

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO The Meaning of the Traditions

The material of preceding chapters has impact upon our religious notions in a number of ways:

1) Ancient people of this world knew of a Father in heaven, a Son who is King of the heavens, a rebellion in heaven, and a heavenly host. This knowledge comes from the mists of the past, long before recorded history. It is not the invention of historic times, nor the property of a chosen people.

2) All significant items of Christian belief, aside from pagan distortions, are echoes of a much older religious heritage. This is marked not only by the myths of peoples from all over the world, but far more specifically in the *Egyptian Book of Life*. That written record predates Abraham and the existence of the Hebrew people as a chosen instrument of God.

3) Jewish denial of Jesus as a divine Son is counter to that ancient religious heritage. Jesus was the long-awaited divine Son. But the Jews of his day had drifted so far from understanding they could not accept him. They plotted and ordered the execution of the Creator himself. As Caiaphas the high priest stated, *"It is better that one man should die than a whole nation perish, John 18:14."*

4) The Judeo-Christian belief in one God, pure monotheism, is also a distortion of the true nature of the heavenly realms and the administration of those realms. Indeed there is one God, the Father of all, and one Son, through whom all things were created, but there are also other divine beings who administer creation. The notion of a God who is solitary and alone is denied by the Bible, the source book of their faith. Unfortunately, the Bible is of little instructive value concerning the heavenly realms; it is merely suggestive with tantalizing bits and pieces.

When the titles, attributes, and characteristics of the God-figure of Judeo-Christian belief are listed analytically an identity appears among three phases of that figure. Yahweh, Michael and Jesus are the same personality in three different roles: a personal God, a ruler and commander of the heavens, and a God who lived among us as a man. This was brought out strikingly by the comparisons with the Egyptian god-figure Ra-Khephera-Osiris.

These points are crucial. Information comes down to us from prehistoric times, earlier than 3000 BC, long before Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus or Paul, and which reflects, no matter how distorted, essential elements of Jewish and Christian belief. The olden peoples of this world may have invented mythological tales of a king of the gods but the Egyptians had replete details of this myth long before the Hebrews were given it directly.

The comparisons raise considerable difficulty, regardless of our religious inclinations or theological views. Devout Christians may believe the *Egyptian Book of Life* is the work of the Devil. How else could it so closely resemble revelation through the life and teachings of Jesus? Jews may tremble at the thought that Jesus was truly the Son of God predicted in prehistoric times. Modern secular minds may think that Jewish religious history reflects the expression of a frustrated Israelite people who borrowed many ideas from Egypt. They may also feel that Jesus was a deluded personality who had knowledge of the Egyptian writings and who tried to emulate Osiris. But to an objective view, with faith in a living God, the comparisons represent a reality that escapes Jews and Christians, as well as godless minds.

A number of observations may help clarify this situation, and provide better estimate of man's ancient and forgotten past.

1) The comparisons of the Bible against the *Egyptian Book of Life* are detailed. The reference to a mighty ruler of the heavens is undeniable from either Egyptian or Hebrew tradition. From the King-of-kings, to the children of revolt, condemnation, fire, God incarnation, resurrection, salvation history, and eternal life — all essential details are present.

2) The Egyptian record is as dead as the people with whom it was buried. It was not considered, even in the earliest forms, as the work of living persons or peoples. It was crystallized long before the first extant version was written and was preserved as something which had come from the past. It was not something that was in the making. It had an antiquity lost in time; it was maintained out of respect for its authority from some ancient source. It expressed a hope and a promise for unknown thousands of years, just as the belief in Jesus has expressed a hope and a promise to Christians for the past 2,000 years.

3) The beliefs of the Hebrews are living ones, not dead ones borrowed from the past. Those beliefs were created by the lives, activities, writings and experiences of historic personages — not dead memory from obscure antiquity. The beliefs developed over many centuries; they were not given full-blown and complete by any one human personality — not Abraham, nor Moses, nor Isaiah, nor Jesus, nor Paul. The development of Jewish faith spanned 2,000 years, from the time of Abraham, to the final dispersion of the Jews after the Roman destructions. The historical unfolding culminated in the life of Jesus. In spite of fond Jewish thoughts to the contrary, the life of Jesus marked the termination of God's exclusive work with the Jews. Their only hope now lies with a God whom they condemned to a torturous death on the cross.

4) Christian faith is founded in the work of Jews, the apostles, who were inspired by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, another Jew. Christianity is a continuing expression of God's work on this world, shaped and formed by the life of the Creator himself, but initiated through Jews, even though they are no longer his special instrument.

It may be helpful to briefly outline three major views that one might take of the material we have thus far considered. These are: a) the modern secular view, b) the traditional Christian view, c) the view suggested by the evidence.

The Modern Secular View

This view is based upon several ideas and assumptions:

1) There are no supernatural events. All events have a common, ordinary, everyday and natural explanation.

2) All the strange stories from the past are the product of ignorant, superstitious, and fear-ridden minds motivated from a complex of possible psychological causes. The dream life, fearsome natural events, and so on, shape this motivation.

3) The Judeo-Christian record is not the product of a living reality originating from God but of men easily influenced by mythological traditions, religious idealisms, or the persuasive power of a few charismatic but deluded prophets and personalities.

4) During times of social stress and upheaval certain human minds seek security or psychic support in religion.

5) There is no foreknowledge of events. The prophets were merely reflecting their own difficult eras; their pronouncements are not more than frustrated attempts to turn the flow of events, or perhaps to achieve the idealistic dreams of a future salvation. The material from the *Egyptian Book of Life* is not more than expression of similar psychological impulses.

6) Jesus was only a man. He was not divine. Although he may have left teachings of high religious value he probably was partially deluded and may even have plotted a whole sequence of events to impress the gullible people of his day. Since the prophets had spoken of a Messiah he may have felt he was the one to fulfill those prophecies.

7) The Egyptian literature could easily have been the source of many Hebrew traditions and Jesus may have played the role of savior from knowledge of that literature.

8) God may exist but if so he resides in a far-off heaven without a directing hand in the universe, or he may pervade all creation as an abstract spirit.

Such views deny a personal living God. They do not accept that divine personalities guide the destiny of this planet, nor that they could reveal the future.

The Traditional Christian View

This view is strictly monotheistic.

1) There is one God who lives in heaven but the location is hazy, unknown, and unspecified. There is only one God, the Father of all.

2) However, God has a Son who came down to this earth. How the Son relates to the Father is clouded in abstract theological doctrine. There is no clear definition.

3) The Father-Son relationship is further complicated by a Holy Spirit who makes up a Trinity. Again the relationship is unclear and unspecified. How Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be One but with individual expression is one of God's mysteries.

4) Although the Bible speaks of angelic host, fallen Princes, and rebellion in heaven the true nature of those beings and those events is not clearly given. The status of Michael, the role of Lucifer, and other personalities are not explained.

5) For fundamentalists, the Bible is the infallible, inspired and perfect word of God. They make no serious objective effort to understand the sources of the Bible, nor how translations alter their understanding. If the Bible was inspired by God it must be perfect, hence it needs no serious scrutiny. No revelations were given outside the Bible.

6) There also are no modern revelations. Revelation was frozen with the apostles. The passage of Rev 22:18 is proof text that God ceased immediate contact with later generations. He no longer works directly with men to upstep the religious development of mankind. The Bible is sufficient for all future time.

7) Jesus was a sacrificial lamb whose shedding of blood was necessary to save this world. He will sometime return to gather his elect and the world will then be destroyed to permit the creation of a new earth.

A New View (and the Most Ancient)

The view suggested by old folk memory, preserved through the debased mythologies of the world, by linguistic evidence, by the *Egyptian Book of Life*, and by a deeper examination of the Bible, has the following characteristics:

1) There is a Father-God behind all creation. He is a remote personality who brought into being a host of celestial executive personalities. He is the One God, the One and Only.

2) There is a Creator-Son, a distinct personality who fashioned the starry realms visible to our eyes and who commands a host of celestial personalities. He is resident upon a certain celestial sphere, the holy mount of assembly, in the north part of heaven, perhaps in the constellation of the Great Bear.

3) There is a spirit personality pervading the universe who is intimately associated with the Father and the Son. This spirit is known in the ancient mythologies as the Mother of the gods. Knowledge of this spirit personality was later developed into the Christian concept of the Holy Spirit.

4) The Creator-Son may be one of many who organized different sections of the starry realms. Michael is one of the Chief Princes.

5) Our world once knew administration by divine beings.

6) A rebellion occurred in the heavens, among the starry realms of space. This rebellion carried many celestial personalities with it, a third of the host of heaven. The rebellion was joined by the former Prince of this World who disrupted normal planetary developments. He brought on the cyclic pattern of our earth's geophysical history, and the consequent turmoil, trouble, and tribulation. He also

was instrumental in the default of Adam and Eve. As part of their task they were assigned to rescue the world from rebellion but they failed. As a consequence earth's golden age was destroyed.

7) The Creator-Son incarnated on this planet as a human mortal. One purpose was to gain experience as a human mortal, that he might be a more merciful Creator. Another was to rescue the planet. He assumed planetary authority and care.

8) A special program of planetary salvation has been unfolding through the ages. This program involves not only the geophysical cycles of the earth, but also the selection of a special group of people to disseminate the genes of Adam and to preserve them through the planetary judgement shortly to ensue. Abraham was to be the father of many people. His genetic strains have carried to many parts of the world.

Other factors become apparent from our study.

1) The geographical area near the Tigris-Euphrates river basin is the focus of the prehistory of our world. It is the location of the earliest historic Semitic people, the Akkadians. It is the location of the Sumerians, those who possessed the most detailed record of the world ages. It is near the center of the origins of the Indo-European people. It is not too far distant from Egypt and a people who preserved the most intact record of religious belief from very ancient times.

From the evidence of Semitic influence we may reasonably assume that the ancient world administration was based somewhere near this area. The worldwide Semitic influence, and the location of surviving remnants of Semitic people, suggest this neighborhood was the location of the original planetary administration. This assumption also follows ancient tradition of the location of the Garden of Eden and the beginning of man. The assumption is also supported by the fact that the major forces in world civilization also issue from this area.