

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

The Fallen Gods of Greece

In every ancient religion the forces which tend toward evil and suffering are visible to soul-vision as demons or "fallen gods." Historically, a hierarchy of fallen Gods generally refers to an older theological system which has been overcome and outmoded by a new one. The Gods of the old religions tend to become the demons of the new; this applies even to modern Christianity. Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, enumerates hosts of fallen Angels whose names come directly from pagan pantheons. Lucifer was the Latin name for the Morning Star. Beelzebub was a God in Canaan; so also was Samael.

When the Hellenes invaded ancient Greece during the latter part of the Taurean Age and the opening centuries of the Arian Age, ancient deities were "overthrown" (cast out) by the Olympians under the leadership of Zeus. As that wave of migration advanced from point to point, Zeus took to himself one wife or consort after another, and by each he produced offspring; but his own identity remained unchanged. This gives a clear picture of a patriarchal religion advancing upon and supplanting a former matriarchal religion in which the mother deities were pre-eminent. Worship of Aphrodite of Corinth belonged to the

matriarchal era, when the beautiful Mother was the supreme object of adoration. The later degradation of this cult to the point where Corinth was known as a city of Magdalenes is a matter of history. Thus Aphrodite Urania, the pure, became a demon to the Christian mind. She is typified as a spirit of evil in Wagner's Tannhauser, where the cave of Venus is the abode of lustful female demons intent upon destroying human souls.

Foremost among the fallen Gods of Greece are the race of Titans — serpentine deities, sons of Ouranos (Heaven), whom Zeus imprisoned in the pits of Tartarus. They represent the titanic and cataclysmic forces which were active in earlier geological epochs of the Earth Period: volcanoes, earthquakes, floods and so on, which the Olympians reduced to order under the Law of Zeus.

During these epochs, a hierarchy of so-called "fallen Angels" was very active in human affairs, its function being to awaken mankind to a knowledge of the outer material world. All knowledge of a purely materialistic nature was its gift to infant humanity; and woman, possessed of innate clairvoyant powers, was its willing instrument. Hence, the first civilization came through woman and was the fruit of instruction by the "serpent."

Womankind gradually converted man to materialism with the inevitable result that as they lost their spiritual vision

they turned to the use of brute force to achieve their ends, and the first of their accomplishments was to subjugate their teachers. Thus, the roles of the sexes were reversed. Men became the instruments and protégées of the Lucifer Spirits while women turned to contemplation of the spiritual, concentrating their efforts upon supporting religion wherein their love nature might find an outlet. When masculine ecclesiastical authorities forbade their communication with Luciferic instrumentalities, women became increasingly subservient to a patriarchal church.

Prometheus (Lucifer) the Titan brought fire and civilization to mankind. He brought also the Secrets of Olympus, and in punishment for this Zeus crucified him upon a rock in the Caucasus. There he suffered until released by the savior-hero Hercules. Esoterically considered, this is an initiatory myth for the masculine candidate; but the essential teaching applies equally to the feminine. It shows that the Light-bringer (Lucifer-Prometheus) must be "redeemed" within the soul of each person individually; that is, the creative fire of genius must be liberated from materiality and turned to the service of the spiritual. Material arts and material sciences are good as far as they go; if they stop short of reality, however, they are to that extent limited, and limitation upon mans soul must always result in sorrow and suffering.

Prometheus stole the Fire from heaven, lighting his torch from the chariot of the Sun, and brought it down to earth for man's use. This symbolized the misuse of the creative life force within man. Each day a vulture devoured his liver (center of the desire body) but it grew again during each night, so his torture was unending. However, Zeus (Jupiter) could not slay the Titan because he possessed a secret so vital that it concerned even the ruler of heaven himself. Esoterically, this is a reference to Scorpio which holds the secret of regeneration and, therefore, of Life Everlasting, without which even the Gods would perish. Having involved himself in the affairs of men, the Titan was under the Law of Causation to suffer and endure until the Great Work of our Creative Day has been accomplished under the inspiration of the Lords of Form.

Later Greek poet-philosophers were not content to let their Prometheus legend rest with the Titan chained to the black rock. It was believed he discovered a remedy for old age when he stole the Fire from heaven, but as he bore it toward earth, this remedy was stolen from him by a snake. Obviously, the snake represents his own attribute for it is reminiscent of his Titan origin; that is, it represents the Dweller on the Threshold. Snakes, now possessing the remedy, can renew themselves by casting off their worn-out coats; but man must suffer the evils of old age until he

recovers the stolen boon — that is, until he makes the secret part of his inner consciousness.

The redemption of Prometheus appears in the legend of Chiron, the Centaur. Centaurs were fabulous creatures possessing the body of a horse surmounted by the head and shoulders of a man. Chiron was the most noted among them. He lived in a cave near the summit of Mt. Pelion, to which the mystic heroes of Greece came to be taught. Hercules, Jason, Castor, Pollux, Achilles were among the famous ones who came to imbibe of Chiron's knowledge relating to the stars. This is of special interest to students of astrology, for at his death Chiron was placed in the heavens as the constellation Sagittarius which governs the higher mind, the mind that is able to rise above the realm of sense and into the sphere of pure reason And intuitive vision.

Unfortunately, so the legend continues, Hercules opened the fatal wine jar and its odor attracted hordes of evil spirits. Wine here symbolizes materiality under the sway of mortal mind. Earth-man, typified by Noah, planted the first vineyard; and to this day humanity is held under the domination of this false spirit of decay. But Hercules dipped his arrows in the blood of the vanquished Hydra and managed to slay most of these evil spirits, and in doing so he accidentally wounded Chiron. Being immortal, Chiron

could not die; so he pleaded with the Gods to deprive him of his immortality that he might be released from his suffering. He prayed to be accepted as atonement for Prometheus. Zeus (Jupiter), deeply moved by his plea, accepted the sacrifice. (Like Jehovah in the Bible, Jupiter typifies Cosmic Law.) Hercules then made his way up the precipitous rock, killed the vulture and set Prometheus free. Chiron, thus freed from his suffering, was placed in the heavens and beautified with stars.

Mythologically, Sagittarius is shown at the edge of the star stream aiming at the great red star Antares which gleams in the heart of Scorpio. Ovid writes: "The Archer thrusts the Scorpion with his bended bow." In Genesis 49:17, as Jacob bestows his blessings on his twelve sons, he says in regard to Scorpio: "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider (Sagittarius) shall fall backward."

Prometheus the Titan, creator of humankind on the form side of Nature, is Lucifer in Hebrew legend. Vulcan, like Prometheus, is another fallen God of Fire, and in his fall he portrays another facet of the brilliant and gem-like Lucifer. He was a blacksmith, a metal worker, a builder. His hand fashioned the Palace of Apollo "beyond the sunrise" and all the shining dwellings of the Gods and Goddesses. In their totality these dwellings are the visible universe. When

Vulcan was cast out of heaven he was a whole day in falling:

From morn to noon he fell,
From noon to dewey eve,
A summer's day, and with the setting sun
Dropped from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Aegean isle.

The fallen Vulcan is Hiram Abiff of Masonic legend, he who built Solomon's Temple (the solar system). In humanity he is Cain, who made two blades of grass to grow in place of one. He is Tubal-Cain, for he is the prototype of craftsmen. He is the Fire burning in the forge of Nature, which is visible to the "new vision." He is called the least beautiful of all the Gods. One account states that he was ejected from heaven because he was deformed; another, that he became deformed in consequence of his fall. Medieval Christian artists vied with one another in depicting the hideousness of Satan (Vulcan).

The mystical sacrifice of Prometheus was the inspiration of Prometheus Bound, wherein Aeschylus, the dramatist-Seer and Initiate of the Eleusinian Mysteries, expresses profound sympathy for the suffering Titan.

Another initiatory myth of similar import is the story of Hephaestus, master artist of the Olympian Gods whom Zeus

cast out of heaven. Again it is a Titanic force, the divine creative Fire, which is concerned. Hephaestos was the son of Hera, born without a father (according to one account) even as Athena sprang from the forehead of Zeus. His expulsion from heaven hints of his former grandeur as the Son of the Virgin Mother in a matriarchal religion. It was he who built the mansion of the God of artists, artificers and craftsmen. When the Olympians desired to create Pandora, Hephaestos formed her beautiful body. Smoke from volcanoes was thought to come from the fires of his forge burning deep within the earth, a reference to the terrestrial Fire of Life which is as clearly visible to the etheric vision of modern Seers as it was to the clairvoyance of the ancients.

When Hephaestos was flung from Olympus, Dionysus took his place as the God of celestial Fire, for Dionysus was the God of the Divine Fire belonging to a man's soul as Hephaestos was the God of the Creative Fire burning in the heart of every human genius. Hephaestos corresponds to Ptah of Egypt, to Horus of the Vernal Equinox, and to the Masonic master workman, Hiram Abiff, whose hammer is the symbol of the sign Aries.

Hephaestos was twice flung from heaven. Hebrew mythology relates the story of two wars in heaven, in both of which a multitude of angelic Beings were cast down to earth.

Christian mythology attempts to make Lucifer the embodiment of ugliness as a result of his fall; the Greeks thought Hephaestos "lame" and malformed, the only unbeautiful God of Olympus; yet the original Hebrew story depicts Lucifer as eternally youthful and beautiful. The works of medieval artists indicate their knowledge of this last tradition and Milton followed it in his Paradise Lost.

Occult literature is replete with narratives about the entrancing beauty of the "fallen Angels." Hebrew tradition ascribes to them all of the arts and crafts of civilization, and specifically states that women were their earthly agents in early epochs.

The first war in heaven of Hebrew mythology occurred before the world was created. This agrees with the findings of occult science. It culminated in the Garden of Eden with the "seduction" of Heva (Eve) and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden. The second war took place after the expulsion, when certain rebellious angelic hosts descended to earth and took unto themselves wives from among the beautiful daughters of Cain. They taught their wives the arts of reading, writing and alchemy. From these Wise Women taught by the "Serpents" name the line which produced Tubal-Cain and those artists and craftsmen whose genius ultimately flowered in Hiram Abiff.

Angels of secular arts and crafts must not be confused with demons representing evil qualities of the soul: lust, murder, avarice, anger, contempt, envy, vengefulness, hatred, and so forth. Hebrew esotericism provides a list of "fallen Angels" corresponding to these evil qualities. In Western Wisdom Teachings these demoniac beings are not called "Angels" but "elementals." They are not superhuman like the Angels, but sub-human. They inhabit evil thought forms thrown off by human beings, feeding upon them and thus furthering their own evolution at the expense of the evolution of humanity. They must be expelled from consciousness if one is to acquire a true picture of the Olympians.

Nor are the Chthonian (Underworld) deities of the Greeks to be thought of as evil or "fallen." These include Pluto, who carries the keys to the Underworld, and Persephone, God and Goddess of Death. The names Hades and Aidoneus (the Unseen) also applied to Pluto. The God Hades does not in the least correspond to the Christian Satan, whose name Sathanas indicates him to be the God (spirit) of Hatred and Despair, leader of the Black Hierarchy. The Christ overcame Satan and death during the three days between His Crucifixion and Resurrection. This is an initiatory myth demonstrating that so long as we are enchained by hatred we must continue to suffer the trials of this world; only divine Love and Wisdom can set us free by conquering hate

and discord. Samael is the Angel of Death to the Hebrews. It is Samael ("severity of God") and his Angels who rule over the Hebrew purgatory. Since death and hate figure together, death is unconquerable except through love. The Greeks taught this truth in three very beautiful legends: those of Orpheus and Eurydice, of Eros and Psyche, of Adonis and Aphrodite.

Each of the Olympians possessed a Chthonian aspect. There is even an Aphrodite of the Tomb at Delphi. In this capacity she was worshipped as the Goddess of the Depth, the Dark One. The Adonis myth also taught the triumph of love over death. This myth came to Greece from Chaldea, but Ishtar is easily recognizable in the Greek Aphrodite of the Tomb. Aphrodite contended with Persephone for Adonis who, like Tammuz, was killed by a boar. A compromise was effected whereby Adonis was to spend one-third of the year with Persephone, one-third with Aphrodite and one-third alone.

One of the loveliest of Greek initiatory legends, that of Eros and Psyche, portrays the beautiful God of Love coming as Death to a maiden who, having been thrown from a high rock as a sacrifice to Aphrodite, finds happiness and bliss in the arms of her lover, Death. Some of the most exquisite portrayals of heaven-world bliss to be found anywhere in literature appear in this initiatory legend. The self-same

concept occurs in Christian writings where Jesus is called the "Lover of the Soul." Like the Chthonian Eros of the Mysteries, he is depicted with beautiful white wings.

Hermes, too, has a Chthonian (Underworld) aspect in which he, as Hermes Trismegistus, is the presiding Angel of Hermetic philosophers. He is also called Hermes Psychopompos, Guide of Souls, for he conducts the souls of the dead (Initiates) through the inner worlds.

Dionysus, son of Zeus, takes on a Chthonian character under the name of Zagreus. As Dionysus Zagreus he is the God of a strictly monotheistic cult, the Orphic Mysteries. To an Orphic Initiate all other Gods of the pantheon are but attributes of the One Supreme Deity. Dionysus is most clearly identified with the Chthonian Eros, Lover of Souls.

Although the Hebrews name the Angel of Death Samael — he who slays with a drop of venom for he is of serpentine nature—they acknowledge him as the servant of God. He is said to possess twelve wings. The Arabs speak of the Death Angel as Azrael and have much to say of his beauty and kindness. A neophyte in the Arab Mystery Schools was cautioned not to look too long upon his beautiful face as to do so meant death. To esotericists this means that the great sweetness of Azrael's beauty irresistibly draws the soul away from its body.

Likewise, the Greeks had words of praise for the God Hades — not in fear and propitiation as exoteric scholars suppose, but in recognition of his real nature as a god of love and tenderness and mercy — as in the Eleusinian Mysteries.

After the Greeks reached the apex of their glorious civilization, their thoughts turned increasingly toward solving the mystery of death. From the sixth century onward the greatest thinkers applied their Initiate powers to the establishment of Mystery Schools which would prepare the Greeks for the coming of Christ.

— ***Corinne Heline***