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Abstract: Peirce remarks on several occasions in the 1790s on affinities between his evolutionary metaphysics and Schelling's Idealism, behind which, he avers, lies 'the monstrous mysticism of the East'. What are these affinities? Why are they affinities with Schelling rather than with Hegel? And what is the mysticism in question? I argue that Schelling, like Peirce but unlike Hegel, is committed to evolution, not only across species boundaries, but also across the boundary between the inorganic and the organic. Moreover, Schelling, like Peirce but unlike Hegel, embeds this account of evolution in an account of the evolution of God through love. The monstrous mysticism of the East, I argue, is Lurianic kabbalah, to which Schelling is demonstrably indebted, and which is committed to an evolutionary theism on which is based, if not an account of natural evolution, an account of reincarnation as a mechanism by which life-forms progress from inorganic to organic bodies as they develop their consciousness. Publicized by Christian kabbalists such as Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont, incarnationism prepared the way for evolutionism. Peirce's remarks show his awareness, not only of his debt to Schelling's Idealism, but also of Idealism's debt to kabbalah.
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