

The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled Imagined Rituals of Sex, Death, and Madness Revisited

The original argument of *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled* (New Haven: Yale, 2006).

1 “Clement of Mar Saba” reports five streams of tradition

1.1 Mark’s Roman account of “the Lord’s doings . . . those he thought most useful for increasing the faith of those who were being instructed” catechumens

1.2 The “more spiritual Gospel for the use of those who were being perfected” initiated consisting of Mark’s “own notes and those of Peter, from which he transferred to his former book the things suitable to whatever makes for progress toward knowledge” gnosis.

1.3 “the things not to be uttered (*aporrhēta*), . . . the hierophantic teaching of the Lord,” which Mark did NOT divulge.

1.4 The ritual use of these gospels in “the church in Alexandria.” “As a mystagogue,” Mark added to the second gospel stories and sayings “of which he knew the interpretation would . . . lead the hearers into the innermost sanctuary of that truth hidden by seven veils. . . .” In Alexandria “it even yet is most carefully guarded, being read only to those who are being initiated into the great mysteries.” References to being “perfected” and “children of light” recall baptismal passages in Clement’s writings.

1.5 The Carpocratian gospel and its interpretations

2 Beginning with the fourth stream, a 2nd-cent. text describing the ritual reading of any NT book would be unparalleled, and make this text an important source for the early history of Christian worship. But what is described is very unlike the initiations known to Clement of Alexandria, both in his own church and those of competing sects.

2.1 The Secret Gospel uses Resurrection symbolism, six days of teaching, a nocturnal “mystery” nakedness, a linen cloth. This resembles 1950s Anglican notions of early Christian initiation, which retroject the 4th-cent. Lenten catechumenate and Easter vigil baptism into the 1st-2nd centuries.

2.2 Clement uses symbolism derived from Jesus’ own baptism in the Jordan, consistent with all early Egyptian evidence that locates baptism at Epiphany (January 6) rather than Easter

2.3 Early Egyptian lectionaries do not support T. Talley’s theory that a Lazarus-like story with baptismal significance was read shortly before Easter in Egypt.

3 As for the second stream, one should note a similar compositional approach:

3.1 The first gospel excerpt was constructed of words and phrases from the canonical gospels, with the apparent implication that Jesus practiced homosexuality.

3.2 The second gospel excerpt, which shows Jesus rejecting women, also incorporates ancient traditions that seemed to imply Salome sought a sexual relationship with Jesus

3.3 M. Smith’s commentary is similarly a tissue of elements taken from a wide range of ancient sources, without regard for original context, date, or religious differences, implying a universal practice of “magic” leading from sexual ecstasy to heavenly ascent.

4 Smith’s reassembly of “scattered indications” to produce sexual rituals of dissociation, leading to subjective experiences of heavenly ascent that should objectively be dismissed as “schizophrenia” is evident in many of his works, but remarkable for its lack of references to contemporary scholarship on magic, shamanism, or psychology, which Smith cited rarely and only to ridicule.

5 While a priest, Smith held rigid views on sexual morality that are much harsher than the pastoral counseling of his time, but resemble Clement, the heresy hunter depicted in the Mar Saba text.

Smith was familiar with a debate in which Clement was accused of saying that lying was morally justified if it served to advance the purposes of the Church.

6 Late-antique Greek texts on man-boy sexuality, following Plato's *Symposium* as a model, 6.1 are sharply at odds with the notion of a youth being the first to express love to an older man, 6.2 do not presume complete rejection of women as implied in Secret Gospel excerpt 2, 6.3 cannot make sense of the disagreement between "Clement" and the Carpocratians, but rather make Clement's position seem hypocritical, denying glaring similarities between his church and the Carpocratian tradition.

6.4 The second, fourth, and fifth streams of tradition (Secret Gospel, Alexandrian initiation, Carpocratians), then, all seem to converge on the idea that Jesus practiced ritualized homosexuality, as if the text were actually written from a "Carpocratian" viewpoint

7 On the other hand, the Uranian academic subculture of the Victorian era, epitomized by Oscar Wilde,

7.1 identified homosexuality with the heavenly ascent of Plato's *Symposium* and with ancient heretical groups

7.2 circulated humorous alternative gospel stories, created by reassembling elements from canonical texts

7.3 constructed fanciful liturgies by reviving what were thought to be early Christian practices

7.4 often completely rejected relationships with women, more like the second Secret Gospel excerpt than like ancient Greek paedophilia

8 If the Mar Saba Salome is identified as Wilde's Salomé, a clear message and vivid characters emerge, and every aspect of the text can be explained.

8.1 The literary genre can be identified as an example of the genre folklorists call "extended double entendre," in which the speaker seems unaware of a humorous, usually sexual, secondary interpretation. Authors sometimes compose such texts in the voice of their real-life opponents as a form of ridicule.

8.2 In this case, Christian heterosexual morality is therefore ridiculed in the person of the hypocritical moralist Clement, known for his advocacy of lying to serve the Church's ends, whose seven-veiled mystery is actually murderous Salome.

8.3 The third (unwritten, unspeakable) stream of tradition therefore represents Uranian homosexuality, "The love that dare not speak its name."

8.4 The fifth stream of tradition, the libertine magic of the Carpocratians, is shown to be the true tradition from Jesus.

The "extended double entendre" genre. This "classic example of the extended double entendre" (a well-known genre in American folklore) circulated in the 1940s-1960s. Apparently a speech by a feminist to a women's organization, it was doubtless actually penned by a male chauvinist pig. The Mar Saba text is simply a much more sophisticated example of the same genre, lampooning Christian heterosexual morality in the person of Clement, the lying hypocrite clergyman, while the true author favors the "Carpocratian" or "libertine" view. The genre allows the joker to feign innocence of the hidden meaning, and accuse a reader who detects it of having "a dirty mind."

We must have what man has. It may not be much but we mean to have it. If we cannot get it through our organization then we will get it through our combination.

We refuse to be placed in the gallery any longer and insist on being placed on the floor of the house.

We are willing to look up to man, but don't always want to be forced or held down without making a few motions of our own. We want to hold up our ends and show our possibilities whenever anything rises that fills our expectations. Nothing that comes can be too hard for us.

We are willing to work under men who have been above us in the past even to the point of exhaustion, if necessary, but are beginning to become disgusted with failings and short comings.

Never, when anything arose that required our presence and attention, have we failed to come again if the occasion required it, but too often have our hopes and striving been met with feeble performances that have left us disappointed and dissatisfied.

How often have our efforts to push forward with our ends been met with a cry, "Down with Petticoats!" and now I say, "Up with Petticoats" and "Down with Pants!" Then we shall see things in their true light.

As long as women are split the way they are, the men will always be on top.

Source: Alan Dundes and Carl R. Pagter, *Work Hard and You Shall Be Rewarded: Urban Folklore from the Paperwork Empire* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992) pp. 209-10. On the sources and transmission of such texts, see p. xxi. This kind of folklore continued into the era of affirmative action, see Danielle M. Roemer, "Photocopy Lore and the Naturalization of the Corporate Body," *Journal of American Folklore* 107 (1994) 121-38. For more information see <http://www.music.princeton.edu/~jeffery/replytobrown.pdf>.

Objections about Clement as reputed author

Objection 1. I discredited Smith's interpretation, not the document itself.

Quotation A. "C'est surtout l'usage apologétique homosexuel de l'évangile secret par Smith qui est réfuté par l'A[uteur] et non l'authenticité du texte en question; et il reste à démontrer que le rite décrit par l'évangile secret s'accorde ou non avec . . . ce que l'on sait des affirmations anciennes relatives aux «traditions secrètes» des apôtres et du judaïsme." Jérôme Rouse-Lacordaire, «Bulletin d'Histoire des Ésotérismes» in *RSPT* 92/4 (2008) 849-50.

Rebuttals to Objection 1. First, anyone who wants to use this argument needs to come up with a more compelling interpretation that explains every feature of the text better than mine does. Second, the text echoes Clement's descriptions of baptism as perfection (*Paed.* 1.26.1) and illumination (*Protr.* 10.94.2, *Paed.* 1.29-30, *Strom.* 5.64.4), while ignoring other elements of baptism as Clement's church—and the groups he opposed—knew it:

- a) a three-year catechumenate (*Strom.* 2.96.2),
- b) instruction by bishops/presbyters (*Quis dives* 42.4)
- c) a three-day baptismal celebration (*Strom.* 5.73.2)
- d) Epiphany themes: Baptism perfects, as in the baptism of Jesus (*Paed.* 1.25, 1.30.2, 1.35.3, 1.36.3, 1.38.1); the seal (*Paed.* 3.58, *Strom.* 4.116, 7.57), water and fire (*Ecl.*).
- e) *Strom.* 2.44.1-4 quotes *Hermas* on the Apostles baptizing the OT worthies after death, not a rite in which the living enact death and burial with Christ.
- f) Basilidians baptized at a night vigil of readings on 6 or 10 January (*Strom.* 1.146.1-2)
- g) Valentinians associated baptism with Gnostic escape from the physical world (NOT bodily resurrection [*Strom.* 4.89.2-5; *Exc.* 77-80]), but in the latter case this is bracketed by references to Jesus' baptism as an example to be followed (*Exc.* 76, 85).

h) A three-day Epiphany commemorating Jesus's baptism and the Cana miracle was celebrated in the Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox churches from at least the 9th cent.: K. Schüssler, "Analyse der Lektionarhandschrift sa 530^L," *Journal of Coptic Studies* 4 (2002) 133-66, see 151-52.

Objection 2. I misunderstood Clement's mystery vocabulary, which is not sacramental.

Quotation B. "Contrary to Jeffery's assertion, Christian applications of *mystērion* and its cognates to the sacraments were uncommon 'till well into the third century' and did not become normative until the fourth." Longer Mark "was expounded allegorically to worthy, theologically advanced Christians as a means of transmitting the Alexandrian church's mysteries about the nature of God. This is a purely metaphorical initiation. The letter says nothing about liturgy or an annual ceremony." Scott G. Brown in *RBL* 9 (2007) pp. 5, 14.

Quotation C. "Clement may simply be referring to a general growth in intimate knowledge of God, and not to baptism or the catechumenate per se, or the text's forger has mistakenly used technical sacramental vocabulary anachronistically."

Nicholas V. Russo, "A Note on the Role of *Secret Mark* in the Search for the Origins of Lent," *Studia Liturgica* 37 (2007) 181-97, quote from 190-91.

Rebuttal to Objection 2. My critics are under-informed about the early Christian use of mystery vocabulary.

Quotation D. "Literally thousands of monographs, dissertations and articles have been addressed to the question [of] the comparison of early Christianities and the religions of Late Antiquity, especially the so-called mystery cults." Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*, Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). p. vii.

In Clement's writings we can observe the coalescence of four distinct vocabularies of mystery terminology, as outlined in my article "The Mystical Chorus of the Truth Itself: Liturgy and Mystery in Clement of Alexandria," *Inquiries into Eastern Christian Worship: Acts of the Second International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy, Rome, 17-21 September 2008*, ed. B. J. Groen and S. H. Teeple, *Eastern Christian Studies* 10 (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming).

- a) "apocalyptic-incarnational," from Jewish apocalyptic: *mystērion* = Aramaic (Persian loanword) *rāz* (cf. Syriac *rāza*). Synonyms include: wisdom, knowledge, logos. For Clement it refers to the presence of the living Christ in the worshipping Christian community, through both the readings and the sacramental actions
Mark 4:11, 1 Cor 2:7, Col 2:2-3; Clement, *Hypotyp.* 7. Frag. 16 (on 1 Tim 3:16) (incarnation); Clement, *Protr.* 111,3 (scripture); Clement, *Paed* 1.41.3-1.43.1 (eucharist)
- b) "cultic," the technical terminology of the polytheistic mystery religions, which Clement considers obscene and derives from *misos* ("defilement"), in contrast with chaste Christian rites
Clement, *Protr.* 2.13.1, 2.22.3, 2.34.3-5, 12.119.1-2, 120.1-2 et alibi.
- c) "cultic-philosophical," mystery-religions terms are re-applied to the process of acquiring philosophical knowledge by Plato and followers, including Philo. Clement's usage is NOT restricted to the teaching of doctrine and Biblical exegesis
Clement, *Strom.* 5.66.2-5 (eucharistic sacrifice as *epoptikē theōria*)
- d) "typological," Old Testament priestly rituals are allegorical mysteries (as in Philo) pointing to the new covenant, including the rituals of Christian worship
Clement, *Strom* 5.40.2-3 (priestly robe [*stolē*] of Lev. 16:23-24 signifies both the Incarnation of Christ and a Christian's coming to faith as in 1 Cor 15:53, 2 Cor 5:2-4)

Origen, *Homiliae in Numeros* 4.3.1; 5.1.3 (*ecclesiasticis observationibus* of Christian worship require exegesis, just like the OT rituals that foreshadow them).

Objections about Morton Smith

Objection 3. One offhand joke about homosexuality is being taken too seriously.

Quotation E. “The notion that Smith wrote the Mar Saba document with the purpose of ‘creat(ing) the impression that Jesus practised homosexuality’ is patently silly. In the nearly 600 pages that make up his two books about his discovery, he gives barely six lines to the subject, lines which I read as slightly heavy-handed mischief-making. Smith, having more common sense than Jeffery, knew very well that no new document containing a possible, though wholly unclear, allusion to sexual relations between Jesus and another man could conceivably make contemporary Churches less homophobic; the only way to do that is to face the matter head on, as the late John Boswell did. It is Jeffery, not Smith, who is obsessed with the possible sex between Jesus and the young man he had brought back to life.” W. V. Harris, “A Bible Fantasy,” *Times Literary Supplement* No. 5455 (19 October 2007) 23.

Rebuttal to Objection 3. Smith’s writings are rife with jokes about Jesus practicing ritualized homosexuality, often with the double-entendre demurrer that the less sophisticated will perceive a sexual meaning while he himself knows better.

Quotation F. “The teaching that sexual acts are morally indifferent could easily have been derived from Jesus’ reported saying, ‘There is nothing outside a human being which, by entering, can make the recipient impure.’” M. Smith, “Paul’s Arguments as Evidence of the Christianity from which He Diverged” (1986) in *Studies in the Cult* 2:103-9, see p. 105 (on Mark 7:15). Also Smith, *Clement of Alexandria* 91 (on Hippolytus, *Trad. Ap.* XXI.11); 154 (on John 11:36); 171-72 (Mark 10:21 deemed “improper”).

Quotation G. In the Mar Saba letter Clement tells us that the Gospel of Mark served as a collection of texts from which Christian teachers began their explanations. . . . This event must have needed a good deal of explaining: “Holy man arrested . . . naked youth escapes.” M. Smith, “Clement of Alexandria and Secret Mark: The Score at the End of the First Decade,” *HTR* 75 (1982) 458 n. 19. Cf. M. Smith, “Under the Sheet,” *New York Review of Books* 26/1 (8 Feb. 1979) <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/7916>.

Citation. On “rich”= “debauched” = “libertine,” see M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria* 188, 211; Smith, *Jesus the Magician* 133-34, 138.

Quotation H (also an example of Smith’s “scattered indications” methodology). “Prophecy is likewise the commonest purpose of invocation in the magical papyri, but there are many others, especially erotic. *Daimones* were often sent to bring lovers, but were also asked to give the magician such power that anyone whom he called would immediately drop everything and follow him, as the disciples did when Jesus called them (Mark 1:18, 20, etc.). Beyond such particular services, *daimones* were also called to enter the magicians and unite with them, so that the magician could say, ‘I am you and you are I,’ or, as Paul said, ‘I live no longer I, but Christ lives in me’ (Gal 2:20). Such identification was sometimes, especially for erotic purposes, effected by physical means. The magician, when identified with a god, might identify a cup of wine with his blood—the blood of the god—and give it to another to drink. Whoever drank it would be joined to him in love. These rituals are the closest known parallels to the eucharist . . .” Smith, “How Magic Was Changed by the

Triumph of Christianity” (1983), repr. in *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*, ed. S. J. D. Cohen (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 2: 208-16, quote from 210.

Quotation I.—another patchwork sexual initiation rite created by weaving together Biblical and Patristic quotations, the same technique as in the Mar Saba text (note emphasis on the “early” dating): “The identification of him as ‘the way’ (echoed by Hebrews 10:20 [‘the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh’]) is particularly vivid in his saying in John 1:51, ‘You shall see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.’ . . . a title characteristic of the earlier strata of the gospels. In this saying Jesus identifies himself with the ladder between earth and heaven, foreseen in Jacob’s dream (Gen 28:12). Aphraates, one of the earliest Christian writers of Mesopotamia, declared, ‘The ladder is the mystery [initiated by] our saviour, by which righteous men ascend from the lower world to the world above’ (*Demonstratio* 4.5). What mystery he had in mind is not known. It would seem to have included a technique for ascent.” Smith, “Ascent to the Heavens and the Beginning of Christianity” (1981), repr. in *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh* 2: 47-67, see 60, brackets original.

For more examples see P. Jeffery, “Reply to Scott G. Brown,” pp. 7-11.
<http://music.princeton.edu/~jeffery/Review%20of%20Biblical%20Literature-Jeffery%20reply%20to%20Brown.pdf> or <http://tinyurl.com/4rlssk>.

Objection 4. Smith’s letters to G. Scholem show he was sincere.

Quotation J. “While no definitive proof will ever satisfy Smith’s debunkers, his correspondence with Scholem . . . should provide sufficient evidence of his intellectual honesty to anyone armed with common sense and lacking malice.” G. Stroumsa, ed., *Morton Smith and Gershom Scholem, Correspondence 1945-1982* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) p. xv.

Rebuttal to Objection 4, part 1. Smith’s letters actually show he was researching Clement and writing a book about Mark’s magical Jesus before he discovered the fragment.

Quotation K. “Last February I came back to Harvard to work for the degree of Doctor Theology, for which I am to make a special study of the New Testament and of Church history down to 400 and, for a thesis, probably produced, under [Werner] Jaeger’s direction, an edition of one of the minor works of Gregory of Nyssa. For the past six months I have been working on the background—giving half my time to classical literature and half to the early Fathers, especially Clement of Alexandria.” Smith to Scholem, 17/8/1948, ed. Stroumsa, p. 28.

Quotation L. “I’ve bogged down in the task of writing an extra chapter for a book on Mark which I finished last summer. I thought I’d found considerable evidence for Mark’s use of a collection of miracle stories like those (collections) put together by the devotés of Asclepius, and some evidence indicating that the group which put together this collection conceived Jesus as a healing god, by analogy with Asclepius and Sarapis. Nock objected . . . This goaded me to writing an additional chapter on Paganism in Jewish Palestine, and for this chapter (which I haven’t yet started writing) I now have about two hundred pages of notes . . .” Smith to Scholem 1/8/1955, ed. Stroumsa p. 81.

Quotation M. “I got involved in the study of Hellenistic influences in Palestine and am still at it, though now at last about to give it up and simply write an account of my results to date, which fill about 300 file cards. . . . [S]ome will go into the chapter of my book on Mark, for which the whole

study was started and which is still awaiting its completion . . .” Smith to Scholem, 27/10/1955, ed. Stroumsa p. 85.

Quotation N. “I’ve been working quite steadily, and a number of articles and my perennial book on Mark are actually now completed or on the very verge of completion.” Smith to Scholem, 28/2/1956, ed. Stroumsa p. 89.

Rebuttal to Objection 4, part 2. The letters show that Smith’s understanding of the Carpocratians as libertines was derived from Scholem’s idea that they were “the Frankists of antiquity,” ed. Stroumsa xv-xvii, 119. This misrepresents the Carpocratians as described by Clement.

Rebuttal to Objection 4, part 3. The letters finally explain the curious fact that Smith’s work on magic is remarkably uninformed by the scholarship available in his time, which he mentioned rarely and only to ridicule. The true source of Smith’s notion of magic is the writings of Aleister Crowley, who founded secretive cults with sexual initiation rites, and whose play *Mortadello* introduces a Salomé-like character.

Quotation O. “Actually, the most striking characteristic of [Mircea] Eliade’s work on shamanism is its total and deliberate neglect of the importance of sham. This is characteristic of a great many works of contemporary anthropology and ethnology. . . . For good observation it is of course necessary to study with sympathy. But for good judgment it is necessary to regain objectivity.” M. Smith, “Historical Method in the Study of Religion,” *History and Theory* 8 (1968) 8-16, see p. 15.

Quotation P. “Of course, I always have time to read nonsense; over this past period I have read (among other things) a life of Mr A. Crowley along with a selection of poetry and one of his plays. The play (a comedy by the name *Mortadello*) turned out, to my pleasant surprise, to be quite good. . . full of power and life and demonstrat[ing] an unusual command of language. . . . [A chronology of Crowley’s life follows.] Reacting to his upbringing he developed hatred towards Christianity Then he became interested in magic. . . . Why am I interested in a fool like him? I cannot say. I just am. He has a certain ‘Keckheit, Kühnheit und Grandiosität’ (as Goethe said about Byron) which I find lacking in your usual research student and your average Anglican minister.” Smith to Scholem, 26/11/1945, ed. Stroumsa pp. 10-11.

Objection 5. By suggesting that Smith’s writings reveal personal psychiatric issues, I overstepped the boundaries of responsible discourse and effectively slandered him.

Quotation Q. “Though Jeffery asserts that he has attempted as much as possible to avoid a psychological approach to Morton Smith’s life, the book nevertheless reads much like an extended psychological profile, and many elements of Jeffery’s argument derive from wild speculation about Smith’s motivations and emotional states.” Nicole Kelly in *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* 4/1 (Summer 2009) 114-17, quote from 116.

Quotation R. “Peter Jeffery is probably the cleverest of Smith’s assailants to date. . . . Jeffery’s vicious hostility to Morton Smith seems to stem from the fact that he is a devout Christian, while Smith, after about 1950, was a religious sceptic. . . . A successful attack would have to be vastly more dispassionate than *The Secret Gospel of Mark Unveiled*. The author says of Smith that he was ‘an angry person willing to utter any insult that might stick, no matter how far-fetched.’ That judgement is not completely mistaken, but it also reflects the man who delivered it.” W. V. Harris, “A Bible Fantasy,” *Times Literary Supplement* No. 5455 (19 October 2007) 23.

Rebuttal to Objection 5. It was Smith who first raised the issue of mental illness, with his numerous pseudo-scientific statements about psychic conditions and frequent ridicule of psychiatry. Thus it is appropriate to ask questions about the many peculiarities he himself exhibited in *The Secret Gospel* (Harper 1973): self-contradiction, anger, euphoric amnesia, etc. I actually exercised considerable restraint by not publishing my personal opinion of what his diagnosis was, or the many bizarre but revealing stories I heard about him from former colleagues and students.

Quotation S. “The end or function of psychiatry is . . . to make people happy [by] persuading the patient that what he supposed a sufficient cause for unhappiness is not, after all, so important as he thought it. . . . [I]t is primarily the demand of society which has made the profession so critical of the socially unacceptable forms of self-satisfaction (mania and some forms of schizophrenia) and has led it to expose the instability which lies at their roots. The instability which lies at the roots of highly successful careers is noted only when such careers end up in the psychopathic ward.” Smith, “Psychiatric Practice and Christian Dogma,” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 3 (1949) 12-20, see 12-13.

Quotation T. “Jesus seems to have had a peculiar attraction for and power over schizophrenics. Hence his ‘exorcisms’ (his ability to quiet persons whose suppressed impulses had broken through their rational control and expressed themselves in violent and destructive actions explained as the work of ‘demons’). . . . The stories of his disciples’ sudden, total abandonment of their ordinary lives to follow him . . . probably . . . indicate an instability in the disciples’ characters that explains why they yielded to possession by Jesus in baptisms. . . . Such group hysteria usually begins with individuals in the group; their visions and other symptoms are contagious—cf. the history of the witchcraft trials. Mass conversions followed. Both converts and the original followers, when they went abroad, communicated the psychological infection to the circles they formed in other provinces. Paul presumably caught it in Jerusalem: his first serious attack occurred while on the way to Damascus; he later spread the symptoms though Asia Minor and Greece.” M. Smith, *The Secret Gospel* (San Francisco: Harper, 1973) p. 116-17.

Quotation U. “As the connection between mental derangement and psychiatric ability is proverbially close in our own time, so it was in antiquity. The Greek expression, ‘He has a demon,’ is ambiguous—it leaves uncertain which of the two is in command. No doubt the uncertainty was often justified. But if the man emerged triumphant from the struggle with what we should call his subconscious (what the gospels called Satan), then he might well believe himself and be believed by others to be able to command not only his own demon, but the rest of the demonic powers. Such belief, with his own experience, might enable him to quiet lunatics (in ancient terms, to cast out demons) and to produce apparently miraculous cures of blindness, deafness, aphasia, paralysis, and the like, cures which are now explained as the sudden cessation of hysterical symptoms. Smith, “Messiahs: Robbers, Jurists, Prophets,” (1977) repr. in *Studies in the Cult* 2: 44

Quotation V. “Christian salvation was evidently conceived as a special supernatural service which only Jesus’ authorized representatives could provide, and for which he had authorized them to charge as they saw fit. Psychoanalysis provides a striking parallel.” M. Smith, “Paul’s Arguments as Evidence of the Christianity from Which He Diverged,” *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986) 254-60, quote from p. 258.

For other reviews and more info, see <http://www.music.princeton.edu/~jeffery/raves.htm>
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2. [On Columbia U. Dept. of History stationery]

Feb. 13, 1968.

The Rt. Rev. Harry Lee Doll, D.D.,
105 West Monument St.,
Baltimore, Md., 21201

Dear Bishop Doll:

Thank you for your letter of Feb. 2. By some accident it reached me only to-day; I trust this will excuse what might seem to be my delay in replying.

I must, however, apologize for having neglected the reports canonically due. In 1948 Bishop Powell gave me leave of absence to continue my studies and for some years thereafter I sent him annual reports. These gradually dwindled to an exchange of Christmas and Easter cards; then those ceased to arrive and I ceased to send them.

Since my obligations as Professor of History at Columbia take all my time I have not engaged in any clerical work in New York and see no reason to transfer to this Diocese.

I do not know the significance of listing with the Secretary of the House of Bishops and therefore cannot express a preference concerning it. In general, I should be glad to have you make whatever disposition of the matter you think most suitable, provided it would not prejudice the possibility of my resumption of the exercise of my Priesthood at some future date. My situation at present is simply that between teaching and research my time is full. This state of affairs will probably continue for some years and I have not at [*sic*] yet attempted to plan beyond it.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Morton Smith.

3. [To the Rt. Rev. David Keller Leighton]

July 18, 1972

Thank you for your note of the seventeenth, advising me to think about renunciation of my priesthood. I have thought about it and have decided to do nothing about it. I think opinions are to a great extent reflexes of emotional states and therefore almost equally transient; mine have changed greatly in the past and may change no less in the future. In the meantime, therefore, I shall take no action to limit the possibilities.

Sincerely yours,

Morton Smith

Thanks to the F. Garner Ranney Archives of the Diocese of Maryland