

## **P.D. Ouspensky and Esotericism In the New Testament**

**Douglas J. Meyer**

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### **Abstract**

The focus of this article is an examination of the work of P.D. Ouspensky in his book *A New Model of the Universe*, which addresses the existence of underground schools, as well as exotericism versus esotericism as an eternal dynamic of history in the chapters, “Esotericism and Modern Thought,” “Superman,” “Christianity and the New Testament,” and “In Search of the Miraculous.” This article contains new observations about the possible influence of an esoteric school, or Order, in the New Testament book Epistle to the Hebrews, the account of the Transfiguration in the Gospel of Luke, and the raising of Lazarus from death.

## **P.D. Ouspensky et l'Esotérisme dans le Nouveau Testament**

**Douglas J. Meyer**

### **Résumé**

Cet article examine l'œuvre de P.D. Ouspensky à travers l'étude de son livre « Un nouveau modèle de l'univers », qui porte sur l'existence d'écoles secrètes, ainsi que la contraposition de l'exotérisme et de l'esotérisme comme une dynamique éternelle de l'histoire, dans les chapitres : « L'esotérisme et la pensée moderne », « Superman » « Le Christianisme et le Nouveau Testament », et « A la recherche du miraculeux ». L'article contient également des réflexions inédites sur l'influence possible d'une école ou d'un ordre ésotériques dans l'Épître aux Hébreux du Nouveau Testament, dans le récit de la Transfiguration de l'Évangile de Luc et dans celui de la résurrection de Lazare.

## **P.D. Ouspensky y Esoterismo en el Nuevo Testamento**

**Douglas J. Meyer**

### **Resumen**

El enfoque de este artículo es un examen del trabajo de P.D. Ouspensky en su libro “Un Nuevo Modelo del Universo”, el cual trata la existencia de escuelas ocultas, además de exoterismo versus esoterismo como una dinámica eterna de la historia en los capítulos, “Esoterismo y Pensamientos Modernos”, “Superman”, “Cristianismo y el Nuevo Testamento,” y “En busca de lo Milagroso”. Este artículo contiene nuevas observaciones acerca de la posible influencia de una escuela esotérica u Orden en el libro la Epístola de los Hebreos del Nuevo Testamento, la reseña de la Transfiguración en el Evangelio de Lucas, y la resurrección de Lázaro entre los muertos.

## **P.D. Ouspensky e o Esoterismo no Novo Testamento**

**Douglas J. Meyer**

### **Sumário**

O foco deste artigo é um exame do trabalho de P.D. Ouspensky em seu livro “Um Novo Modelo do Universo”, que aborda a existência de escolas subterrâneas, bem como o exoterismo versus esoterismo como uma dinâmica eterna da história nos capítulos “Esoterismo e Pensamento Moderno”, “Super-homem”, “Cristianismo e o Novo Testamento” e “Em Busca dos Milagrosos”. Este artigo contém novas observações sobre a possível influência de uma Ordem ou escola esotérica no livro do Novo Testamento, Epístola aos Hebreus, o relato da Transfiguração no Evangelho de Lucas, e em ressuscitar Lázaro da morte.

## **P.D. Ouspensky und die Esoterik vom Neuen Testament**

**Douglas J. Meyer**

### **Zusammenfassung**

In diesem Beitrag wird das Buch von P.D. Ouspensky „Ein neues Modell des Universums“, besprochen. Die Kapitel „Die Esoterik und das moderne Denken“, „Superman“, „Das Christentum und das Neue Testament“ und „Auf der Suche nach dem Wunderbaren“ besprechen das Vorhandensein geheimer Schulen und stellen die Exoterik gegenüber der Esoterik als eine ewige Dynamik der Geschichte dar. Dieser Beitrag stellt neue Betrachtungen bezüglich möglicher Einflüsse einer esoterischen Schule oder eines Ordens im Buch „Brief an die Hebräer“ des Neuen Testaments vor. Es betrifft die Verklärung, wie im Lukas Evangelium berichtet, und die Auferstehung von Lazarus.

### **Introduction**

*If it is ever established beyond question that Jesus was an initiate of the pagan Greek or Asiatic Mysteries, the effect upon the more conservative members of the Christian faith is likely to be cataclysmic.*

*Manly P. Hall – The Secret Teachings of All Ages<sup>1</sup>*

The philosopher P.D. Ouspensky in his book *A New Model of the Universe* (1931) discusses esotericism and esoteric schools as an inner circle of humanity and the source of civilization. The “Great Work” of esoteric schools is to evolve civilization over time and, if it fails, to preserve the knowledge of the civilization and then restore the culture by modifying the model to account for the failure. He writes, “The main substance of what has been gained by humanity in a period of culture is preserved in esoteric centers during a period of barbarism, and afterwards serves for the beginning of a new culture.”<sup>2</sup> (p.39) At critical junctures these schools take actions to change the course of history. In science fiction, the *Foundation* trilogy by Isaac Asimov depicts this same idea. In these books, a group of mathematicians develop a science called “Psychohistory,”

by which the future course of history can be changed via the injection of ideas, or similar carefully designed nudges.

These schools are often the target of persecution and yet, Ouspensky writes, “True civilization exists only in esotericism. It is the inner circle which is in fact the truly civilized portion of humanity, and the members of the inner circle are civilized men living in a country of barbarians, among savages.” (p.43) The outer appearances and symbolism of these schools change over time, but the core truths are ultimately the same. Those who are members of these schools may appear very pedestrian in life: “Men belonging to the esoteric circle, when they appear among ordinary humanity, always wear a mask through which very few succeed in penetrating.” (p.32) Essentially, they are in this world, but not of this world. (Jn 8:23) All such schools have in common the fact of initiations and degrees by which the student is introduced to sequences of new ideas, some of which mark a point of no return to earlier thinking; this is similar to the knowledge of good and evil which expels the mythical Adam and Eve from paradise. Those who understand the idea of esotericism may have the epiphany that many types of human knowledge contain hidden meaning. According to Ouspensky:

In all myths and fairy-tales of all times we find the idea of “magic,” “witchcraft” and “sorcery,” which, as we come nearer to our own period, take the form of “spiritualism,” “occultism” and the like. But even people who believe in these words understand very imperfectly what they really mean and in what respect the knowledge of a “magician” or an “occultist” differs from the knowledge of an ordinary man; and therefore all attempts to create a theory of magical knowledge end in failure. (p.15)

Throughout his book, Ouspensky outlines his “psychological method,” which is to take his principles of esotericism and use them to perceive the threads of history known and understood only by the few. In the chapter “Esotericism and the New Testament,” Ouspensky expresses the idea that the Gospels and New Testament endure because there is something special that is imperfectly sensed by the vast majority who read them and “[t]his *something* was the connection with the Mysteries.” (p.157) “The Gospels tell us in a direct and exact way of the existence of esoteric thought, and they are in themselves one of the chief literary evidences of the existence of this thought.” (p.151)

Everywhere throughout the gospels there are references to the dead and the living, and those with open eyes to see and ears to hear. The dead are the exoteric. Those who are living, reborn or undead, are esoteric; in addition, the idea of general salvation was very limited in number, “for many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14) and, “for the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” (Matt. 7:14) This is indicative of those who approach and seek initiation, as the gate is a symbol of initiation into an inner court: “knock and it shall be opened to you.” (Matt. 7:7) In the gnostic Gospel of Thomas, Jesus said, “I shall choose you, *one out of a thousand, and two out of ten thousand.*” Ouspensky writes, “The idea of the exclusiveness and difficulty of ‘salvation’ is so definite and so often emphasized in the Gospels that all the lies and hypocrisy of modern Christianity are indeed necessary in order to forget it and to attribute to Christ the sentimental idea of *general* salvation.” (p.152)

We may find that true Christianity was originally little different from the teachings of the pagan Mystery Schools as long as it is understood that it is an adaptation of the mysteries that would not seem too revolutionary within a patriarchal monotheistic model of civilization. For example, the goddess of wisdom (Sophia) is hidden in the Holy Spirit of the Trinity: “And whosoever says a word against the Son of man, will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” (Mt 12:32) Of this Ouspensky writes:

These remarkable words mean that calumny and slander directed *at Christ personally* can be forgiven. But as the head of a school, as master of a school, he could not forgive slander directed against the school, against the idea of school work, against the idea of esotericism. This form of *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost* remains with you forever. (p.204)

### **Christianity and the New Testament**

In the Gospels, every occurrence of the “kingdom of heaven” could be interpreted as a reference to esoteric schools. Consider: “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” (Matt. 11:12) This could mean that, in Judea in those days, esoteric society was persecuted. Consider: “Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:10) According to Ouspensky:

But generally this is understood as the foreseeing of the persecutions for the preaching of Christianity among the heathen, while in reality Jesus certainly meant the persecutions for the preaching of esoteric Christianity among pseudo-Christians, or for endeavours to preserve esoteric truths in the midst of a church Christianity that was becoming more and more distorted. (p.167)

People who are exoteric, of the outer circle, may hate and persecute those who are esoteric, or of the inner circle. Free thinkers and students of esotericism experience prejudice. Jesus warned his followers: “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” (John 15:20) Speaking in parable he said, “Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.” (Matt. 5:11) He knew that people claiming to follow him, but who were ignorant of esotericism, would persecute people in His name and call them evil. In this parable about persecution, we may see those who were persecuted trading places with the righteous. In other words, the so-called heretics and witches persecuted in history and the ones who supposedly acted “for my [his] sake” or in the name of Jesus trade places like an optical illusion. The damned become blessed and the righteous damned. Ouspensky wrote the following about the extreme prejudice of the medieval Church of Rome:

Church Christianity from the very beginning contradicted in many respects the ideas of Christ himself. Later, the divergence became still wider. It is by no means a new idea that Christ, if born on earth later, not only could not be the head of the Christian Church, but probably would not be able even to belong to it, and in the most brilliant periods of the

might and power of the Church would most certainly have been declared a heretic and burned at the stake. (p.149)

According to Ouspensky, Christ was not teaching a religion: "It must be remembered that later cults deviate very sharply from the fundamental teaching of Christ himself, *which in the first place was never a cult.*" (p.150) Cults are calcifications of mystical teaching which become dogmatic: "Give not that which is Holy unto the dogs, and cast not your pearls before swine, for they will trample them under foot and will turn and bite you." (Matt. 7:6) One interpretation of this dogs and swine parable is to be most careful with giving esoteric knowledge to *dogmatists*. This obvious interpretation is missing in all mainstream Bible commentaries, arguably because the commentaries are written by dogmatists. The occultist H.P. Blavatsky writes the following about Jesus. She calls him "one of the greatest reformers, an inveterate enemy of every theological dogmatism, a persecutor of bigotry, and a teacher of one of the most sublime codes of ethics; Jesus is one of the grandest and most clearly defined figures in the panorama of human history."<sup>3</sup>

## Superman

In Ouspensky's chapter "Superman," the history of esotericism is linked closely with the evolution of humankind and civilization. Ouspensky quotes Friedrich Nietzsche: "You have made your way from worm to man, and much is still in you of the worm. Once were ye apes, and even yet is man more of an ape than any of the apes (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*)." (p.141) Ouspensky sees the human race as essentially an eternally transitional form and suggests that we conceive of our own evolution in our concepts of a superman which is meant to lead us to a higher ideal of behavior and human form. Ouspensky further states: "Side by side with the idea of hidden knowledge there runs through the whole history of human thought the idea of superman. [...] The idea of superman is directly connected with the idea of hidden knowledge. The expectation of the superman is the expectation of some new revelation, of new knowledge." (p.113, 125)

In esoteric tradition, initiation must be sought and asked for. In *The Behavior of Crowds - A Psychological Study*, the author Everett Dean Martin writes about mass psychology: "About each crowd, like the circle of fire which the gods placed about the sleeping Brunhilde, there is a flaming hedge of logical abstractions, sanctions, taboos, which none but the intellectually courageous few dare cross."<sup>4</sup> This is what is meant by "To he who overcomes, I will give to eat of the tree of life (esotericism)." (Rev. 2:7) Ouspensky relates the idea of the superman to initiation and the esoteric schools, and the idea that the superman must necessarily be connected to the mysterious, of magic and sorcery; the study of religions old and new; that one sees new meaning in allegories and myths; and deep and strange significance in things which once seemed evident and uninteresting. He describes the need and purpose for initiation and degrees of knowledge:

In the ancient Mysteries there existed a consecutive and graduated order of initiation. In order to be raised to the next degree, to ascend the next step, the man to be initiated had to pass through a certain definite course of preparation. [...] He was told of the awful consequences following a violation of the order of initiation [...] we shall understand that

*initiation* was an introduction into a circle of new ideas [...] new ideas were not disclosed to a man until he proved himself sufficiently prepared to receive them [...] and that a wrongly received idea can produce very undesirable and even disastrous results. [...] Having once come in contact with certain ideas man is unable to live as he lived before; he must either go farther or perish under a burden which is too heavy for him. (p.135-7)

Life is not easy for the superman or initiate; it must be understood that he or she stands apart and lives a peculiar life very unlike the ordinary. It is difficult for most to conceive or understand as “there will be very much suffering in his life” (p.134), and this is a gloomy aspect of the initiate being cut off from enjoying ordinary life. To this it may be added, being “first born of the dead” (Col. 1:18) and “let the dead bury the dead” (Matt. 8:22), which minimally imply liberty of conscience in regard to orthodox teachings, customs and superstitions; and of the serious consequences of heterodoxy or thinking outside of the box. There are indications of monasticism and its cause as “a man’s foes will be those of his own household,” (Matt. 10:36) and “for when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.” (Mark 2:25) Suffering is caused in part by being a transitional being who may envision a better world. But there is an upside also as such:

Thus superman appears to us a dried-up being, rational and deprived of emotions, whereas in reality the emotionality of superman, that is, his ability to feel, must far exceed ordinary human emotionality. [...] The psychology of superman eludes us because we do not understand the fact that the normal psychic state of superman constitutes what we call *ecstasy* in all possible meanings of this word. (p.133)

### **In Search of the Miraculous**

In the chapter “In Search of the Miraculous,” Ouspensky makes his most poignant and romantic case for the obvious existence of hidden esoteric schools and one of their grandest expressions during centuries of growing darkness in Europe. He speaks of his thoughts and emotions while visiting the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. Notre Dame is one of the first Gothic cathedrals using flying buttresses and is over 800 years old. Anyone who has been in the presence of these magnificent structures cannot help but be in awe of the technical expertise and effort and time that it took to construct them. One may be struck by the idea in modern times that the achievement of the building of the cathedrals is comparable to the modern achievements of the space age.

Ouspensky comments that when looking down from the towers of Notre Dame, he feels that the real history is the history of those who built Notre Dame, but that virtually nothing is known of the builders themselves or the schools for the architects and engineers. But obviously there had to be these schools. He writes that there are two histories, one is the history of crime, and this is the history taught in schools, of war and catastrophes. The other history is the history of that which created what has endured for centuries, such as Notre Dame, but which is known only to very few. However, the hidden nature of these schools reveals that they had a very complex origin. He expresses a unique theory:

The building of cathedrals was part of a colossal and cleverly devised plan which permitted the existence of entirely free philosophical and psychological schools in the rude, absurd, cruel, superstitious, bigoted and scholastic Middle Ages. [...] These schools, which built the “Gothic” cathedrals, concealed themselves so well that traces of them can now be found only by those *who already know that such schools must have existed*. Certainly the Catholic Church of the 11th and 12th centuries, which already used torture and stake for heretics and strangled all free thought, did not build Notre Dame. There is not the slightest doubt that for a time the Church was made an instrument for the preservation and propagation of the ideas of true Christianity, that is, of true religion or true knowledge, which were absolutely foreign to it. (p.345-6)

Ouspensky explains that prior to the Gothic period, which he specifies as beginning after the first Millennium and lasting for about four hundred years, monasteries were the repository for all knowledge, but the legalization of the hunting down and prosecution of heretics, of the growing heretic mania, and ultimately the Inquisition, made it impossible for the monasteries to preserve and disseminate knowledge, as the Catholic Church was rapidly losing the inclinations that had previously preserved knowledge:

There was then found or, to speak more accurately, *created*, for this knowledge a new and convenient refuge. The knowledge left the monasteries and passed into architectural schools, “schools of masons.” The style later called “Gothic [...] of which the characteristic feature was the pointed arch, was accepted as the distinctive sign of the schools [...] in every “school of masons” where all the sciences necessary for architects were taught there were inner schools in which the true meaning of religious allegories and symbols was explained and in which was studied “esoteric philosophy” or the *science of the relations between God, man, and the universe*, that is, the very “magic”, for a mere thought of which people were put on the rack and burnt at the stake. (p.346)

These schools are the very essence of the occult. They were underground colleges which, for common people and the recorded history, did not exist, but which certainly did exist, and they at least lasted up to the Renaissance, when the existence of “secular science” became possible. This is so little understood by common humanity that Ouspensky perceived it was vain and useless to try to teach people that which they have no desire to know. And he arrives at the most startling and significant conclusion:

And again, as many times before, I could find only one argument against this, namely, that perhaps the aim both of the teaching of the Apostles and of the construction of Notre Dame was not to teach *all* the people, but only to transmit *certain* ideas to a few men through the “space of time.” Modern science conquers space within the limits of the surface of the small earth. Esoteric science *has conquered time*, and it knows methods of transferring its ideas intact and of establishing communications between schools through hundreds and thousands of years. (p.348-9)

## Esoteric Schools in New Testament Times

Manly P. Hall, in the quote that begins the paper studied here, wrote: “If it is ever established beyond question that Jesus was an initiate of the pagan Greek or Asiatic Mysteries, the effect upon the more conservative members of the Christian faith is likely to be cataclysmic.” To make this connection we make two steps: one is to substantiate the idea that the New Testament can be interpreted as being influenced by an esoteric order or school, and the second is to identify what is common among the esoteric schools with the pagan mysteries. We examined the work of P.D. Ouspensky to establish how the interaction of esotericism and exotericism is an eternal dynamic in history through the concept of the Great Work, the means by which civilization is evolved over time. We also explored Ouspensky’s thinking about the New Testament being about an esoteric school, and the superman being about the aspirations for the evolution of humankind to a higher level. Manly P. Hall provides evidence of an esoteric order from the standard King James Bible:

If Jesus was God incarnate, as the solemn councils of the church discovered, why is he referred to in the New Testament as “called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedec”? [Heb. 5:10] The words “after the order” make Jesus one of a line or order of which there must have been others of equal or even superior dignity.<sup>5</sup>

In the Old Testament, in Genesis 14, Melchizedek King of Salem (meaning peace) brokers a treaty for Abraham and the king of Sodom at the end of a war. This is an example of an esoteric order working on behalf of the lives of men. In the New Testament book of Hebrews, it is declared that Jesus is a member of this same order of Melchizedek and not of the lineal descent Hebraic priest caste of Aaron: “He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever.” (Heb. 7:3) This has nothing to do with blood or family descent, as he “has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by a power of an indestructible life.” (Heb. 7:16) This is evidence in the New Testament of an esoteric order being behind the events in the Gospels.

The accounts of the Transfiguration may be interpreted as Jesus introducing his few select disciples to those of “superior dignity” as described by Manly P. Hall. The Synoptic Gospels describe it (Matt. 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 9:28–36). From retelling over time, this occasion became a supernatural myth depicting an encounter with the ghosts of Moses and Elijah and the Divine itself saying, “This is my Son.” But although Ouspensky does not discuss this in his book, it perfectly fulfills his explanation of an esoteric school. If you look at the Gospel of Luke, it begins with, “But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:27) Then about eight days later, Peter, James, and John are taken up the mountain of the Transfiguration for an encounter with Moses, Elijah, and a voice coming out of a cloud. But in Luke two are clearly very real men and not spirits. In esoteric society, it is common for people to adopt aliases, because esoteric schools were persecuted, so alternate names had to be adopted. While coming down the mountain, the disciples are told to keep the meeting a secret, and this would be so if they had met members of the hidden school.



If, as Ouspensky suggests, the kingdom of heaven is a metaphor for esoteric schools such as the order of Melchizedek and, “from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force,” (Matt. 11:12) then there is an historical precedent suggesting a larger conspiracy not only in Judea two thousand years ago, but also throughout history. For example, the book *Born in Blood – The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry*, by John J. Robison<sup>6</sup>, details the persecution of the Knights Templar beginning on Friday, October 13th, 1307, and it argues that some Templars went underground in Scotland and fought at the Battle of Bannockburn with Robert the Bruce in 1314; as well it is theorized that the Scottish traditions of Freemasonry, an esoteric order which surfaced centuries later, come directly from this inheritance.

Within a generation following 1307, a new esoteric order called the Order of the Garter was also established, with the first recorded activities in the 1320’s leading to this order’s influence in establishing the University of Oxford in 1379 and Winchester College in 1382. It would seem possible that the Templar Order transitioned into a new Order of the Garter primarily via father to son. Therefore it is reasonable to conjecture that if a similar persecution had occurred in Judea in the generation before Jesus, the Transfiguration could have introduced a new generation of initiates to the elder generation of “superior dignity,” and it is possible that, in Luke 9:35, when it is written: “[A]nd a voice came out of the cloud, saying ‘This is my Son, my chosen; listen to him!’,” the voice could literally be the father, either adopted or actual, of Jesus, passing on his authority to the next generation. Then there is no need for a supernatural entity, and given what is described in the Book of Hebrews, this was the order of Melchizedek.

There is an account in *The Levitikon: The Gospels According to the Primitive Church* (2010), which is an alternative scripture of the Book of John. The story is that in 1804, the year Napoleon became Emperor, a French doctor named Bernard-Raymond Fabre-Palaprat found an ancient manuscript at a Paris bookseller. In the preface of the book it is claimed that “this manuscript is in Greek on parchments (large leaf) in letters of gold, bearing the date of 1154. It is a copy or an apograph of a manuscript from the fifth century, preserved by our brothers in the East, similar to the copy from the West.” Of interest for this article, it is mostly the same as the standard Gospel of John, except for excluding the account of the resurrection, by ending at chapter 19. There are other minor omissions and introduced sentences, but in chapter six, when the Jews question Jesus’s claim to have come down from heaven, the customary confusion is that his parents are known to the crowd: “Do we not know his mother and father?” However in the *Levitikon*, it reads: “How does he now say, ‘I have come down out of heaven’? Is it because he lived with the Greeks that he has come thus to converse with us? What is there in common with what he learned from the Egyptians, and that which our fathers taught us?”<sup>7</sup> This Greek mystery connection is confirmed also in John 12:25, where Greeks come to see Jesus and he speaks to them in familiar symbolism taken from the Eleusinian Mysteries (cult of Demeter): “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” Further, this parable may also be interpreted in the raising of Lazarus from death being a mystery school play portraying a mystical death (or cabalistic tree of life lesson of the *sephiroth* of Daath) and resurrection being enacted in the midst of Judea, where mystery play acting was forbidden exactly as it has been forbidden in societies through the ages, and even in certain cultures in present times. The interpretation of what this means is outside the scope of this paper, but to the

Hebrew hierarchy it was considered dangerous, as is shown in John 11:50, when the high priest Caiaphas says, “Don’t you think it would be expedient, that one man should die for the people, rather than the whole nation should perish?” Then from this day forward they plotted how they would go about putting Jesus to death and from then on Jesus did not walk openly among the Jews. This is as it would be if the mysteries were forbidden in Judea and the kingdom of heaven (esoteric schools) were being persecuted. Then for just one example the words of Luke 11:52 become plain: “Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves and you hinder those who were entering.”

## Conclusions

In the gnostic Gospel of Thomas, Jesus states: “It is those who are worthy of my Mysteries that I will tell my Mysteries.” In short, given the concept of natural religion and evidential truth found in nature, these mysteries are one and the same with the pagan mystery school teachings, which were at that time forbidden in the xenophobic Hebrew society. Though today Christianity may be represented as an antithesis to pagan religion, Ouspensky writes:

A Christianity can be paganism, and a paganism can be Christianity. [...] Church Christianity has completely distorted the ideas of Christ, but, starting from the Church form, some people who are “pure in heart” may by the way of feeling come to a right understanding of the original truth. (p.36-37)

Therefore, there is credible evidence, beyond Ouspensky’s writing in *A New Model of the Universe*, of the influence of an esoteric school or Order to be found in the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews and the account of the Transfiguration in the gospel of Luke. And if we interpret the raising of Lazarus from death as a pagan mystery play being enacted openly in a Judea that forbade esoteric society, then there must be a great deal more to be illuminated by following this reasoning.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Manly P. Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages – An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic, and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy*. (Los Angeles, California: Philosophical Research Society, Inc. 1929, 1988). CLXXVIII.

<sup>2</sup> P.D. Ouspensky, *A New Model of the Universe – Principles of the Psychological Method in its Application to Problems of Science, Religion, and Art* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1997). All page numbers referenced are from this unless otherwise noted as Bible quotations.

<sup>3</sup> Helena P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* Vol.2, (unabridged 1877 version). 150.

<sup>4</sup> Everett Dean Martin, *The Behaviour of Crowds*. (New York & London: Harper & Brothers, 1920). 156.

<sup>5</sup> Manly Hall, *Secret Teachings*, CLXXVIII.

<sup>6</sup> John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood – The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry*, (New York, NY: M. Evans & Company, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> Rev. Donald Donato, translator, *The Levitikon - The Gospels According to the Primitive Church*, (United States: Apostolic Johannite Church, Inc. 2010, [www.johannite.org](http://www.johannite.org)). 23 and 42.