles and followers, later overthrew the Roman Empire.

It is my belief that the present Christian faith is built upon the teachings of certain Syrian sects, particularly the Essene and the Nazarene. These sects were distinguished for their virtue and propriety, and of all the Jewish communities, they alone made claim to extensive scholarship. Roman governors and officers stationed among the Jews engaged Essenes as tutors for their children. This order claimed descent from the Greek master Pythagoras who had visited Mt. Lebanon and founded a cult there in the fifth century B. C. The Nazirs also occupied a prominent position. They were bound together by vows and certain rituals. They had an oath that they would cut neither hair nor beard until the coming of the Messiah. It should be remembered also that the Jewish mysticism of that time had been considerably influenced by the captivities in Egypt and Babylon.

Somewhere among these sects appeared the doctrine of the "Word made flesh." There can be no question but that the Egyptian god Horus the younger was the pattern used in creating the Messianic character. It is entirely possible that our story of the life of Christ is the account of a neophyte passing through the degrees of a secret order. We know that such initiation rituals have given us our mythologies of Greece, Rome, Egypt, India, and China. The Grecian gods and Roman heroes were personages of an ancient religious ceremonial. A copy of the BOOK OF THE DEAD was found recently in which this presumed account of the soul's wandering in Amenti was marginally decorated with prompter's notes, proving beyond question that it was a drama actually portrayed by living persons. If the death and resurrection of Osiris was a play performed on rare occasions with profound solemnity, why may not the Christian drama be of like nature?

The medieval Church perpetuated the ritualistic aspects of Christian mysticism in their mystery plays. These dramas were presented on certain feast days on the wide porches of the cathedrals. The plays

usually depicted incidents in the life of Christ, the life of the Virgin, or the trials of the apostles. Sometimes the plays were interpreted by readers who stood in the high stone pulpits near the church door. Some of the plays took the form of processions, but usually they were episodic.

The explanation now given for these plays is that the illiteracy of the people and the numerous dialectical difficulties in language made preaching and teaching difficult, whereas the visual enactment was understandable to all. Nevertheless, their close similarity to the ancient mystery plays is a strong point in favor of their direct descent from the pagan initiation dramas.

If this be the case, and certainly such an interpretation is the most meaningful that can be given to the story, we readily understand why historicity is wanting. It would be impossible to give the birth date of Dionysius, Apollo, Odin, Vishnu, or these other "divine beings" inasmuch as they were personifications of universal forces contrived as a means of revealing them through legend and fable.

It is very possible that the early Church Fathers, seeking desperately for a concrete human being on which to hang the fabric of their faith, picked Jehoshua Ben Panthira as the nearest parallel to be found among the Jewish rabbins. Armed with this small fragment of history, they proceeded to correlate the two, building in a little here, and removing some contradictory fragment there, until, lo, and behold! the "King of Kings" is a Nazarene, in spite of the popular opinion that nothing good could come out of Nazareth.

This further explains why Helena, the mother of Constantine, within three hundred years after the death of Jesus was unable to find in all of Jewry any man who had even heard of him. According to the story, she finally came upon one aged man who claimed to have heard that Jesus had lived. He took her to an old Roman execution field where excavations revealed a number of crosses. When the whole matter had been settled to every one's satisfaction, Constantine, to show his extreme veneration, had one of the passion nails pounded into a bit for his horse. This, in the presence of the fact that nails had not been invented at that time, shows us just

about where we stand. We might add that another one of the nails was melted into the iron crown of Hungary.

We conclude that the Christ of the Gospels was a symbolical personage, created in the adytum of some ancient temple to personify man's whole search for truth, and that Truth itself, for the following reasons: 1. There is no satisfactory proof of the physical existence of Christ. 2. Christ is associated definitely with the solar myth. 3. The miracles of Jesus could not have taken place without historical recognition. 4. Heretics were not crucified under the Roman law, this penalty being reserved for murderers, robbers, and highwaymen. 5. Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee, died 4 B. C. 6. The only Roman registration of the Jews was under Quirinus, A. D. 6. 7. The slaughter of the innocents did not take place. 8. There is no proof that the Gospels were written by the men whose names they bear. 9. The early Roman Church was in no agreement as to the life of Christ, Irenaeus claiming that he lived to old age. 10. It is exceedingly doubtful if St. Peter was ever in Rome. 11. The GOLDEN LEGEND by Voragine is filled with impossible and absurd legends, most of which have been believed as literal truths for centuries. All of which indicates the quality of criticism with which these religious subjects have been considered. From these, and a mass of other material contradictory and controversial, we are inclined to question the literal Christ as an instrument of spiritual power, and to see in the story a mystical exposition of divine spiritual truths.

INTERPRETATION

If we consider the Gospel account in the light of comparative religion, we shall find that there is very little contained therein not to be found in the great religious systems of the pagan world. It is written in the Bible that Mary the wife of Joseph received a vision in which it was foretold that a son should be born to her, she should call him Jesus, and he would deliver Israel from sin. It is most significant that the name of the Virgin should be Mary. There are important phonetic associations. The Latin word

MARE means the sea. Of course, the word virgin also means pure—and virgin MARE means pure sea. In pagan symbolism the sea is the natural symbol of illusion because of the reflecting quality of water. Mary is Isis, the Egyptian goddess of the Mysteries whose veil no man might lift. She is the virgin Sophia, the Mother of Adepts; she is Diana of the Ephesians, the MATER DEORUM of the Romans; she is Istar, Astarte, Mylitta.

The Annunciation has its parallel in the legends of the Aztec Indians. Quetzalcoatl, god of the winds and of the sky, whose symbol was the cross and who shed his blood for the sins of his people, was born of Sochiquetzal in the land of the seven colors. An angelic spirit descended from the constellation of Orion and told his mother that she should bear a son who should save his people.

Mary the mother of Jesus, Maya the mother of Buddha, have an identical significance. They are the womb of the Mysteries from whom are born the sons of light, the redeemers, the saviors of men. He who enters the temple and having perfected himself in the sacred wisdom emerges therefrom between the pillars of the porch, is indeed born again out of the Great Mother, Wisdom. Therefore, he is a son of Wisdom, in Egypt, the son of the hawk and the son of the widow—Isis mourning for Osiris.

In ancient time, the coming of a new adept was announced from the portico of the temple. The god-men, the twice-born ones, were no longer as ordinary mortals, they were the objects of a universal veneration, the most honored of mortals because they were the closest to Truth. These adepts are called "sons of the silent mother" in some of the ancient writings. They bore witness before men of the light. They were frequently referred to as the "sons of God."

Our word COLLEGE comes from the ancient COLLEGIUM which was a society of artisans bound together by vows. Our word GYMNASIUM is derived from one of the names for the temple of wisdom. The institution is the mother of its graduates. The same thought survives to this day in our exoteric system of education. In the term ALMA MATER, the university is acknowledged as the mother of its graduates. The Annunciation, therefore, announces the coming

of an initiate. His star has been seen. He has come forth from the portals of the House of Wisdom, the virgin mother of the wise. She is the one who, though her sons be many, is still a virgin.

Joseph took his wife Mary down to Bethlehem to be registered. There was no room in the inn and the travelers were lodged in the stable or grotto. It appears from the account that the stable was partly a natural cave. The present grotto of the Nativity shown to visitors at Bethlehem is definitely a cavern in natural rock. This is the most important part of the symbolism. Faber in his CABIRI has reproduced a picture of a cave of the Mysteries as a frontispiece.

Mithras, the Persian Christ, was born in a cavern. Caves are symbols of both the womb and the tomb, or birth and death. Primitive peoples believed that their ancestors lived under the earth in caverns where they celebrated and feasted. Mounds were the domes of the palaces of the dead. A pyramid is a highly perfected mound, containing rooms for either burial or initiation, or both. The Southwestern Indians of America still believe that the gods dwell under the earth, that they themselves came out of the earth in the beginning, and also, that the souls of the dead return again to the underworld. Among the Indians in the vicinity of the Grand Canyon there are legends to the effect that this great natural abyss led downward into the world of the spirits. Volcanoes were similarly honored and for the same reason. In their KIVAS or houses of initiation, the Hopis dig a small chimney-like hole down into the earth believing that through this opening the gods can hear their deliberations. The belief that the dead live under the earth and that an initiation into the mysteries is a symbolic death, caused the rites of the pagan mysteries to be given nocturnally and in weird, subterranean places, frequently crypts.

The infant Jesus was born in a manger surrounded by animals. These animals merely represent the animal world, or the material universe, wherein most mortals dwell in the state of dumb, driven cattle. There may be another link in this part of the story. In the Egyptian Mysteries, candidates were surrounded by masked priests who bore over their faces the masks of various animals. One of the

most frequently used was that of the bull or ox. These masked priests represented the temptations of the animal world with which the neophyte is repeatedly tested.

Jesus was born in a manger. The manger is the feeding trough from which the animal nature eats of the grain and seed, particularly the seed of wheat, the life-bestower, which has long been the symbol of the savior god. This is a survival of the agricultural cult of very primitive time. The death and resurrection story belong to the agrarian period of early humanity. After thousands of years, the cult of the wheat seed descended even to St. Paul who likening the seed to Christ says: "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." (I Cor. 15:36. Read the entire chapter for further examples of the seed symbolism.) Tithing survives from the same period. Some prophets of ancient days realizing the wastefulness of man decreed that ten per cent of the seed should be dedicated to the god of increase and should be put away for the next sowing, for if ten per cent of the seed were not returned to the earth, there would be famine and sorrow in the land.

The Star of Bethlehem is susceptible of numerous interpretations. Several writers have attempted to prove that a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn heralded the Nativity. The Gnostic interpretation is probably the nearest to the truth. They taught that the star was not seen by ordinary mortals, but only by such as possessed inward vision. The star was the soul of the adept descending from the spheres of light, the higher eons. At initiation, the higher self is united with the mortal nature. This luminous over-soul, the *Anthropos*, full of light and shining unto the ends of creation, descended through the substances of the invisible planes and came to rest finally in the body of the new adept. This concept is distinctly pagan. After the death of Julius Caesar a comet was seen. The Romans regarded this comet as the soul of Caesar ascending to the abode of the blessed. This interpretation is more or less inferred by the Gospel account. Only three wise men came to worship at the manger of the babe, and these came because they had seen his star. The Gnostics taught that the SOTER, or Savior, descended through an infinity of eons, lighting each

one, falling like a flame from the sky. In modern esoteric systems, the aura or subtle body plays the part of the star. From this aura it is possible to tell the spiritual estate of man.

Three wise men, kings of Eastern lands, came to Bethlehem, following the star. They brought gold, frankincense and myrrh as offerings to the newborn babe. Gold is the symbol of mind and of power. Frankincense is the symbol of emotion and beauty. And myrrh is the symbol of the body because it was used in the embalming of the dead. The wise men belonged to the three races to signify that all living things adore the ever-living Truth. The wise kings are the three lower eons of the Gnostics, the symbols of the inferior parts of man's own nature. Together they make up the personality composed of thought, emotion, and matter. This lower man humbles itself before the incarnate Word and gives allegiance and recognition to the spiritual self.

The Immaculate Conception constitutes one of the principal problems of the Church. The acceptance of the Virgin Birth of Christ is advanced usually as an absolute prerequisite to salvation. There are several possible interpretations. Buddha was born through the right side of his mother which might signify a Caesarian birth, a term based upon the fact that Julius Caesar was so born. At the time of Caesar this was recognized already as a symbol of extraordinary excellence, an omen of greatness. Most of the savior gods are born of an immaculate conception, through which circumstance they gain an especial esteem. Of course, in the dictionary the word immaculate means clean or without blemish, and in itself infers no miraculous or metaphysical circumstance. The word assumes a supernatural significance only in the terminology of the Church.

Ancient peoples desiring to honor their prophets and teachers frequently ascribed to them some supernatural origin. Even Mohammed's birth was accompanied by wonders. But these wonders belong entirely to the imagination of the pious.

It is intimated that the mother of Jesus had other sons and daughters to whom no supernatural qualities are attributed. There is no factual foundation for a belief that Jesus was conceived in any other

than a normal manner. A parallel for this is found in the birth of Pythagoras. Although his father and mother are clearly mentioned, it is stated by his most enthusiastic admirers that he was conceived by the specter of the god Apollo which they themselves called a "holy ghost." This was not intended literally, but rather astrologically, as he was born under the sign Leo which was ruled by the sun god Apollo.

In the Gospel story, Herod is made out as a man of despicable villainy. In truth, he was a mild, kindly person, very solicitous of the welfare of his people, and more or less a nonentity occupying a well-nigh hopeless position. He appears no better and no worse than the average prince of his time. He was beset constantly with uprisings and turmoils directed not against Rome but against himself. It is this man who has been immortalized as the personification of all corruption.

The Jewish hatred for everything Roman may have inspired a general dislike for Herod, but it is probable that he was simply chosen in the Christian drama to play the part of evil because he fitted approximately into the desired plan. The origin of Herod's massacre of the innocents is twofold. First, in India where Krishna is smuggled away as an infant when the evil king causes the murder of the firstborn. And second, in the story of Ben Panthira being forced to flee into Egypt to escape the Jewish persecution of the rabbins. The Krishna story in India is centuries older than the Christian account, but it is practically identical with it. The slaughter

of the innocents belongs definitely in the class of apocrypha. (See Mathew 2:16 for the account.)

The Romans were good historians, and so was Josephus. The slaughter of the firstborn of a whole province never could have escaped history. Early Christian theologians have declared that the innocents slaughtered by Herod represented the saints martyred for Christ. But even this fails to solve the mystery.

Let us think then in the terms of the Mystery ritual. Christ represents truth and wisdom. Herod is cast in the role of ignorance and evil. Ignorance and perversion realize that in the presence of truth they must fail. Therefore, they set about to discover and destroy truth. But what is truth? and where is it to be found? The institute of Pythagoras at Krotona was burned by a disgruntled and rejected candidate. The master escaped but died soon after, probably crucified by his enemies. Under the guidance of Rome, the religious and political sects of Syria were as far as possible broken up, their members killed or sent into exile. Take for example the case of Simeon ben Jachoiu who was forced to hide in a cave for years. The breaking up and destruction of the old Mystery Schools and the persecution and martyrdom of their disciples is one of the key interpretations of this fable. In Revelation the woman, the Mysteries, is sent out into the desert which describes the scattering of the initiates into the Arabian desert. By analogy, this also represents the efforts to destroy truth in society and in man by the cunning contrivances of ignorance and perversion.

Yours sincerely,

Manly P. Hall