SEVEN.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE ancient Babylonians identified seven of their great gods with the seven planets; but we must remind the reader of the fact that the ancient astronomers knew only those five planets which were visible to the naked eye; the word *planet*, however, had then another connotation, meaning a celestial body that moved freely about in the heavens. Thus it is obvious that the sun and the moon were counted among the planets.

The fixed stars were supposed to be attached to a hollow globe, which was accepted as a sufficient reason for their rotation in unison. All the other celestial bodies that possessed a motion of their own, i. e., the planets, were conceived as having their several separate spheres, each one revolving according to the arbitrary will of its ruler, the Sun, the Moon, Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Mercury and Saturn.[1] Happily for the number seven two new planets, Uranus and Neptune, were discovered in due time when, owing to a change of our astronomical science and its terminology, the sun and the moon ceased to be regarded as planets. The old belief, however, unfortunately falls to the ground because the earth must now be counted among the planets, which would raise their number to eight,—without counting the planetoids, about three hundred altogether.

In India, the number seven also played an important part, and Buddha no doubt utilised the sacredness of the number to enforce thereby his own views of morality on his disciples. The Buddhist canonical scriptures teach us that there are seven jewels of the law, which when united make up the bright diadem of Nirvâna. They are: (1) Purity; (2) calmness; (3) comprehension; (4) bliss; (5) wisdom; (6) perfection; and (7) enlightenment.

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[1] St. Paul's notion of the seven heavens to which he alludes in his Epistles, is apparently based upon the astronomical views of his time. For an illustration of this conception see p. 418.

There is in addition another mode of utilising the number seven in Buddhistic ethics, which appears in the enumeration of the seven points which constitute religious endeavor: (1) Earnest meditation; (2) the great struggle against sin; (3) the aspiration for saintship; (4) the acquisition of moral power; (5) the production of the organs of spiritual sense; (6) the attainment of wisdom; and (7) the leading of a life of righteousness.

The number seven plays an important part in Buddhist folk- lore. There are seven kinds of miraculous property, the sword, the snake skin, the palace, the garden, the robes, the bed, and the shoes. They are endowed with magical qualities; the shoes for instance "convey the wearer one hundred miles without fatigue and across water without wetting, the snake skin cannot be wetted

THE SEVEN JEWELS OF BUDDHIST FOLKLORE.

by water, nor shaken in the wind, neither become warm in heat, nor cold in freezing weather. The sword confers invincibility, etc. A world monarch is possessed of seven jewels, which are described by Col. L. A. Waddell as follows: [1]

"The seven gems [2] are the attributes of the universal monarch (*Cakra-vartin Raja*), such as prince Siddhārta was to have been had he not become a Buddha. They are very frequently figured on the base of his throne, and are:

"1. The Wheel. The victorious wheel of a thousand spokes. It also repre- sents the symmetry and completeness of the Law. It is figured in the early Sanchi Tope.

"2. The Jewel (Skt., *Ratna;* Tibetan, *Norbu*). The mother of all gems, a wish-procuring gem (Cintamani).

[1] *The Buddhism of Tibet*, p. 389.

[2] Cf. Hardy's *Man*, p. 130, and Alabaster's *Wheel of the Law*, p. 81.

"3. The jewel of a Wife (Skt., *Stri;* Tibetan, *Tsun-mo*). 'The Jasper-girl' who fans her lord to sleep, and attends him with the constancy of a slave.

"4. The gem of a minister (Skt., (?) *Girti* or *Mahajana;* Tibetan, *bLon-po*), who regulates the business of the empire.

"5. The (white) Elephant (Skt., *Hasti;* Tibetan, *glan-po*). The earth-shaking beast, whom as a symbol of universal sovereignty the Buddhist kings of Burma and Siam borrowed from Indian Buddhism. It seems to be Indra's elephant Airā-vata.

"6. The Horse (Skt., *Ashva* ; Tibetan, *v Ta-mch'og*) It seems to symbolise the horse-chariot of the sun, implying a realm over which the sun never sets, as well as the celestial *Pegasus*-steed, which carries its rider wherever the latter wishes.

"7. The gem of a General (Skt., *Kshatri* or *Sena-pati*; Tibetan, *d Mag-d pön*) who conquers all enemies."

As the Greeks speak of seven sages so do the East Indians of the seven rishis (i. e., inspired men of great sanctity) and Hindu folklore discovers them in the seven stars of the Great Bear. The Chinese, too, know of the seven wise men who spurned the temptations of the world and retired to the bamboo grove where they led a life of undisturbed rest and happiness.

The awe of the number seven could only be enhanced when the first notions of mathematics dawned on the thinkers of mankind and when geometricians discovered that the relation of the radius to the circumference of the circle could be roughly expressed by the number seven ; or, what is the same, that the relation of the diameter to the circumference is approximately expressed by the number three and a half.

The number three and a half (viz., seven halves) plays an important part in eschatologies and other prophecies as being the determinant of cycles of history. Almost every important period, be it one of trial, expectation, punishment, or other dispensation, is supposed to be three and a half days, weeks, months, or years. Such periods of "three and a half" are calculated in different ways according to the notions of the various prophets.

Daniel makes the prophecy that the Jews shall be given into the hands of an enemy who is plainly recognised as Antiochus Epiphanes, for "a time and [two] times and the dividing of time," which makes three and one-half (chap. vii. 25). And the same computation is made for the scattering of the holy people : "It shall be for a time, times, and an half" (chapter xii. 7). The conclusion of the Book of Daniel introduces the same notion of a cycle of three and one-half years. The prophet says : "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two
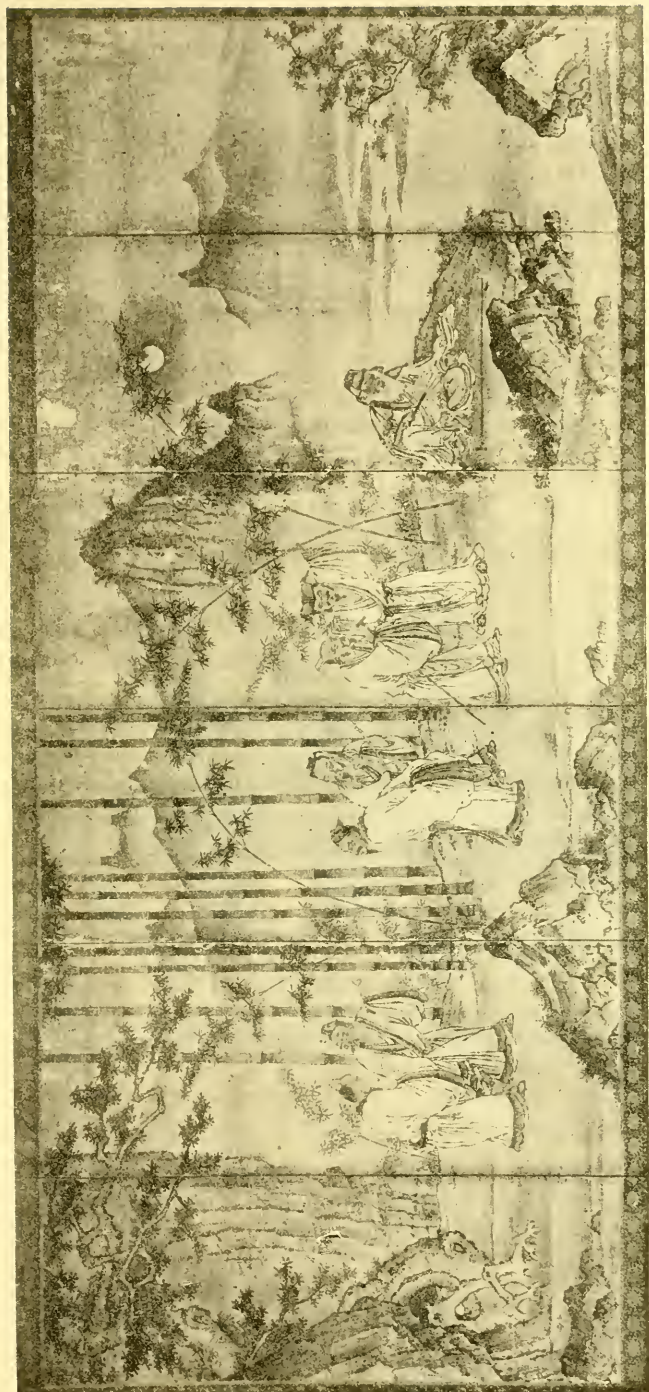
THE SEVEN SAGES IN THE BAMBOO-GROVE.

A favorite subject of Chinese literature and art, characterising Celestial preference of retirement and meditation to the activity of a life devoted to the public weal.

hundred and ninety days,"—viz., little more than three and one-
half years (chap. xii. 11).[1] Again, the interruption of the sacrifice
is stated to be one-half year-week, that is to say, three and one-
half years (Daniel ix. 27).

According to the Revelation of St. John (Chapter xi) the holy
city will be trodden under foot by the gentiles for forty-two months
which is three years and a half (verse 2). Then two witnesses
clothed in sack cloth will prophesy "a thousand two hundred and
three score days" (verse 3), which is again three years and a half,
counting twelve months of thirty days (i. e., $\frac{7}{2} \times 30 \times 12$). The
prophets are killed by the beast and their bodies remain dead for
three days and a half (verse 9). But after three and a half days
the spirit of life from God re-enters them (verse 11). The same
method of calculating events by this old-fashioned method of squar-
ing the circle by assuming π equal to seven halves is met with again
and again in the eschatological books of that age. Power is given
to the beast for forty-two months (Rev. xiii. 5), and the Jews of
the time when Christ lived believed that the famine in the days of
Elias lasted three and a half years,[2] which does not agree with the
reports of the Old Testament, where we read that it ceased *in* the
third year.

The same mode of calculating a cycle as being three times and
something more appears to have determined the time of the sojourn
of the prophet Jonah in the belly of the big fish, from which he
escaped on the fourth day, for the statement is made (i. 17) "and
Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

A last yet dim echo of the archaic calculation of π still lingers
in the determination of the time which Christ was said to have
passed in the domain of death. A passage in Matthew ascribed to
Christ himself which must have been written before the Church
had determined to celebrate the death of Christ on Passover eve
and the day of his resurrection on the next Sunday, reads as fol-
lows :

"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly ; so shall
the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

The question, Why Sunday was celebrated among the gentile
Christians as the day of resurrection in spite of an explicit proph-
ecy which would have fixed the date on Tuesday, is not germane

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[1] See Hilgenfeld, *Jüdische Apok.*, pp. 32 et seq. Neither Hilgenfeld nor any other scholar
offers an explanation for the constant recurrence of the number $3\frac{1}{2}$ for the computation of cycles,
and we recommend our theory of $3\frac{1}{2}$ as the ancient approximation of π, to the consideration of
scholars working in this field.

[2] Compare Luke iv. 25 and James v. 17 with 1 Kings xviii. 1.

to our present inquiry, but it is obvious that the day of the sun which was traditionally the religious holyday among the pagans of Asia Minor at the time when Paul began to preach, recommended itself to the early Christians as the best choice for church services.

In Greece the number seven was not less esteemed than in Asia and Egypt. Pythagoras looked upon seven as the symbol of light, and it designated for him the opportune time (καιρός), perhaps for the very same reason that it played such an important part in the eschatologies of Jews, Christians, and Gnostics. Seven times the radius of any circular motion constituted in any rough computation the duration of a whole cycle, and thus seven stands for π and governs all those relations that depend upon this important and mysterious number. Following in the footsteps of his


THE SEVEN PRIESTS OF DIONYSOS-SABAZIOS.
(From the Tomb of Vibia. After Maas.)

master, Philolaos, a Pythagoræan of the fifth century B. C., claims seven for the symbol of spiritual light or intelligence.

It is perhaps no accident that seven priests of Dionysos partake of the Dionysian Eucharist in the frescoes of the tomb of Vibia.

It appears that the Jews developed their notion of the sacredness of seven on the same lines as the Babylonians and the Persians. It is well known that a seven-armed candlestick stood in the temple at Jerusalem, and we cannot doubt that its seven lights were representative of the seven divine messengers of Yahveh, who are the same as the seven rulers in the starry heavens of the more ancient religions of Mesopotamia.

In the Bible seven is a number of great significance. In the first chapter of Genesis we read that God rested on the seventh day from his works, and he consecrated it as a Sabbath (Gen. ii. 2–3). "Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold" (Gen. iv. 15). Noah was commanded by God, according to the priestly account of the Deluge, to take seven pairs of all clean animals into the ark (Gen. vii. 2–4). Jacob served seven years for Leah and seven other years for Rachel (Gen. xxix.). Jacob bowed before Esau seven times (Gen. xxxiii. 3). Pharaoh saw in a dream seven
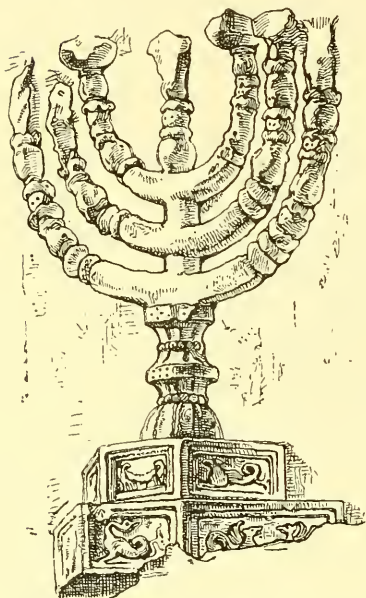
THE SEVEN-ARMED CANDLESTICK OF
THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM.
(From the Arch of Titus.)
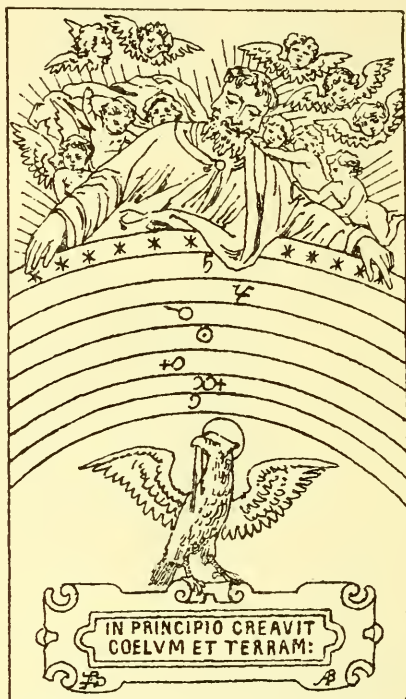
THE SEVEN HEAVENS OF CHRISTIANITY.[1]
(French MS. of the XVIth century.
Didron.)

well-favored and fat-fleshed kine and seven other ill-favored and lean-fleshed kine (Gen. xli. 2–3). Joseph mourned for his father seven days (Gen. l. 10). The Lord smote the river Nile for seven days (Ex. vii. 25). The children of Israel were commanded seven days to eat unleavened bread (Ex. xii. 15). The law demanded

[1] The seven heavens show the signs of the seven planets. They are covered by the vault of the fixed stars, above which is the dwelling-place of the trinity.

that a Hebrew slave should serve six years and in the seventh he should go out free for nothing (Ex. xxi. 2). In the temple service the priest had to dip his finger in the blood of the sacrificed bullock and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary (Lev. iv. 6). A woman after the birth of a male child was unclean seven days (Lev. xii. 2). The Lord threatens to punish the people for disobedience with all kinds of terrors, and if they will not yet for all this hearken, then he will punish them seven times more for their sins (Lev. xxvi. 18). Balaam requested Balak to build seven altars and prepare seven oxen and seven rams (Num. xxiii. 1). In Deuteronomy we read among the curses on disobedience, that the children of Israel will flee before their enemies on seven ways (Deut. xxviii. 25), but if they hearken unto the Lord their enemies shall flee on seven ways (Deut. xxviii. 7). The walls of Jericho fall on the seventh day before the blast of seven rams' horns, blown by seven priests, after having compassed the city seven times (Josh. vi. 4). Bathsheba's child died on the seventh day (2 Sam. xii. 18). Because David had numbered the people, the children of Israel were punished, and a choice was given him between seven years of famine, three months of flight, and three days of pestilence (2 Sam. xxiv. 13). Naaman became clean of his leprosy by bathing seven times in Jordan (2 Kings v. 10–14).[1] Job's friends mourned with him seven days and seven nights (Job, ii. 13). Seven days is the time of mourning for a dead person (Sirach xxii. 13). The psalmist sings that seven times a day he does praise God (cxix. 164). In Proverbs xxiv. 16 we read that a just man falleth seven times and riseth up again.

In Hebrew to swear an oath is the same word as seven, and the reason can only have been that the number seven played an important part in swearing or making solemn contracts. Thus we read (Gen. xxi. 22–31):

"And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven Ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they *sware* both of them."

The word שָׁבַע *shaba* = "to swear," is the verbal form of שֶׁבַע "seven," the latter being obviously akin to the Sanskrit *sapta,*

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[1] Conf. also Lev. xiii. 33; when healed a leper had to be confined for seven days before he was declared clean.

Zend *hapta*, Persian *heft*, Greek ἑπτά, Latin *septem*, and English *seven*. A solemn declaration of truth consisted in "sevening" it, be it by repeating it seven times, or offering a sevenfold sacrifice, or calling in seven witnesses. Herodotus tells us (in Book III., 8) that in Arabia the two men making a contract had their hands cut with a sharp flint, and seven stones placed between them were stained with tufts of their mantles dipped in their blood.

In the Book of Esdras we read that before the day of resurrection the world will be turned into silence for seven days, and no man will remain.
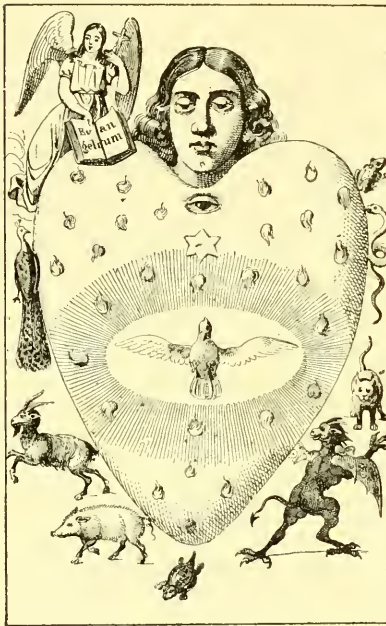
THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT CAST OUT FROM THE HUMAN HEART.
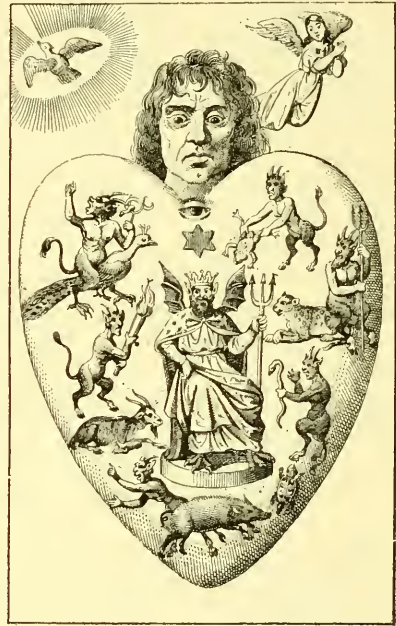
RETURN OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT WITH SEVEN OTHER SPIRITS MORE WICKED THAN HIMSELF.[1]

According to the Book of Tobit there are "seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints and go in before the glory of the Holy One." Corresponding with this idea of seven holy angels seems to be the doctrine of the seven evil spirits who take possession of the soul, as related in Luke xi. 24–25, where Jesus is reported to say:

[1] Reproduced from *Geistlicher Sittenspiegel*, Würzburg, 1732. See *History of the Devil*, pp. 354–358.

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished."

It is not impossible that the idea of the seven holy angels be-fore the throne of God and the seven other wicked spirits, more wicked than the unclean spirit, is a reminiscence of the seven Igighs and the seven Anunnaki of the Babylonians.

The belief in the sacredness of seven found support in Greece in the fact that the Greek language had seven vowels, *e* and *o* being represented twice as short and long. The seven vowels α ε η ι ο υ ω were by the Greek Gnostics supposed to be related to the seven planets. Prof. Richard Wünsch says:

"We learn from the Church Fathers that the Gnostics, particularly the fol-lowers of Markos, chose the seven vowels to indicate the rhythm in which the seven spheres participate in the harmony of the universe. Now these seven spheres are the sun, the moon, and the five planets, and each of these heavenly bodies is ruled by a particular guardian spirit, an 'archon.' The names and nature of these archons are very different within the various Gnostic sects; they are mostly crea-tures of the demiurgos, are hostile to the human soul and try to detain it in their realm when, after the death of the body, it enters upon its journey to God, but they are overcome by the soul if it is initiated into the mysteries of Gnostic phi-losophy and the magic formulæ which even the archons must obey. Sometimes indeed these archons are treated as the equals of the archangels so that the writ-ing out of the vowel series was equivalent to an apostrophe to the archangels; most familiar and perhaps most striking in this connexion is the inscription in the theatre at Miletus :

αεηιουω : Thou holy one, protect the city of the Milesians and all the inhab-itants thereof

εηιουωα : Thou holy one, protect, etc.

This appeal appears seven times, and then collectively in conclusion :

Ye archangels, protect, etc.

Sometimes the archangels are connected by name with the planets and the vowels; Kopp, *Palaeogr. crit.*, III., 334, 335 : α Luna-Gabriel, ε Mercury-Michael, η Venus-Arael, ι Sol-Raphael, ο Mars-Samuel, υ Jupiter-Zadagiel, ω Saturn-Kafriel.
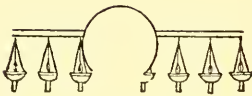
The Christian Church adopted the Gnostic doctrine of the seven celestial regions. St. Paul speaks of the seventh heaven. Further, there are "the seven spirits which are before the throne of Him which is and which was and which is to come," reminding us of the seven ighigs of the Chaldæans.[1] Not only is the number seven frequently referred to as a sacred number by St. John the Divine in the Revelation as well as by the Church fathers, but we have also the evidence of the Christian monuments.

Christ is represented on a lamp found in the Catacombs as the

[1] See illustration on p. 336 of *The Open Court*, No. 541.

ORNAMENTATION OF A
LAMP FOUND IN THE
CATACOMBS. (Twin-
ing, *Symbols and
Emblems*, plate 14.)[1]

ye gifte of wisdome

ye gyfte of pite

ye gyfte of strenghe

ye gifte of counsaill

ye gifte of underestandynge

ye gifte of connynge

ye gifte of dreede

10.

SEVEN LAMPS REPRESENTING
THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE
SPIRIT. (From a French
MS. of the Apocalypse,
fourteenth century, in the
British Museum.)

SEVEN DOVES AS THE
SEVEN GIFTS OF THE
SPIRIT. (From a MS.
of the fourteenth cen-
tury, of Old English
devotional poetry.)

[1] The good shepherd is represented with seven sheep. Seven stars over his head and the symbols of sun and moon indicate an influence of Mithras worship; but the dove on the ark and the two pictures of Jonah, as lying under the gourd and swallowed by the fish, are evidences of the Christian character of the whole composition.

Good Shepherd who carries a lamb in the usual style, and is sur-
rounded by seven sheep which are supposed to represent the seven
Churches of the Revelation. About the Good Shepherd appear
the figures of the sun and the moon, and between them are the
seven stars. On the right side of the Good Shepherd we see a
small box representing the ark of Noah, with a dove standing upon
it; the picture on the left side is meant to represent Jonah under
the gourd vine.

The Christian view of the seven heavens ruled by the seven
planets remained unaltered until the Copernican world-conception
took its place and caused the old Christian pictures of the universe
to be regarded as mere archæological curiosities.

Is it a mere accident, or are we confronted with echoes of older
traditions, when we find the number seven regarded as sacred
throughout all mediæval Christianity? There are frequent pictorial
representations of the seven gifts of the Spirit. The names of these
seven gifts are not always the same; they vary considerably in vari-
ous illustrations and are not always specified, since their several
names are either supposed to be known or taken to be indifferent.
But there is a general agreement as to the number of them, being
the same as the Buddhist jewels of the law.

Theologians discovered seven penitential psalms in the bible,
and the schoolmen of the Middle Ages classified the scientific aspi-
rations under seven heads as the seven liberal arts.

The seven gifts of the Spirit are represented [1] either as seven
doves surrounding Christ, or the Virgin Mary.

The seven-fold nature of the spirit of the Saviour is also indi-
cated in the Revelation of St. John, where the lamb is represented
with seven horns and seven eyes. In the same book we read:
"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive (1) power, (2)
riches and (3) wisdom and (4) strength and (5) honor and (6) glory
and (7) blessing," which are seven qualities.

In a manuscript Bible of the twelfth century, now in the Brit-
ish Museum, we find a picture of the seven gifts of the Spirit, rep-
resented in female heads; the spirit of wisdom is placed at the
top, and wears a crown on her head. Besides the name of the
gift, each representative figure bears an appropriate sentence, and
the circle of these seven little figures is completed by a hand repre-
senting the presence of God the Father sending out twelve rays of
light corresponding to the twelve Apostles. The figures of Faith,

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[1] Louisa Twining's *Symbols and Emblems of Early and Mediæval Christian Art.* New Edi
tion. 1885. London: John Murray, Albemarle St. Plates, 27, 29 and 30.

Hope and Charity occupy the centre of the circle, and Charity being the greatest of the three is distinguished by a crown. The other six gifts are understanding, the strength of patience, the bliss of piety, the wisdom of counsel, the knowledge of temperance, and the power of the Lord.

Another manuscript represents the seven gifts of the Spirit as seven doves which are the gifts (1) of wisdom; (2) piety; (3) strength; (4) counsel; (5) understanding; (6) cleverness (called

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY SURROUNDED BY THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.
From a MS. Bible of the twelfth century, in the British Museum.
(After Louisa Twining's *Symbols and Emblems*, Plate XXIX.)

connynge); and (7) fear of God (dreede). A poem accompanies this picture, which Louisa Twining translates as follows:

> "In this desert wild and waste,
> Seven fowls are flying with flight,
> That are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost,
> That nowhere but in clean hearts will light,
> And dwell there, if they find them chaste,

And give them ghostly strength and might,
So big and bold[1] that they then haste
To pray to God both day and night."

Besides the seven gifts of the spirit, Christian theologians enumerate seven virtues (which consist of a combination of the three Christian virtues of St. Paul and the four Greek virtues of

From a MS. of the eleventh century, in the British Museum.

From a MS. of the Psalter of St. Louis, Library of the Arsenal, Paris, thirteenth century.

From a painted window in the Abbey of St. Denis, twelfth century.

CHRIST WITH THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.

Plato) and seven deadly sins. The Roman Catholics to this day preach sermons on the seven dolors of Mary, and the legends of the saints tell the story of the seven sleepers of Ephesus.

[1] "These words are not quite clear in the orginal, but I believe this is the meaning of them."
—Louisa Twining.
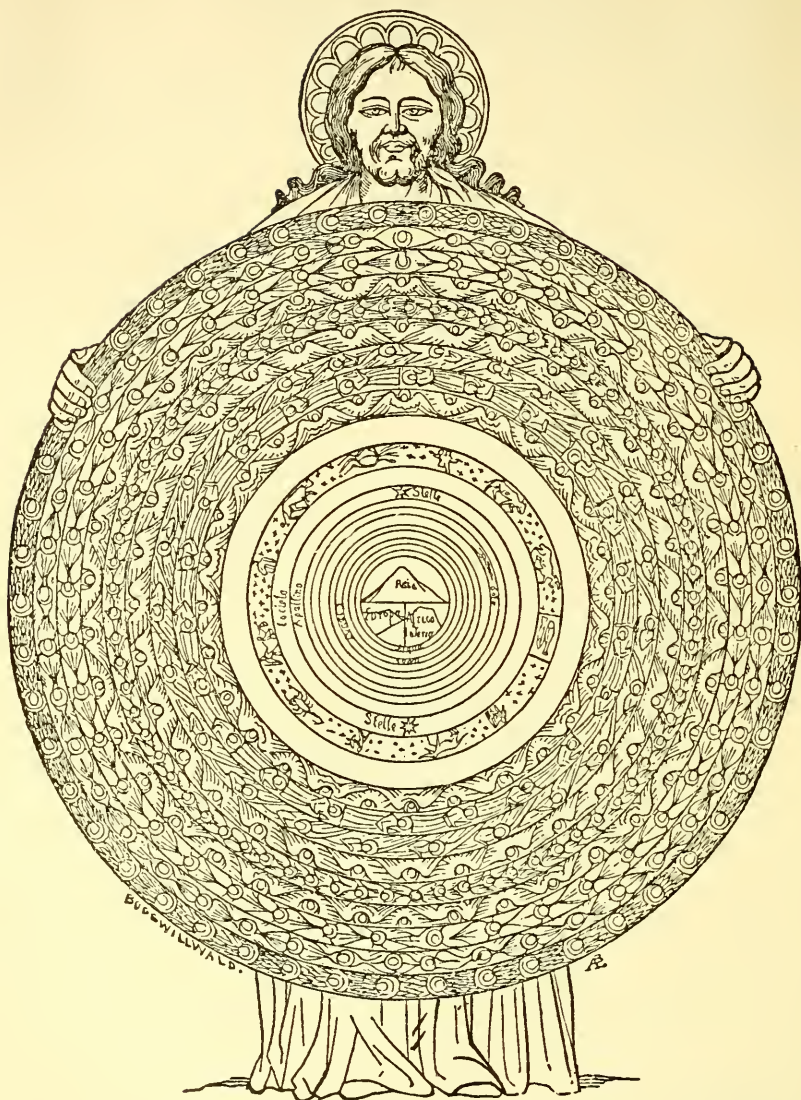
GOD SUPPORTING THE WORLD, CONSISTING OF TWICE NINE SPHERES.
(By Buonamico Buffamalco.)[1]   Fresco in the Campo Santo of Pisa.

[1] This picture is the embodiment of the Christian world-conception of the fourteenth century.
A sonnet accompanies the fresco and explains that nine choirs of angles surround the world, in
whose inner circles the constellations roll round the earth which occupies the centre of the uni-
verse.

When the spheres of the sun and the moon were added to the seven spheres of the planets, the number nine grew more and more prominent, and its sanctity was the more firmly established as it was regarded as the product of three times three.

A picture in the Campo Santo represents God holding in his hands the world. There are nine spheres of angelic life corresponding to the nine spheres of the planets, the sun and the moon. The two realms are separated by the sphere of the fixed stars with the zodiac, and the center of all spherical domains is the earth with its three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Seni, Wallenstein's astrologer, explains the cabalistic significance of numbers in Schiller's drama, *The Piccolomini.* Speaking to a servant who places eleven chairs in the Duke's reception-room, he says :

"Eleven is a bad number ; set twelve chairs. Twelve signs are in the zodiac, five plus seven. The holy numbers are contained in twelve."

"Eleven means sin. Eleven transcends the ten commandments."

In explanation of the holiness of five, Seni says :

"Five is the soul of man. As man is a mixture of good and evil. so five is the first sum of odd and even."

One, among the Pythagoreans, is the number of essence. Two is otherness involving diversity of opinion or difference. Three is mediation or atonement, and completeness, indicating beginning, middle, and end. Four is the square, meaning squareness or justice ; it also signifies the four quarters of the earth. Five, represented in the five fingers of the hand, stands for a small group. Being a combination of odd and even, it signifies marriage in the Pythagorean system, and also man as a combination of matter and mind, or of good and evil, as explained by Seni in the above quotation. Six, i. e., a half dozen, is an important number in the duodecimal system of Babylonia but has otherwise no particular meaning. We might consider it as the number of the surfaces of a die, meaning luck or chance. Eight, the first cube, indicates solidity. Nine, the treble triad, the number of the threefold trinity of Babylonia, is believed to be the most efficient number for incantations. The three times three is still used in our lodges by the freemasons and other fraternities.

The symbolism of numbers attributes to seven a peculiar sanctity. Being the sum of three and four, it means the All as ensouled by God. Three means the Deity ; four, the world, and thus seven is the sum of the two and represents the entire cosmos, God and the world.