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## EDITORIAL

WHEN, some three years ago, Paul Brunton wrote his little book *The Secret Path*, it evoked a responsive chord in the hearts of many who sensed the informing spirit of the work, and gave rise to hopes of further helpful and encouraging productions of a similar character. Like *Oliver Twist*, an appreciative public began to ask for more. As is too frequently the case, no allowance appears to have been made for that elusive factor, inspiration, without which the presence of any degree of authentic spiritual power in creative literary effort is impossible. Those, apparently, who were the most sympathetic in the circle of Brunton's admirers, were the most disappointed when they failed to find in his following books the same animating spirit as characterized his earlier work. Yet although the response from that particular circle may have been somewhat apathetic, the appeal to a different class of reader nevertheless broke fresh ground and has advantage to the author.

orthodox



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The circumstances under which *The Secret Path* was written are recalled by the author in his latest volume *The Quest of the Overself*;\* and the reminder should go far towards removing a source of misunderstanding, or shall we say towards removing a misconception which is liable to give birth to unfair criticism. *The Secret Path* was written not so much in response to persistent requests from friends and correspondents as "at the bidding of a force which I could not disobey, and which I heeded more than my own personal preferences. Once, however, embarked upon my task, I deliberately put aside those personal disinclinations which had hitherto held me back, and tried by an act of will to fulfil in a spirit of service the task which had been set me."

### Books with Varying Appeal

In view of the reception accorded to the book, it is now clear that Brunton had indeed a service to perform, but the urge to turn out another work on similar lines "to order" as it were, was never present. Indeed, he confesses to an inherent dislike of being regarded in the light of anything resembling a spiritual teacher. "The laurels of successful advocacy of a spiritual message, so far as they include publicity and followers and correspondence and visitors, are equally as distasteful to me as are the thorns of martyrdom. . . . I ask no more of the world than that it leave me to my wandering and scribbling and contemplating."

During the interval of three years between the appearance of *The Secret Path* and the publication of Brunton's present work, books from his pen of varying merit and appeal have seen the light. Yet slowly and persistently, and step by step with the widening of experience and the deepening of insight, the urge to supplement the earlier effort became insistent. "Once again," he declares, "the inner bidding has come to me, to take up the following work and to do it as an act of service, and in the face of such imperious command my own personal will falls powerless. I have therefore obeyed and in the obeying have tried to enter into my task in that spirit of devoted service which was demanded of me. These pages, this gospel of inspired thought and action . . . are a fitting sequel to my earlier writings. . . .

35, "Moreover, the three years which have elapsed since *The Secret Path* was written have been years of wider experience of

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these deeper truths and of considerable expansion in personal realization. My understanding of them is, I hope, now more profound and therefore I feel myself in a better position to handle the subject more comprehensively, more accurately and with a clearer vision of the true relation of these truths to our practical everyday existence."

Let it be quite clear, again, that Paul Brunton makes no exaggerated claims for the teaching of the East as compared with that of the West ; nor is he any less emphatic in his repudiation of the doubtful honour of being regarded in the light of a teacher or prophet. All he says is that if conscientiously followed, the modified and adapted yoga practices of which he writes will result in a measure of internal peace and satisfaction : they are not intended to solve the mystery of the universe ! This, he says, "is beyond the reach of the ordinary yogi", and is the secret of "a rare few" even in India, the home of ageless wisdom. Still, the degree of spiritual unfoldment attainable under the conditions of stress and turmoil as they exist today in the West must prove of inestimable value to the individual, if only through the maintenance of that inner tranquillity which refuses to be entirely swamped by the outer discord of a world gone mad. As a matter of fact, the feverish unrest of our present age is in no small measure due to the fading out from the consciousness of men of that more or less clear awareness of the spiritual basis of existence. With the decay of outworn dogmas has naturally come a lack of trust in those finer "intimations of immortality" which are now for the most part considered as the mere vague sentiments of the dreamer or poet. Men have yet to learn that religion is not so much a matter of creed or dogma as of vital inner experience—an awareness which the system of (Over)self-unfoldment described in Brunton's new book is designed to quicken.

In general, the plan of this latest work follows the natural line, first, of analysis of the various aspects of the self, and then of the practical application in daily life of the principles which may be deduced from the foregoing analyses.

### What is the "Overself" ?

The choice by Brunton of the term "Overself" is a matter of felicitation, because no term hitherto in common use has adequately connoted, in language other than that of orthodox



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theology, that essential superconscious element which is the very essence of mankind in its highest aspect. We may talk of the Higher Self, of the Christ within, of the Holy Guardian Angel, of Adonai, or choose from a host of similar terms ; but each has its association with religion, theosophy, qabalism, gnosticism, or some other particular cult. Here, at any rate, is a word which is free from such extraneous influence. Says our author, "First of all it might be said that the Oversoul is primarily man's essential being, the all-important residue which is left when he succeeds in banishing the thought of his identification with the physical body or the intellect. . . . The Overself is the creative Force which gives birth to the personal ego, sustains it for a cosmic period, and then draws it back into itself again. . . . Life distilled to the last drop—that is the Overself."

Here is the crux of the definition—the Overself as the quintessence rather than the residue of human consciousness.

Yet we are warned against the erroneous conclusion that there is a separate Overself attached to each individual. There is only one Overself—“not millions of eternal Overselves but millions of perishable individualities”. It is as well to conceive at the outset as clearly as possible the ideal of which we are in quest, even though, from the loftiness of its nature, it cannot be truly apprehended. Our author essays the task in the following extract :

“The Overself is eternal. It has never been away from us at any moment. We, however, have been heedless of it. . . .

“We do not ‘see’ the Overself ; we apprehend it. Visions merely disclose its finest garments, its robes of dazzling light. . . .

“We do not behold its beauty ; our being dissolves into its breath and we *become* that which poet, painter, sculptor, musician seek but scarcely find.

“The Overself is the supreme reality, but its reality is too subtle, too exquisite, too rare, for expression. It is best savoured in long-drawn silences. It is the ray of God in man, the immeasurable Infinite which pervades his measurable being, the true Spirit behind the human creature . . .”

The symbolical diagram which accompanies Paul Brunton's chapter on the Overself is not reproduced here, as this and the interpretation call for close study and meditation rather than



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cursory reading, and apart from the rest of the book would serve little useful purpose. It is in its atmosphere, its overtone, that the power of Brunton's book lies, rather than in its printed word, necessary as this is to establish *rapport* with the reader. Like all truly mystical works, its message lies hidden beneath the mere surface meaning.

## The Voice of Nature

In the quest, then, for this Overself, our author finds his first clue in the finer and aesthetic feelings which characterize music, art, poetry, and so on. Indeed, poetry and mysticism are closely allied, poets generally being mystics at heart. Wordsworth especially is distinguished by this characteristic. Take his well-known lines :

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :  
 The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
     Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
     And cometh from afar :  
 Not in entire forgetfulness,  
 And not in utter nakedness,  
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
 From God, who is our home.

Or the words of Matthew Arnold in his sonnet, *Quiet Work* :

One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,  
 One lesson which in every wind is blown,  
 One lesson of two duties kept at one  
 Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—  
 Of toil unsevered from tranquillity,  
 Of labour that in lasting fruit outgrows  
 Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,  
 Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.  
 Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,  
 Man's senseless uproar mingling with his toil,  
 Still do thy quiet ministers move on,  
 Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting :  
 Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,  
 Labourers that shall not fail when man is gone.

It is a logical step, and an easy one, for all but the most earthly, to "look up from Nature to Nature's God". The voice of Nature whispers its healing message to the stricken heart, and brings



courage and hope to the weary mind. These finer feelings, born of the peace or beauty of Nature, Brunton maintains, should be fostered and cherished carefully. This love and adoration of Nature springs from the deepest depths of one's being. One should deliberately cultivate these moods, which are "most frequently evoked unconsciously through aesthetic pleasures, through such things as listening to beautiful music, reading inspired poetry, and yielding to impressions made on one's senses and mind by unforgettably grand natural scenes. . . .

"Whenever such a mood of powerful charm, intense awe, or utter peace is experienced it is necessary that one should keep all one's mind upon it and recognize it as an important messenger, and listen to its message; one should ponder long and deeply over this message and seek to trace it to its higher origin; one should try to weave its effects into the fabric of one's own character. Because such moods do not come to us labelled with the name of the country of their mystic origin we are apt to undervalue their worth. . . .

"One may turn to Nature at any time for relief and succour from earthly misery. She is beauty made earth and serenity made stone. When, for instance, one wanders into the silent depths of a forest and penetrates its throbbing silence, alone with its immensity, one should concentrate on the first emotions thus aroused and heighten them to a degree where they pass into something of genuine spiritual value. . . . As one walks upon the leaf-strewn ground, a state of concentration may be induced which will deepen gradually until, if one is fortunate, that eternal serenity of the Overself which underlies all our fitful moods may flash forth and give us an unforgettable experience."

### Cultivation of the Heart

We hear much nowadays of the necessity for thought-control, mental mastery, etc.; but of the cultivation of the heart, far too little. Not that mind-training is unnecessary—far otherwise. Our author devotes considerable space to these points, as well as to the control of breath—useful adjuncts for the overcoming of that physical inertia and resistance which make systematic meditation a matter of so much difficulty. Nevertheless, in our view, the true key to the Overself resides in the heart. In a little



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essay, *Green Leaves*, by Mabel Collins, inspired from the same source as *Light on the Path*, the pregnant sentence may be found :

"It is the emotions alone which admit you to the citadel of the soul ; it is through the heart only that you can reach yourself. Those who are without heart are also without soul."

It is in the section of his book dealing with the *Mystery of the Heart* and the *Overself* that Paul Brunton rises to his greatest heights. His new volume has been well worth waiting for. The authentic spiritual message, like a voice from far off, breathes through the whole book, but more especially in the chapters to which reference has just been made. Our author begins with stressing the significance of the fact that a stranger, say of some primitive race, wishing by sign language to indicate himself in contradistinction to others, will point to his own heart. This action, he declares, "is highly significant, as a mute testimony to nature operating through the profoundest instincts of the human creature, associating selfhood with the most important physical organ of the body—the heart." True, ~~con~~ sense of I-ness, the ego-thought, resides in the brain. "This personal ego," he continues, has come into existence as a creature which derives all its power to exist, to understand and even to act, entirely from the impersonal *Overself*, but which unfortunately is nowadays unaware of this divine derivation. It exists in its own belief as a being which lives and moves by its own strength alone, but in this it is self-deceived. Without this secret link with its immortal essence, the *Overself*, it could not continue such existence for a single moment."

But a line of communication exists between head and heart, a link of the ego with its birthplace. A way of return is still open.

"If the ego could be awakened from its exteriorization and induced to turn inwards and backwards, tracing its way to its own original seat, it would necessarily move towards the *Overself*. Once the latter were found, it would merely have to keep in constant communication with that holy source, to sip nectar with the gods and be happy. The true object of all genuine spiritual practices is therefore to persuade the personal mind to turn inwards, away from the material universe, and through such abstraction in meditation or prayer slowly to retrace its steps. . . . This is the spiritual goal set before him by life, by God—and no other really exists !"



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Some special meditational practices are given in detail, so that those who feel drawn to do so may discover the truth for themselves. As an indication of success, "there will be a tender melting feeling in the depths of the heart, a faint breath-like sacred presence that increasingly suffuses one"; or, as the little mystical guide *Light on the Path* puts it, "in the deep silence a mysterious event will occur, which will prove that the way has been found. Call it by what name you will, it is a voice that speaks where there is none to speak—it is a messenger that comes, a messenger without form or substance; or it is the flower of the soul that has opened. It cannot be described by any metaphor."

## The Ligature

Furthermore, "the intellect will be caught and held in the heart", a phenomenon well known to Christian mystics, amongst others, and classified by the famous Roman Catholic writer Abbé Poulain under the heading of "the ligature". All vital religion, of course, confesses the same truth. It is only the dogmas that differ, not the spiritual essence. After all, as our author pertinently indicates, the brain is the seat only of reflected consciousness, a reflection derived from the true centre, the heart. Intellectual consciousness is secondary, while heart consciousness is primary—moon and sun. And the superficial reader is warned against assuming that by heart consciousness mere emotion is intended.

Of the final stages in the quest of the Overself with which Paul Brunton deals, little more can be said, except, perhaps, to draw attention to another parallel with the advice given to the seeker in *Light on the Path*. We are there told that the effort of creating oneself a disciple must come from within the aspirant himself. He has "to leap right away from his present standpoint to his next, and at once become an intrinsic part of the divine power as he has been an intrinsic part of the intellectual power of nature. Each man has to accomplish the great leap for himself, and without aid; yet it is something of a staff to lean upon to know that others have taken that leap. It is possible that they have been lost in the abyss. No matter, they have had the courage to enter it. . . . Scarce one passes through without bitter complaint. Your teacher or your predecessor may hold



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your hand in his, and give you the utmost sympathy . . . but when the silence and darkness come you are alone, you lose all knowledge of him."

In describing the first-fruit of success in the quest of the Overself, Paul Brunton writes :

"It is like plunging into an abyss of infinity where the essence of one's existence threatens to pass away beyond recall. This curious condition mingles a momentary but powerful fear of death with a sense of being liberated. The two struggle with each other. . . . Absolute fearlessness, a readiness to die, is now called for. . . . 'Not my will but thine be done' reflects the required attitude. . . . There must not be the slightest reservation. . . . Instead of continuing to seek the Overself by means of intellectual exertions, one stops and lets the Overself seek him !

"All these reiterations of the need for dropping egotism in its subtlest and least apparent form—even that of effort—are necessary because of the crucial importance of this transformation from personality to impersonality. It corresponds to the stage when a pregnant mother arrives at the point of actually yielding the babe from her womb. . . . The great care needed at childbirth is not greater than that which is needed now at the birth of the human being into the Overself. And with this the man is literally 'born again', and attains an unforgettable proof of his own divinity."

The similarity between the two descriptions is so marked that they may almost be regarded as identical. But again, it is characteristic of authentic mystical experience that it should be of a similar character, whether it occurs in the orthodox Church or within the fold of some Eastern religion, or independently of any organized creed.

### "Children" take Heaven "by Storm"

Another noteworthy point in connection with the two descriptions given above is the fact that, in the final analysis it is not the disciple at all who "creates himself" ! True, he contributes his own share of the necessary effort, but the rest lies in other hands. It is the old paradox once more—"little children" taking the kingdom of Heaven "by storm".

Since the great spiritual leaders of the race have given teaching



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which later became crystallized into religious dogma, it is only to be expected that spiritual experience should take on a religious tone. This point comes out strongly when Brunton touches on the subject of Grace—"this manifestation of an authority higher than our own which finally starts to extinguish our attachment to the ego". . . . The working of Grace has been made familiar to Christian devotees by the many stories of notable conversions, which, it may be remarked, are by no means confined solely to the West. Grace, Brunton says, is the Power of the Overself, "the gate-keeper at the Shrine". The operations of this power are veiled in mystery, and inevitably we are reminded of the lines by Matthew Arnold :

We cannot kindle when we will  
The fire that in the heart resides,  
The spirit bloweth and is still,  
In mystery the soul abides.

Among the signs which herald the coming of Grace is a disposition to fits of weeping. "Such weeping", our author states, "will not always be visible and external; it may take place silently in the secret chamber of the heart. When the tears, however, do make their appearance, one should not resist, but yield to their poignancy, even to the point of shedding them frequently and copiously so far as external conditions permit. Such tears are valuable allies . . . they dissolve those hard incrustations built up by the ego, which bar the gate to the entry of Grace. By their gentle but powerful aid much is accomplished, sometimes as much as could be achieved by the ordinary self-effort in meditation. . . . He alone who knows how to weep for the Highest, and how to refrain from weeping from wordly disappointment, is fit to know Truth."

Having in view the fact that the first aphorism of *Light on the Path* runs "Before the eyes can see they must be incapable of tears" the student of occultism may feel some misgivings. This is well, for a danger exists of grave misinterpretation of the aphorism in question. Light on this problem has been offered to students in the inspired essay by Mabel Collins entitled *A Cry from Afar*. At the outset, it is declared, with emphasis, "Let no man look for the time when his eyes shall become incapable of tears. . . . No human eyes can be incapable of tears." The little essay proceeds to show how pity and sorrow characterize



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the man in whom the Spirit is stirring. "Tears are as the dew on the dry ground. Man's being would wither in the dryness of the material world if there did not arise from himself that tenderness which is tears, and which dissolves from within the iron bondage of separateness . . . the whole being is softened and suffused with the dew of its own tenderness. All men must be softened and suffused ere they are fitted to enter upon the stage in which they are incapable of tears."

## The Grace of "Tears"

That the suffusion of the inner being with such tenderness might unfit a man or woman for the proper discharge of their duties in everyday life is an illusion born, again, of misconception. The tears of which Paul Brunton writes are not the tears of hysteria. The tenderness mentioned in *A Cry from Afar* is not mere softness. Grace does not begin to manifest until the inner life has not only begun to unfold but is on the way to becoming firmly established. Instead of becoming unfit for the struggle of life, the spiritual man, on the contrary, finds a reserve of strength, a fountain of living waters, which enables him to cope with it more adequately even than the most ruthlessly dynamic personality, driven merely by an abundance of animal vitality and magnetism. The inner, spiritual life is not, as is so often erroneously supposed, something divorced from the outer or personal life. It "steps it up" as the transformer steps up electrical voltage. Environment loses its tyranny, and for the first time one begins to experience real freedom.

In the life of dedication to the Overself lies the secret of that inner repose which manifests in the outer world as added power. Such power through repose is more than ever necessary in the feverish and unsettled times in which we live; and the way to gain it is indicated plainly enough in Brunton's new book—by far the best he has so far written—if only the meditational practices there described are conscientiously and regularly followed. Even though the quest may be initiated by motives of reward, all who undertake it will be well repaid.

THE EDITOR.



## WITCHES AND WITCHCRAFT

By the Hon. RALPH SHIRLEY

On the subject of the Witches' Sabbath, and the nature of the experiences undergone by the followers of the Cult, much has been written, although a good deal still remains to be done in the way of research. This article from the pen of our esteemed Contributor throws a strong sidelight on the psychic nature of the phenomena of witchcraft, and will doubtless be read with interest by his many admirers.

THREE different views have been taken with regard to the question of witches and witchcraft and the alleged meetings of its votaries at the so-called Witches' Sabbath. The most prevalent view, since what is commonly termed Rationalism obtained the upper hand, is that the whole affair was in the nature of a mare's nest, an illusion which took hold of the popular imagination, more especially during the Middle Ages, and led to panics among the ignorant multitude who ascribed their misfortunes or physical complaints and ailments to diabolic influence, and who sought among the most ill-favoured or most unpopular of the community harmless individuals to whom they ascribed the cause of their ills. To indulge, again, in some form of chemical or scientific research was to render its practitioner at once suspect by his more ignorant neighbours. According to this view the belief in witchcraft was a form of phobia, as we should term it in modern parlance, and a very infectious one at that.

It must, however, be borne in mind that while we associate these panics in especial with the Middle Ages, there is no period of known history in which such beliefs were not prevalent. The Mosaic law condemned witches to death, though the persecution of them seems to have been intermittent.

Later on a succession of Roman Emperors issued edicts against them. So that we are not entitled to consider the phenomenon as in any way peculiar to mediaeval times except perhaps in regard to the special character of its manifestations during this period of history. It follows that the difficulty of looking upon it from a purely rationalistic standpoint is accentuated by the vast accumulation of evidence in support of it, the extraordinary



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character of which Mr. W. E. H. Lecky emphasizes in his *History of the Rise of Rationalism in Europe*, as well as by the universality of its presence under all conditions and at every epoch.

From the second point of view witchcraft has been regarded as a thinly veiled survival of pagan worship on its lower levels. As Mr. Montague Summers observes in his *History of Witchcraft*,

When a human being, a man, occupied the chief position at these meetings and directed the performance of the rites he would sometimes appear in a hideous and grotesque disguise, sometimes without any attempt at concealment. This masquerade generally took the shape of an animal and had its origin in heathendom, whence by an easy transition through the ceremonial of heretics it passed to the sorcerer and the witch.

He quotes the *Liber Penitentialis* of St. Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury 668-690, as saying :

If anyone at the Kalends of January goes about as a stag or a bull, that is making himself into a wild animal and dressing in the skin of a herd animal and putting on the head of beasts, for those who in such wise transform themselves into the appearance of a wild animal penance for three years [is prescribed] because this is devilish.

It is, I think, quite clear that these orgies took place not infrequently and that the leader in them, the so-called Devil, was a man dressed up in the form of a goat or sometimes of a bull or a cat or other animal. He doubtless corresponded to the Satyr of earlier classical tradition.

Underlying this conception of the Devil as an object of worship is the mythological story of the overthrow of Saturn (Satan) by Jupiter. Saturn, once supreme, still retained his votaries, though their adoration of him was carried on as a form of secret and obscene ritual. These votaries were the survivors of a faith now driven underground but once openly practised and universally sanctioned and approved.

These Satan-worshippers betook themselves to the Sabbath on foot, as a rule, but sometimes on horseback, and if, as was not infrequently the case, they came leaping into the air and indulging in uncouth dances, we must not assume that there was anything of a psychic nature in such antics even if they sang and danced with brooms in their hands as described by Bodin. They were,



in short, masqueraders who met together by appointment for the purpose of indulging in obscene orgies of a diabolic character.

The third view of the Witches' Sabbath is of a totally different nature and interprets the phenomena recorded as experiences of a subconscious character, but perfectly real and actual to those who underwent them. The witches, in short, attended these meetings in their etheric bodies, their physical forms remaining in their beds in a state of trance. A very vivid description of such experiences written in the form of fiction is to be found in the late Mr. J. W. Brodie Innes's novel *The Devil's Mistress*. Isobel Gowdie, the heroine, an actual historical character, is carried to the witches' meeting-places on horseback, but it is made clear that the horse is an illusion of the senses, being in reality a piece of timber or beanstalk or anything else that might be handy and which by the aid of a magical ointment underwent the required transformation. The Somerset witches maintained that they habitually flew through the air by means of a magical oil and magical incantations. So, too, Margaret Johnson (tried in 1633) stated that "if they desired to be at any place, upon a sudden their devil or spirit will upon a rod, dog, or anything else, presently convey them thither".

In his *Malleus Maleficarum* Sprenger cites the case of a woman who surrendered herself voluntarily to the Dominican fathers and confessed that she attended nightly at the Witches' Sabbath. She was thereupon locked in her chamber by officers appointed for the purpose who took care to render her escape impossible and kept guard over her, watching her movements through a secret grille. They reported that after the door was closed she threw herself upon her bed and became perfectly rigid in every limb. Subsequently, they entered the room and, finding her in a state of trance, endeavoured to rouse her by shaking her roughly. This producing no effect, they placed a lighted candle close to her naked foot, which was scorched in the flame, but she still remained in a state of insensibility. Eventually, she recovered consciousness and related in detail the incidents which, as she declared, had taken place at the Sabbath which she had attended, and then complained of a hurt upon her foot.

On the following day the fathers explained to her all that had occurred and that she had never moved from the spot and that the pain arose from the taper which had been applied to her



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flesh as a test. They admonished her with paternal charity, and on her humble expression of contrition for her error and promise to guard against such fantasies in future a suitable penance was prescribed and the woman dismissed.\*

Here we have surely, quite unmistakably what Theosophists would term an excursion on the astral plane and what perhaps we may better describe in the phraseology of today as an out-of-the-body-experience. That such experiences formed an important portion of the witch phenomena of an earlier age it seems to me very difficult to deny, in view of what we now know of psychic phenomena generally and of the possibilities of functioning in the etheric form, of which strongly evidential records continue to accumulate.

I would venture to suggest that the least-difficult manner of accounting for the somewhat voluminous evidence which we possess is to accept both the psychic and materialistic phenomena as actually occurring—one as a subconscious experience, and the other as a Satanic rite.

In proof that such subconscious experiences are not unknown today a very curious piece of evidence came under my notice some time ago. One of the readers of that most remarkable work *The Devil's Mistress* wrote to the author, Mr. Brodie Innes, that she had read his book at a gulp and was most deeply impressed by it as she had had a precisely similar and most vivid experience herself.

The Devil [she wrote] was my lover. He came from pine woods near the sea and was a little like Mephistopheles on the stage. I loved him absolutely, but when he said "You will go with me to Hell today" I strove to make the sign of the Cross, but only succeeded in crossing my two forefingers.

Her life in Hell, she declared, was indescribable bliss, but she escaped in the end—and the Devil was left lamenting that he had lost her soul.

Had she, one wonders, been a witch in some earlier incarnation?

Paul Grillard (1537) gives an account of an Italian witch who flew in the air by the aid of magic ointment. Isaac de Queyran (1609) states that witches who lived at a distance from the meeting-place flew home through the air.

\* Recorded in Montague Summers's *History of Witchcraft*.

B



A French witch (Antide Colas) speaks of being taken out of her bed by the Devil and carried away as if by a cold wind, the Devil seizing her by her head. There are a number of confessions of witches who stated that they were carried through the air on animals of various kinds. One of them (Rolande du Vernier 1598) said that she went to the Sabbath on a black sheep which carried her away at such a pace that she lost consciousness. From the Swedish records, it would appear that witches were carried over churches, houses, high walls, etc., on a beast which the Devil kept ready for just that purpose. All these illusory experiences unmistakably point to the existence of trance conditions brought about through the employment of the magical unguent with which the witches' bodies were anointed. Sometimes the rod or stick on which they travelled was itself smeared with this mysterious ointment, as in the case of Claire Goessen (1603), a Belgian witch.

The Witches' Sabbath, of course, was a veritable orgy of the blasphemous and the obscene. Those who feel inclined to make a study of the very revolting details are referred to the *History of Witchcraft* by Montague Summers (London: Kegan Paul), and to *The Witch-cult in Western Europe*, by Margaret Alice Murray (Oxford: Clarendon Press). I do not accept the viewpoint of either except in part, but they refer back to original documents (the latter, especially) of exceptional interest from an analysis of which one can of course draw one's own inferences. Margaret Murray's book, as its name implies, is confined to the phenomena of witchcraft in Western Europe and though it is fuller in detail than the former it is nevertheless more limited in its scope.

In these records the Devil, so called, does not invariably appear in male form and it is by no means always a case of meeting at the Witches' Sabbath. Sometimes it is pretty obvious that a casual encounter leads to further intimacy, and in many instances the Devil's understudy appears to be mistaken for His Satanic Majesty. A young man or young woman, as the case may be, deliberately plays the part in order to add a dramatic element to the situation—this in spite of the fact that it was a very dangerous game to play. There is no escape from the conviction that human credulity must be held accountable for many instances of this alleged infernal traffic.

So in the case of William Barton, who was tried in Edinburgh, we read in his confession :



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One day, going from my own house in Kirkliston to the Queen's Ferry, I overtook in Dalmeny Muire, a young gentlewoman, as to appearance beautiful and comely. I drew near to her but she shunned my company and when I insisted she became angry and very nyste. Said I "We are both going one way, be pleased to accept of a convoy." At last after much entreaty she grew better natured and at length came to that familiarity that she suffered me to embrace her and to do that which Christian ears ought not to hear of. At this time I parted with her very joyful.

The next night she appeared to him in the very same place and "after that which should not be named" he became sensible that it was the Devil. Here he renounced his baptism and gave himself up to her service and received the Mark; and she called him her beloved and gave him the new name of John Baptist.

There does not seem here to be anything that could not be paralleled countless times at the present day. Obviously, the "young gentlewoman" was having a game with William Barton, a conclusion at which any jury nowadays would very quickly arrive.

The Witches' (or Devil's) Mark which was given to William Barton by this saucy minx, as I think we may term her, was of course intended to clinch the proof of her identification with the Witches' Satan.

The infliction of this mark was the final rite in the ceremony of admission. Reginald Scot states (1584) that the Devil gives to every novice a mark either with his teeth or with his claws. Sir George MacKenzie, a celebrated Scotch lawyer, describing what did or did not constitute a witch, states :

The Devil's Mark useth to be a great article with us but it is not *per se* found relevant, except it be confest by them that they got that Mark with their own consent, *quo casu* it is equivalent to a "Paction". This Mark is given to them as is alleged by a Nip in any part of the body and it is blue. Delrio calls it Stigma or Character and alleges that it is sometimes like the impression of a hare's foot or the foot of a rat or spider.

Some of the witches were also baptized. Of the Swedish witches it is said that "the Devil caused them to be baptized and made them confirm their baptism with dreadful oaths and imprecations". Mary Osgood, similarly, a New England witch (1692), "went to five miles pond when she was baptized by the Devil who dipped her face in the water and made her *swear* early



her former baptism and told her she must be his, soul and body for ever and that she must serve him, which she promised to do".

Isobel Gowdie, the witch of Aulderne, had another sort of baptism. The Devil marked her on the shoulder and sucked out her blood at the mark, and spouted it in his hand and sprinkling it on her head said, "I baptize thee, Janet, in my own name."

Rain-making was one of the powers ascribed to witches in times past. This appears to be associated with the fertility cult, a relic doubtless of the old pagan religions. A curious story of this kind is narrated by Reginald Scot, who quotes it from the *Malleus Maleficarum*, written in 1487, as follows :

A little girl walking abroad with hir father in his land heard him complaine of drought, wishing for raine, etc. Whie, father, (quoth the child) I can make it raine or haile when and where I list. He asked where she learned it. She said of hir mother who forbad hir to tell anie bodie thereof. He asked her how hir mother taught hir. She answered that hir mother committed hir to a maister who would at anie time do anie thing for hir. Whie, then (said he) make it raine but onlie in my field. And so she went to the streame and threw up water in hir maister's name, and made it raine presentlie. And proceeding further with hir father she made it haile in another field at hir father's request. Thereupon he accused his wife and caused hir to be burned ; and then he new christened his child againe.

The transformation of witches into hares, cats, or other animals is a further development of the witch tradition. If the hare is shot or wounded the wound is transferred by repercussion to the witch's body and this provides evidence of the transformation. So, too, the witch at times provides evidence of her presence in her etheric body. If anyone present has psychic powers the witch becomes visible to him and, as in the case of the hare, any wound inflicted on the etheric body of the witch is transferred to her physical form. Joseph Glanvil in his *Saducismus Triumphatus* gives an instance of this which led to the conviction of the witch in question, a certain Jane Brooks, who was suspected of persecuting a boy called Richard Jones by occult means.

On a certain Sunday about noon [so runs the narrative], the Child being in a Room with his father and one Gibson, and in his fit, he on a sudden called out that he saw Jane Brooks on the Wall and pointed to the place where immediately Gibson struck with a knife. Upon which the father cried out, "Oh, father, coz Gibson hath cut Jane Brooks' hand and we are free." The father and Gibson immediately repaired to the Constable,



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a discreet person, and acquainting him with what had passed, desired him to go with them to Jane Brooks' house, which he did. They found her sitting in her room on a stool with one hand over the other. The Constable asked her how she did? She answered, not well. He asked again why she sat with one hand on the other? She replied she was wont to do so. The Constable desired he might see the hand that was under, which, she being unwilling to shew him, he drew it out and found it bloody according to what the boy had said. Being asked how it came so, she said, 'twas scratched with a great pin.

The boy's persecution continued, according to the narrative, until Jane Brooks and a fellow conspirator of hers were lodged in gaol. After this it ceased. Jane Brooks was condemned and executed at Chard assizes on March 26th, 1658. It does not, however, appear from the account given by Dr. Glanvil why she should have entertained a grudge against the unfortunate youth in question.

Among the phenomena recorded in connection with the present case, that of levitation is cited, the boy Richard Jones attributing it to the intervention of Jane Brooks. On one occasion the boy, being at the house of a certain Richard Isles in Shepton Mallet, went out with Isles's wife into the garden when she (being within two yards of the boy) saw him rise from the ground before her till he passed into the air over the garden wall and was carried in this manner over thirty yards, when he was taken up as one dead.

When he came to himself he declared that Jane Brooks had taken him by the arm out of Isles's garden and carried him to the spot where he was picked up.

In this instance we learn nothing of the means whereby Jane Brooks acquired her psychic powers, nor does the Devil or his representative figure in the narrative, but such phenomena inevitably recall similar records in the case of notorious witches whose trafficking with the powers of darkness was openly admitted by them at their trials.

In the last case we are evidently touching upon the problem of the exteriorization of the etheric body with which I have dealt fully in my latest book, on *The Mystery of the Human Double*.

I think that it will be fairly obvious that in treating of such a subject as the above we are confronted with occurrences, as I have already indicated, that fall into quite different classes. I would suggest that the majority of the so-called Witches' Sabbaths are relics of the rites appertaining to so-called early



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fertility cults, which have been submerged and superseded by higher and more spiritual religious faiths and observances, but which were still carried on, *sub rosa*, so to speak, and linked up with a species of masquerade by worshippers dressed up in the skins of animals and posing as devotees of rustic divinities of the nature of Silenus, Priapus, or Pan.

A different category of secret worship is connected with the employment of certain herbs and unguents which have for their object the exteriorization of the psychic element in man and its abuse for immoral or malevolent purposes under the guidance or control of masters of the darker side of ceremonial magic. It is indeed within the bounds of possibility that we should be justified in regarding the former type as a materialistic copy or imitation of the latter, but this is a question to which an answer, in the present state of our knowledge of such cults, could hardly be given with any real confidence. It must remain at present as a conjecture only.

All we can say is that the records of witch cults and witch phenomena, plentiful as they are, ~~do not point to one single interpretation, and that anyone who seeks to explain them on the basis of a single hypothesis will inevitably be forced to ignore an important and vital section of the evidence available.~~ The natural desire for simplification may tempt students of the occult in the direction indicated, but the dispassionate critic will be loath to arrive at a conclusion which involves turning a blind eye to records which conflict with some preconceived conception of the probabilities of the question under consideration.

### BOOK REVIEW

THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS. By Frances J. Beeching. Maastricht and London : A. A. M. Stols, Ltd. Price 8s. 6d.

SHEER Communistic propaganda. According to Mrs. Beecher, Communism will save the world.

Submission to authority is anathema ; self-training and self-discipline distinctly wrong. Parental love is an instinct, and instincts belong to the world of error. Ergo, parents are the last people to be entrusted with the care of their own children. Promiscuousness is advocated, and "love for the whole" will apparently ensure all actions being pure and right.

Moral and intellectual anarchy !

R. E. BRUCE.



# THE CLUE : UNITY ?

By R. F. PICKARD

Logic, a manifestation of the Laws of Pure Reason, as our Contributor shows, is a Key—perhaps the only Key—to the metaphysical approach to the secret of Life. Beginning with pure Intellect, it passes, however, into direct Cognition of the Unity of all things—the way of the Jnana Yogi.

## I

ONE of the difficulties which beset those who wish to discover the real meaning of the universe is that they do not know at what point to begin ; and, while there are many methods of approach open to the metaphysical investigator, I contend that there is only one which commends itself to the severely critical mind.

Now, because we seek accurate answers to our questions by the use of reason, it seems natural that our first consideration should be : Is our method of reasoning the correct one ? The position is as follows : all ratiocination is based on certain primary laws of thought, which we sum up under the name logic. Every scientific argument depends on these laws, the best known of which are : (1) Whatever is, is ; (2) A thing cannot both *be* and *not be* ; (3) A thing must either *be* or *not be*. We have, accordingly, had infinitely wide experience of the validity of logic, having found it a reliable basis on which to reason for purposes of science. For, although scientific "laws" are in many cases merely provisional hypotheses, yet the primary laws of thought, on which all science is built, can themselves be regarded as always holding good, else scientific theories could not have their wide practical application. Consequently, the laws of thought are accepted as axiomatic by everybody ; logic is regarded as the only possible method of reasoning.

We have seen that it is correct to use logic in reasoning about the facts of experience. Now, however, comes the question whether we may apply it as an accurate method of inference in order to learn something about those things which are *outside* experience.

The means of testing whether logic can be justifiable in the only



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metaphysics necessitates the use of logic itself. Directly we begin to think, we must use reasoning of some kind, and hitherto our reasoning has been of one kind, namely logic. When we try to see how far logical inference is valid for purposes of metaphysics, we perceive three possible alternatives, theoretically :

(1) There may be no reason for the universe. Everything may exist through chance, and our universe may appear to have order merely because it is an infinitesimal part of the countless possible combinations constituting the whole, some of which might happen to have an appearance of order purely by chance (in view of the endless possibilities).

(2) There may be a reason for the universe, but we may be unable to solve the metaphysical problems correctly, on account of our minds being finite ; in which case there is no use in employing logic to discover the meaning of the universe.

(3) The reasoning of logic may be absolute\* (not merely relative) ; in which case it can be used justifiably, as a method of inference, to solve metaphysical problems, provided there are known laws or facts which will serve as the basis for deductions.

Now, as far as our minds can perceive, the first of the three theoretical alternatives above mentioned is the least likely to be correct. There is no good argument favouring the suggestion that chance is responsible for our existence. If chance prevailed we should not expect unity everywhere in the universe. Is it chance that phenomena conform with such consistency and regularity to the scientific laws which have been formulated in regard to them? When we examine the theory that in a vast universe due to chance a small fraction might have order just because there are countless possible combinations, we still cannot conceive why, if this be so, we are not in continual collision with other parts. Neither should we expect, in a world of chance, that degree of coherence and stability which there undoubtedly is. In short, the signs of a universal unity preclude the possibility of chance.

And so we may rule out of court the theory that chance is responsible for the universe ; for when we examine various phenomena we find that they all conform to certain relations. And because these relations have been regularly maintained we are fully entitled to believe that Law governs the universe.

the wh. "The theory [of Relativity] discovered certain things that are fixed—really Moral. And its demonstration that certain things are absolute is just as valuable, as much a part of the theory, as its demonstration that certain things are not." (J. W. N. Sullivan, in *Science . A New Outline.*)



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Having seen that the universe has a meaning, we must now consider whether logical reasoning is absolute, and consequently suitable for use in metaphysics, or whether it is only relative to our mental structure, in which case it will be unsuitable.

In order to show why logical deductions are permissible in attempting to solve metaphysical problems, I must draw attention to the fact that the laws of *thought* are the same as the laws of *existence*. Events happen in accordance with logical prediction, and reality follows reason. As Bertrand Russell well remarks, "What is important is not the fact that we think in accordance with these laws, but the fact that things behave in accordance with them." I think we may therefore conclude that logic is not merely a man-made instrument of reasoning but a series of laws according to which the universe functions. Logic goes to the very root of the universe.

To imagine that logic is an invention of man's to help him in his reasoning is to put the cart before the horse ; for logic is in reality the universal principle which man has *discovered*. The very fact that we can predict accurately the time when various stars will appear in the sky proves that our *reasoning* is in agreement with Nature's *acts*, and that logical reasoning is nothing else but the correct interpretation of Nature. Because logical reasoning is best exemplified in mathematics, we may regard the foregoing statements as corroborated, to a certain extent, by the findings of science : Sir James Jeans observes, "Our efforts to interpret Nature in terms of the concepts of pure mathematics have, so far, proved brilliantly successful."

It may be objected that there are things in the universe which are illogical ; that lunatics, for instance, do not reason logically. The answer to this is that their reasoning is perfectly consistent with the disordered mechanism of their brain, and that their actions are the logical outcome of their condition. And it is the same with animals. Both lunatics and animals, while being instinctively or subconsciously logical in their acts, each within a limited sphere, only appear illogical in that they have not related their actions properly to a wider scheme of things ; theirs is a logic relative to their condition. Yet, in spite of these *local* interpretations, there is running through the whole range of phenomena the one single thread of logic. And, though various phenomena which are the manifestations of the only



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relative one to another, yet logic itself is absolute, as it is not dependent on anything else, it operates everywhere and at all times, and is what gives complete unity. Thus we see a multitude of events, each logical within its own limits, being wonderfully interrelated in a higher scheme of things, which is, taken in its entirety (so far as we know), perfectly consistent and wholly logical.

It being the case, then, that all Nature functions in a way which we can describe as logical, there is no reason for supposing she will alter her course in the future ; and we may therefore infer that the whole universe is built upon the same plan. This unity of structure may be accepted as a fact, for it is a completely rational hypothesis, and the probabilities in its favour are enormous. Indeed, it is the most comprehensive piece of knowledge concerning the universe that we possess.

## II

In the preceding section I concluded that we might justifiably use logic as a method of reasoning in metaphysics, provided we could find reliable premises with which to begin. Now, the most important feature of the universe, for a metaphysician, is its *unity*, the fact that an endless variety of things are bound into a consistent whole. Because there is no fear of this Law of Unity being modified (as it is the most *universal* law of all, on which all other laws depend) it will serve as a solid foundation for accurate deductions. Chance means the opposite of unity, and so we may express the Law of Unity thus : *There is no fortuitous or chance existence.* From this clue we will follow a path of reasoning.

The fact that there is complete unity implies that there is one Power, and only one, which prevents chance from existing ; for were there two or more Powers the resulting state of things would necessarily be chaotic, and it would be pure chance what occurred. There is one determining Factor, something which ensures universal unity. And so, whatever the Power may be, *that* is one of Its functions.

When we came to the conclusion that there is no fortuitous existence, we did so by a method of reasoning, namely logic ; and when we saw that reasoning is valid, this implies that there is a Power which causes things to exist in accordance with logical necessity ;



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else "there is no fortuitous existence" would not be a fact but merely a statement. Unless what is logically necessary is also a *fact*, there is no use in logic, no use in our reasoning at all ; but all science is based on logic, and consequently logical necessities are *facts* ; and that is why a scientist can predict future events, such as the time of appearance of various celestial bodies. For, as we have seen, logic is not merely a man-made method of inference, it is a universal principle which man has discovered.

Because the whole universe is based on logical necessity—because it is the manifestation of things logically necessary in terms of existence—then, in order to find the meaning of the universe, we must find what is the essence of logic itself.

Logic, we know, consists of certain primary laws which are the foundation not only of all thinking and science but also of all *existence* ; for (to quote Bertrand Russell again) "things behave in accordance with them". But these laws have a common characteristic, which is seen in our definition of the Power, namely that It prevents chance and compels unity. For this would make it prevent any transgression of the Laws of Thought (which are also the Laws of Being). The Power is the generator of these laws ; It is the essence of unity, reason or logic. In other words, in order to learn what is the essence of reason, we must find out what is the alternative to, and antithesis of, chance. It is a Power one of whose functions is to compel unity. It is the translator into existence of the logically necessary. The universe is therefore the manifestation of unity, of reason, of logical necessity. It would be pure chance what occurred, were there not some Power to ensure that things should not exist fortuitously ; but all experience proves that there cannot be chance ; consequently there is a Power, one of Whose functions is to prevent chance from existing.

Here let us clear up one point in connection with the word "reason". The sentences "He has lost his reason" and "Give me your reason for doing that" show that this word is used to express different meanings ; and that is the inevitable trend of language. What is important is that this inaccuracy of thought has blinded us to the fact that there is a Power permeating everything, Which is not any particular individual reason, but simply an all-pervades Absolute Reason, of which the universe is the manifestations *That*, apparently, is the force governing all phenomena. The only



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What we now have to find out is this : Of what nature must the Power be in order that it may be *so constituted as to prevent all possibility of chance* ? Hitherto we have deduced merely that the Power is that Factor which makes it impossible for anything to exist through chance ; that is one of Its functions, as It is the essence of unity. But we did not deduce *how* It is to do so. And the problem is not solved by arguing that It might surmount this difficulty by existing everywhere. For if a thing were existing through chance and not through law, it could exist quite independently of whether there were space or time or anything else for it to exist in.

Now, the only logical way whereby the Power can prevent any chance world from existing is *by controlling every possible form of existence*. Anything that was not thus controlled would exist or non-exist fortuitously. Let us see what this implies.

Let us call the Power  $x$ . Then  $x$  can never create a universe *outside* Itself ; for if It did so  $x$  would be only a *part* of the whole (the whole would be  $x$  plus the universe). If It were a part, It could not control the whole, and consequently could not eliminate chance. Therefore any universe of which  $x$  is the cause must be a part of  $x$ , must be *in*  $x$ , not outside It. In other words, the whole universe is a part of the Power, which is therefore manifested as an infinite variety of forms of existence ; and these, being parts of It, cannot exist through chance, for that very reason. That is the only logical way whereby chance could have been prevented, and it explains why the universe contains infinite variety.

These infinitely varied forms, being parts of a whole (the Power), must have something to unify them, else they would be disconnected existences without any relationship one to another. To find this unifying factor, let us consider what we mean by the word "existence".

Of recent years there has been a tendency for scientists to abandon the Dualistic conception of mind and matter, and to believe in what amounts to Idealism. In this connection I will quote one or two extracts from General Smuts' Presidential Address to the British Association : "The stuff of the world is thus envisaged as events instead of material things" ; "science, which can with empirical brute facts, seems to be heading for the reign of reason" ; "if matter is essentially immaterial structure organization, it cannot fundamentally be so different from



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organism or life . . . nor from mind". And Sir James Jeans says, in *The Mysterious Universe*, "This concept of the universe as a world of pure thought throws a new light on many of the situations"; "the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine"; "the old dualism . . . seems likely to disappear . . . through substantial matter resolving itself into a creation and manifestation of mind"; while, in a recent summary of the present-day scientific position, he observes that "the law and order which we find in the universe are most easily explained in the language of idealism", and that, at the farthest point science has reached, "much, and possibly all, that was not mental has disappeared, and nothing new has come in that is not mental". If all is mind, one can understand how various forms of existence could be interrelated as parts of a great Unity, a Supreme Mind; whereas no one can explain, on the Dualistic view, why or how consciousness (awareness) should emerge from the motion of particles or waves: Dualism has not shown any junction between "mind" and "matter", "life" and "non-life".

We can now see what is the unifying factor which connects the infinitely varied forms of existence into a consistent whole. Each of them is a mental form, and there is one great universal Consciousness in which all the other mental forms exist in a certain relationship and orderly arrangement. Because, as I have implied, time and space are themselves mental forms, it is perfectly consistent to regard the entire universe in time and space as a single form of consciousness containing every possible variety of form. In other words, because the Power is manifested as every possible form of existence, and all existence is of a mental nature (i.e., it consists of different degrees of awareness), the Power is a Being Who is conscious of everything. And so the reason why logic may be applied to the solution of metaphysical problems is because our minds are parts of an infinite Mind Which is Itself logical.

## III

To sum up the conclusions reached in the preceding pages. Because logic is not merely a man-made instrument of reasoning, but a principle which underlies everything and thereby gives unity to the universe, this implies a Power, one of Whose functions is to compel unity and prevent chance from existing. The only



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logical way whereby the Power can be *so constituted as to compel unity and prevent chance* is by having *control* over everything that could possibly exist in a chance world. In order that the Power may have control over all the various things which It is to prevent from existing fortuitously they must be *parts of It*. Reasons were put forward why it is probable that *all existence is of a mental nature* (thought and feeling); and so, if we accept that theory, the Power is manifested as *an infinite variety of mental forms*. These would not be connected, nor would they have anything to relate them, unless there were *one form of consciousness containing all the others*. Therefore the Power is an infinitely complex and comprehensive Consciousness containing all forms; in other words It is a Being Who is omni-conscious.

## BOOK REVIEW

THE MEASURE OF LIFE. By Raymond Harrison. London: Stanley Nott, Ltd. Price 10s. 6d.

IN his preface the author remarks that if civilization is to survive, we must be on the threshold of a new age, where co-operation will be universal. He believes the pursuit of astrology to be one of the conditions of that state.

Astrological maps are given to several prominent people, showing the influence of various planets on their lives and characters.

The writer points out that diseases "*may be cured by plants ruled by a planet of an opposite nature to that which causes the ailment, or those ruled by the planet itself*", which, to the uninitiated, sounds rather contradictory.

A strong and well-balanced astrological map must exist if success in life is to be expected, it appears, though certain strong urges in one direction are sometimes noticeable in horoscopes of genius. Mr. Harrison's explanations of the various life-charts are so highly technical as to suggest that the book is intended primarily for the advanced student.

The various illustrations (plates), are delightful, and Mr. Harrison has been lucky in acquiring rights of reproduction for such photos, for instance, as that of a Mithraic sanctuary in Asia Minor, with the signs of the Zodiac painted round the flat surface of the inner arch, besides many others of almost equal interest.

R. E. BRUCE.



# OCCULTISM AND INITIATION: THE GREAT WORK

By PHILIP K. ESCHBACH

In dealing with the subject of the Great Work in Occultism, our Contributor, adopting the Qabalistic terminology in his sketch of the Initiatory Grades, throws a strong light on the mysterious "Dweller on the Threshold".

IN the first, the preceding, article on this subject, an attempt was made to distinguish between *Occultism*, in general, and *Initiation*. Further to this, the question may well be asked, "What is Initiation?" Is it a temporary or permanent state or condition, event or phenomenon which can be described in terms apprehensible by the ordinary intellect? That question shall now be answered, in so far as possible.

Initiation, in its highest phases, involves the attainment of the most sublime and loftiest goal that it is possible to reach, which is nothing less than Union with God. It is the *Unio Mystica*, Mystical Union, or identification with the Supreme Being, described by the Hindus as Nirvana. It is otherwise described as the attainment of Cosmic consciousness or the merging of the Individual Consciousness in the Universal. It is also called the Great Work by the mediaeval alchemists and their modern successors. These definitions are, of course, general and do not explain the actual event; nor do they mention the various definite stages on this Path, of which there are several.

As just stated, there are many degrees of Initiation and mystical experience but there are three outstanding events in the career of each and every Candidate, from Probationer to the Ultimate Attainment. These three chief stages may be further divided into twelve Grades, ten of which are referable to the Sephiroth of the Qabalistic Tree of Life; of the other two, one is below and the other above the Tree, so to speak. These also correspond to the Occult Planetary Spheres, after a certain manner, and there are yet further correspondences. The use of the OTz ChiIM, or Tree of Life, in this connection affords a



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convenient method of dividing, classifying and remembering these stages. We shall not stop here to explain this part of the Qabalah which would require a separate article to itself. Meanwhile, it is to be understood that this classification is not arbitrary or essential and those not familiar with it will still be able to follow the explanation of the Initiatory stages intelligently.

First, then, we have the Probationer standing at the foot of the Tree ready to start the ascent; thus begins the stage of study and development of the ratiocinative faculty, etc. During this general period, he enters first the Sephira of Malkuth, followed by Yesod, Hod and Netzach.

Now, having passed through the first five preparatory Grades in which he is thoroughly trained along the proper lines, the candidate enters the Sephira or Sphere of Tiphareth wherein he experiences the first great initiation. This involves this actual conscious entry into the Spiritual World when that faculty technically known as "initiated imagination" is developed. He may then be called a full *Minor Adept*. Recognition of and partial union with the Higher Self, Higher Manas, The Comforter or Holy Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost, now takes place. The accomplishment of the *first half* of the regimen of the Great Work corresponds to the attainment of this Grade. It is the *Solvé* and first great stage in the Alchemical process, to be followed by the second half or *Coagula*. The Lords of Karma now withdraw to a certain extent and the Will is freed to a degree hitherto unknown.

This is the most crucial stage in the career of the Initiate, involving the terrible ordeal of meeting the first "dweller on the threshold" face to face and in which the titanic task of the *beatification* is undertaken. The mythical three-headed dog Cerberus stands guard over this Threshold. His heads consist of the three *Principles* (Thoughts, Feelings, and Volitions) which have to be so trained and balanced, in the preceding stages, that they are capable of functioning to a certain extent independently of each other, under the control of the "Higher Self". No Candidate can be permitted to pass the Threshold until and unless the Principles have been so trained.

The Dweller is an actual Spiritual Being who, however, is self-created. He is the counterpart of one's own soul seen in all its nakedness and appears objectively, as it were, to the awakened



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spiritual faculties. With this vision, the candidate perceives the actual truth about himself as well as about many other things—he is stripped of all illusions and sees himself as he really is. No longer is it possible for him to gloss over his own short-comings, making excuses for himself and justifying his mistakes. This is the most soul-shaking experience that can be undergone, and such an ordeal can only be passed successfully by him who has been carefully prepared for it. The Candidate must have a passionate devotion to Truth, for itself, in a personal way, and must have been so fortified by previous development that he is able to bear the naked truth about himself and all his cherished illusions. Needless to say, this is a tremendously difficult thing to do, and the very people who are continually clamouring for the “truth” are frequently the ones who are farthest from it and who are among the first to run away when confronted with it. The truth, especially about ourselves, is often different from what we fondly imagine and hope and is usually extremely distasteful, to say the least ; even the grand and sublime Truths of Nature are too much for the unprepared person to behold without losing his equilibrium. We shall have to amplify our statements on this subject in the proper place ; meanwhile, we must proceed with the description of Initiation which is the subject-matter of this essay.

Now, at this stage, the Initiate is by no means necessarily a “Saint”. There is a great deal of confusion in the minds of many Occult students and uninitiated teachers on this score. The moral aspects of Initiatory training are not identical with the smug “morality” of the bourgeois ; thus, asceticism in any form and restriction for its own sake are usually bad. It is not to be denied that the candidate is expected to practice what are commonly considered the prime virtues, because the way to God is a good way and because moral laws have just as much power in the Spiritual World as physical laws have in the material world. But “virtue” and “morality” are terms which have to be carefully defined before they can be used with the precision that is characteristic of all genuine Initiatory training. Thus, in the stages preceding the meeting with the Dweller, the Candidate is instructed along moral and ethical lines, and is expected to make certain progress in self-control, etc. However, it is only *after* Initiation that the student is able to see himself as he really is ; then, as before-mentioned, he begins in earnest the Task of the beatification of his own soul, as represented by the form of the Dweller. To accom-

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plish this Task beforehand is practically impossible and indeed would be putting the cart before the horse. This whole question is linked up with the controversial subjects of "Free Will", the "True (or higher) and the False (or lower) Will", etc., and need to be dealt with separately.

The misunderstanding of this situation, especially in the minds of many Theosophists and some other students, has undoubtedly kept many likely candidates for Initiation away from the Portal. The impression is current that one has to become an ascetic and a saint *first* in order to undertake Initiatory training; this idea is entirely erroneous, as will be further explained at a later date.

To return, then, to our description of Initiatory stages. The Initiate next enters the Sphere of Geburah, where is developed that faculty known to Occult Science as "Initiated Inspiration" which enables the Initiate to read the Secret Script of the Spiritual World. This incarnates the consciousness of the Life-Spirit or *Buddhi*, following that of the Spirit-self or *Manas* in the preceding Grade. Much of *practical* Occultism is acquired, as a *Major Adept*, at this stage.

The next step takes the Initiate into the Sephira of Chesed. Here the faculty of "Initiated Intuition" is brought to perfection and the consciousness of the Spirit-man or *Atma* is attained accompanied by the ability to work with the Philosopher's Stone. The Initiate who has gone thus far may be called an *Exempt Adept*. Such a one has arrived at yet another Threshold which constitutes an exceedingly crucial point in his career—he is on the brink of the second great stage of Initiation, on the edge of the Abyss. He is now confronted by the *Second Dweller* on the Threshold, who is none other than the Christ force or Second Person of the Christian Trinity with Whom he must either unite or else be cast away into the Abyss and for ever lose his right to Salvation as an individual, perfected Man. Here is where the Path really divides. Much of the talk about "Black Brothers and Black Magicians" is nonsense. No one is entitled to the rank of "Black Brother" unless he is already an exalted Adept (which are few and far between), and, incidentally, if there were no Black Brothers there could be no White Ones either! One is not definitely in this category until one has actually taken the "Left-Hand Path", instead of the "Right-Hand Path"



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when confronted by the second Dweller, at the stage now under consideration.

At this point it should be noted that the three perceptive faculties, or rather states of perception, pertaining to the three Grades of Initiation attained after the Threshold has been crossed are not necessarily developed consecutively but may make their appearance coincidentally; this is especially true of the first two—Initiated Imagination and Initiated Inspiration. The same thing is true with regard to other events in a career of Initiation. It is convenient to have a definite classification of Grades, Degrees or stages, such as that herein given, but it is to be understood that the actual course of any given Initiation is not as cut and dried as indicated, except for the main crucial events. Thus, for instance, one may be a Major Adept in certain respects without having crossed the Threshold at all.

The main Task of the Exempt Adept is to get rid of the lower Ego or "Personality" completely. To this end, he has to divest himself of all desires so that he has no more preference for one thing than for another. In him, all is balanced perfectly so that, if he thinks, feels or acts in one direction, there is an immediate swing in the opposite direction, thus maintaining perfect equilibrium in his Magical Being. In order fully to liberate his Will, he has to free himself completely of *habit*, becoming a law unto himself. At this point, also, the three Principles become entirely independent of each other and function under the full control of the Higher Self. The Lords of Destiny now withdraw wholly, leaving the Adept in full charge of his own course. All this follows on the state of perfect balance mentioned above. As a part of the Task of this Grade, the Exempt Adept must found a School or system of philosophy of his own under the aegis of his Masters or Superiors.

Having now earned the undisputed right and ability to inhabit and function on all lower planes of the Spiritual World, and being thoroughly conversant with their inhabitants, characteristics, etc., he has to choose between the allurements of a selfish enjoyment of existence on these planes and of the knowledge, power and bliss that are his and which will confer every pleasure that tempts his vanity, and the alternative of placing his knowledge and power unselfishly at the disposal of humanity. This latter course involves the necessity of further incarnations in



physical bodies. If he follows the first course, he remains in the *Abyss* and becomes, a Black Brother, a parasite on the Universe and an enemy of his race who, although possessed of great knowledge and power and disposing of enormous resources, is yet doomed to eventual extinction.

If, on the other hand, he chooses the Right-Hand Path, he casts aside the lower Ego completely, sacrificing all that he is and all that he has, passes through the *Abyss* and unites with the Second Guardian. The Chymical Marriage is consummated, the *Virgin Sophia* (Soul) becomes the Mother of God (Spirit), Kosmic Consciousness dawns and he attains the Grade of *Master of the Temple*. This is the Mystical Death and Rebirth or Resurrection in which all Initiates take part who pass the Ordeals successfully. It is thus, at this point, that the *Adept* becomes a *Master*. (Mme H. P. Blavatsky attained this Grade on some planes but not on all.) The Sephirotic position of the M. T. is in Binah. Here begins definite understanding of the relationship between the *Microcosm* and *Macrocosm* (Man and the Universe).

The next step carries the Initiate into Chokmah and he becomes a Magus. Finally, he recovers his Crown in Kether (the first and highest Sephira or Sphere on the Tree of Life) and becomes an *Ipsissimus*. Following this lofty Attainment, the twelfth stage is reached in which the Initiate is fully united with the Universal Consciousness and attains Beatitude.

Any detailed description of these higher stages is practically useless—if not, in fact, impossible—in the terms of ordinary language.



# THE COSMIC INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN DOGMA

By K. CONDER

The employment by the Mystics of outworn Theological Terms constitutes a distinct handicap for those who realize the universality of Spiritual Truth. Mystical experience, however, passes beyond the confines of any one system of Theology, and our Contributor, in the present short but able Article, indicates how this handicap may be overcome.

THERE is considerable evidence that, among the many who today are seeking a way of return to a spiritual background to life, a large number are both attracted to and repulsed by the mystical writers of the past: Eckhart, Ruysbroek, Juliana of Norwich, Boëhme, Molinos, Guyon, and others of the same calibre. The attraction comes from their convincing certainty of the mystical experience; the repulsion is from their literal interpretation of certain Christian theological terms that are no longer acceptable to scientifically trained minds, nor to those who believe that spiritual truth is universal and cannot be comprehended within the dogma and terminology of any one religion.

A rapidly increasing concensus of opinion focuses on the belief that such dogma and terminology, if susceptible of any true interpretation at all, must refer to cosmic principles and to experiences inherent in mankind as a whole.

The following passage is chosen as typical of the case in point, and the succeeding notes may serve as a key to the possibilities of such universal interpretation as has been suggested.

Even in the uttermost soaring of her contemplation, the soul must not lose her thought of the Passion of Jesus Christ. For as Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and as no soul can reach the Presence of God or attain to union with God unless she has first been washed in the Blood of Christ and been clothed with the treasures of His Passion, so the memory of that Passion can never pass away, but will become part of the contemplation itself. (Michel de Molinos, *The Spiritual Guide*, Ed. Methuen. Intro., (page, 32.)

All the great religions and religious philosophies posit a Primal Cause, a Spiritual Origin to the universe, which in the English



language is called GOD. This God is Pure Being, the fundamental Essence of all creation, the Unity through all the diversity of forms.

At the first stage of creation—in itself an act of Self-projection—God manifests three primary Attributes :

Will  
Love-Wisdom  
Activity.

This trinity has been discovered by the mystics of all the great religions right down through the ages in their highest moments of contemplation and intuition, and is to be found in every theology. It may therefore be accepted as a premise, to the conscious realization of which all men may aspire.

According to the tendency of mankind to personalize spiritual principles, we find religious dogma clothing these Attributes in anthropomorphic forms ; e.g. in Hinduism as :

Brahma — the Creator  
Vishnu — the Preserver  
Shiva — the Destroyer of forms for the liberation  
of Life.

and in Christianity as :

Father  
Son  
Holy Spirit.

In all religions, too, it has been recognized that the eternal and necessary concomitant of Love-Wisdom is sacrifice. All the stories of all personalizations of the Second Attribute : Vishvakarma, Krishna, Osiris, Orpheus, Mithras, Christ, etc., etc., depict the culminating point of the earthly life of the "god" as being crucifixion or its equivalent ; in other words, the voluntary immolation of the lower self, with all its personal separative desires, in order that the spiritual Self may be liberated and may manifest freely.

The "Passion of Christ", therefore, is a cosmic experience. Passion, Sacrifice, is the voluntary suffering of Love-Wisdom ; and the purpose of suffering is ever to burn out the "dross" accumulated by the individuality during its experiences on this earth. Suffering may be invited and accepted voluntarily by those who have reached a certain stage of evolution—that is of Love-Wisdom, of "Christ-hood"—for the very purpose of transmuting in their own persons some part of the "sin of the world"—the materialization of spirit.



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The "Blood of Christ", again, is a cosmic glyph. Blood is the life principle of the physical body, and the "Blood of Christ" is the Life Principle of the manifested Godhead; in other words the Holy Spirit of which the symbol is fire (as also it is of Shiva): that which effects the burning out of the dross. It is another universal religious concept that the Second Attribute is only to be realized through the activity of the Third; and that the First Attribute is only achieved through the fulfilment of the Second. So it is only by the awakening to conscious activity of the innate Spiritual Essence in the soul that man can reach the "Presence of God", that is, the fulfilment of Love and Unification of Will.

Even the much-disputed doctrine of vicarious atonement finds its true interpretation here, for in so far as humanity is one in essence—all being cells in the Body Corporate—the achievement of any one affects the whole. So the sacrifice by one man of his separated life to the life of "God", to the Divine Will, Love-Wisdom and Service, does actually raise the whole of humanity. ("I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"; i.e. to a higher spiritual level.)

Therefore, to paraphrase the quotation given above, "Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life", for Love-Wisdom is the Way of Understanding and right relationships; the Truth behind all right knowledge; the Life, the creative force behind all right action.

We cannot attain to consciousness of the Presence of God and to union with God until the Life Principle of our real Being flows through us, until the "soul . . . has been washed with the Blood of Christ". And "no soul can attain to union with God" except by the voluntary acceptance of suffering as the means to purification and the full expression of Love, until "she has been clothed with the treasures of His Passion".

"The memory of that Passion can never pass away."

It has been well said that "the only true memory is quality: that which we have become out of that which we have endured". And the quality of our spiritual life, when purified by suffering, willingly accepted and steadfastly endured, will not only colour our moments of "soaring contemplation" but every detail of life; and moreover will contribute to the spiritualization of the quality of the whole of creation and "become a part of the contemplation (the One Spiritual Consciousness) itself".



## SOME AVOIDABLE PITFALLS IN PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

By ALTA PIPER

In Psychical Research, the qualifications, both of the Medium and of the Investigator, which may affect the results for good or ill, should be clearly appreciated and allowed for, if blank scepticism on the one hand and over-credulity on the other are to be avoided, and a balance of judgment achieved.

THE well-read man or woman of today who is not interested in some phase of psychical research is the exception, though it is only natural that this interest should manifest itself in different degrees according to the temperament and training of the individual.

There is one point, however, on which all are agreed. Without personal experience, no matter how extensive one's course of reading or study may be, it is impossible to touch more than the outermost fringe of this subject.

Unfortunately it is in just this matter of acquiring the desired personal experience that, to the novice at least, lies a potential danger. For in order to attain this experience it is, perforce, necessary to seek the services of a medium, and it is easily apparent that many who claim to possess this power are mere pretenders. Sometimes it is a case, regrettably, of deliberate dishonesty on the part of the medium, but oftener it is an honest, but ignorant, self-deception. Especially is this latter true of that phase of mediumship known as automatic writing which has now become relatively common.

That this should be so, however, is hardly to be wondered at when we remember that the "automatic" scripts may be genuinely produced without conscious knowledge, or volition, on the part of the automatist—a fact which may easily tend to strengthen the readiness, occasionally eagerness, which the writers of these scripts not infrequently evince in attributing to them psychic origin.

It is against such a too readily accepted assumption that both the automatist and the investigator must be constantly and assiduously on guard; more particularly if the writings, upon



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careful and critical analysis, are found to display little else than the reflection of the philosophical, religious, or merely material convictions, or musings, of the automatist himself.

It is true that one of the most moot questions of the day in the study of mental phenomena is to what extent the personality, education, training, and environment of a medium influences the phenomena produced. This question as to what extent the medium's own equipment influences the phenomena is both intriguing and important, requiring the interpretation of one trained in psychical research, and, to my observation, is closely analogous to the simile of the window glass.

Light passing through a clean window-pane is obviously stronger and clearer than that which filters through a pane that is dimmed by dirt, although a certain amount of light still passes through the obstructed or cloudy glass. In other words, to a varying extent the medium modifies, or affects, the conveyed message. And this is true not only of the window-pane but of other physical mediums of conduction as well. Why, then, may it not be equally true of psychical mediums?

In this connection we so often hear the question asked: Why, if communication *is* possible, has not something really worth while—something, for instance, in the nature of an invention—been given in this way to an interested and waiting world?

In view of the equipment and temperament of the mediums who thus far have produced veridical mental phenomena, this question, whenever I hear it asked, brings to my mind the picture, let us say, of a savant who, finding himself confronted with the necessity of telegraphing a speech in Russian, can only procure for his purpose an English-speaking telegraphist, to whom he is obliged to telephone the text. There is also the added difference, however, that in our hypothetical illustration the difficulties are well known and appreciated, whereas in the other instance they can only be surmised, and at best imperfectly.

Returning for a moment to the consideration of the question of self-deception or unconscious delusion on the part of the medium we find this to be a serious problem requiring careful, patient, considerate, and possibly helpful handling; but an even more serious situation which not infrequently confronts us is that of deliberate and intentional dishonesty. This possibility



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must be borne in mind at the beginning and, indeed, throughout the course of any scientific and competent investigation.

Although to be most regretted, it is nevertheless understandable that mediums accepting payment for their services (and certainly, like preachers, the labourer is worthy of his hire) may conceivably be over-anxious to return value, even though it be fictitious, for their fee and, consequently, if genuine phenomena are not forthcoming, they may be tempted to resort to fraud rather than (as it probably appears to them) disappoint their clients.

This condition of affairs is doubtless further complicated and aggravated by the fact that genuine metapsychical phenomena *cannot* be produced at all times, or under all conditions. As Sir Oliver Lodge has observed : "We cannot legislate for these things, our business is to understand them."

The factors which contribute to this disability are at present not fully understood, but among those that are we need mention here only the two most important, viz. ill-health and over-fatigue of the psychic. Both these have been found by experience to act as active deterrents to the successful production of psychical phenomena either mental or physical; and the importance of recognizing this and properly protecting the psychic from both conditions cannot be too strongly stressed. For when the deterrent effect of these two conditions is competently remedied the resultant improvement in the psychic's work becomes readily apparent.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the very first requirement at the beginning of an investigation is to establish beyond reasonable doubt the personal integrity of the medium with whom one is working. Wise and unceasing caution on the part of the investigator, as well as a bias towards being over-critical, rather than too credulous of phenomena obtained, are the essential qualifications of a really competent investigator.

It is particularly important in this connection to stress the desirability as well as wisdom of every potential medium's submitting freely and gracefully to competent scientific investigation at the outset of his career, if I may be allowed this term in this connection. It is equally important, moreover, that every would-be experimenter should realize that the part of a psychical investigator is no sinecure, for he must be vigilant, alert, and at



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all times prepared to meet and cope with new and puzzling problems and conditions. Nor will he for a moment forget that it is only by patient perseverance, sometimes in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties, that he is able to determine the genuineness, let alone the comprehension or understanding, of the phenomena that he observes.

Up to this point we have considered only one facet of the psychological investigator's task, and that the more obvious one. There is yet another side, however, which is in every way as important, and requires just as much, if not more, care and intelligent handling on the part of the investigator than the one already considered.

This is the sympathetic understanding and consideration due to the psychic with whom the experimenter is carrying on his investigations. This understanding does not involve the slightest laxity in the precise conditions. Indeed, there are specific instances of men highly qualified in other specialities who have been so dumb, bungling, and incompetent when with preconceived antagonism they rushed into rapid mediumistic inquiry, that they carried pick-axe and shovel as tools to disclose the intricate mechanism of a watch.

Genuine mediumship is an intricate and but partly understood phenomenon. It is evident that if this phenomenon is to endure it is essential that it be handled with the greatest care and circumspection, and *never*, either by the investigator or possessor, abused.

These observations are mere matters of experience, and, considering for the moment, it is obvious that this imposition is not peculiar to the psychic medium but applies equally to all known mediums of communication. The seismograph, the radio, the telegraph, to cite but a few of the best known, are all sensitively and delicately constructed mediums of communication and require competent manipulation if their usefulness is not to be impaired. Even that much-abused instrument of modern communication the telephone cannot be banged about regardless of the consequences of impaired usefulness.

So it is with psychic mediums. If the investigators desire the best results it is as essential to exercise the utmost consideration for their instrument as to be vigilant against the possibility of fraud, conscious or otherwise.



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Again, it is neither intelligent nor useful for the layman to dispose of the whole subject as "humbug", or even worse if, perchance, he has been disappointed with the result of his first séance. Such procedure is similar to condemning all radio sets just because the reception on one set has proved faulty.

Psychical research is still in its infancy; but with a real desire on the part of psychic and investigator not to negative or confirm a preconceived bias but to get at the true facts whatever they may be, there is no reason why this "nascent science", as Sir Oliver Lodge has called it, should not attain to the dignity and position of many another subject which, laughed to scorn at the beginning, has with the passing of time become an established miracle of modern conditions.

### BOOK REVIEW

PERSONAL EFFICIENCY. By S. D. Ramayandas, D.Sc., LL.B.  
London: L. N. Fowler & Co., 7 Imperial Arcade, Ludgate  
Circus, E.C.4. Price 3s. 6d.

SWAMI RAMAYANDAS has written an excellent book for the heedless and the thoughtless, if they can be induced to read it, besides giving help to the more serious student. "*Will-power*", he says, "*is to make up your mind what you want to do, how you are going to do it, then do it. Do not stop to think about difficulties—think about the desired result. . . . One is never too old to train one's mental faculties. The more they are trained the more efficient they become. Use the mind . . . do not let it rust. . . . The more you work according to plan, the more time you will have to spare.*"

All sound advice, which, if rather hackneyed, will still bear repetition.

The Swami goes on to advise the student not to let other people discourage him, and declares that self-confidence and enthusiasm generate a magnetic force that makes other people consider that he is successful, and so to believe in him. This naturally increases both his successfulness and his magnetic power.

Enthusiasm can be induced by envisaging the aim desired in its most agreeable and constructive aspects. So long as this is done, and the thoughts are immediately followed by definite action, enthusiasm remains, but directly the student "*slacks off in thought or action he becomes despondent and . . . his enthusiasm evaporates*". When this occurs, his work becomes "dead", devoid of progress. . . .

Amidst a certain amount of chaff, much wisdom is hidden in Dr. Ramayandas' work, which more careful sub-editing would have cleansed from reiteration and redundancy.

R. E. BRUCE.



## THE PATH OF RETURN

By LOUIS BRONKHURST (Author of *The Book of the Seven Seals*)

In her latest work, the well-known writer on the Philosophy of Occultism, Alice Bailey, deals with the Way of Initiation from the Christian point of view, her volume "From Bethlehem to Calvary" itself constituting a particularly appropriate book for seasonal reading.

THE writer of this appreciation has studied with interest and profit most of the works of Mrs. Alice Bailey, but considers himself particularly fortunate in having been given the opportunity of reading this excellent exposition of the esoteric Christian teaching. This latest book from the pen of an indefatigable author\* deals with the inner significance of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, Who, as Christ, found himself to be even as his Father in Heaven. It describes the culmination of a life which can, and must be, the culmination for all except those who deliberately choose the path of perdition. Even then, after perhaps aeons of time, another opportunity to choose and find the way Home may again be theirs.

From Bethlehem to Calvary is the way all have to travel; for the life spark in us, that one ray of the Godhead which is our actual eternal self can do no other, even though it may dally on the way. It goes forth from and returns to the centre from which it emanated. Call to mind every possible reason to help prove the contrary, and one fails.

In that Divine spark lies hidden all the power that man needs to elevate himself and to guide him back to the Father. It is the most powerful dynamic force in nature and is found in everything Nature ever brought forth. The breath of God, going into nature and returning to Him, demonstrates itself in mineral life as centripetal and centrifugal force, the first to find itself round its centre and become concrete, the other to fly apart and combine with other matter to reach by affinity a higher form of crystal life.

\* *From Bethlehem to Calvary*, by Alice A. Bailey. Published in England by J. M. Watkins, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2. Price 10s. 6d.



So upward, through the vegetable and animal kingdoms till that point is reached where the human seeker is allowed to climb out of the clutches of Nature, of the ever-changing existence from one form to another, to leave Nature behind and reach regions whence even Nature herself came forth. Thus man nears the Father's House.

At last we cross the boundary and on Golgotha, in the sky after we have long left the lower regions of life behind, the veil is torn asunder, the holy of holies is exposed, and we find ourselves One with God.

We realize that we are only a ray of Him, and therefore part of God, and merge into Him. After that realization there is nothing more to learn, for now, being consciously One, we can know what there is to be known.

Over a hundred sources of information are mentioned in the bibliography at the end of the book—useful for those who still doubt and are ever ready to ask "What is her Authority?" It is absolutely superfluous, as proof, for those who move on the Path themselves. They feel the truth even if the goal is yet far away. No one who travels the road knows the time it takes to reach the end. Only the Light Spark in us knows and keeps going. He cannot tell us because we cannot understand. It is that Light power within which illuminates the coming day for us; it is that which burns through the seal which separates our night from the next day. In seven days we came down and in seven stages we go back, to land at the starting-point, full of experience of the road traversed, able to look over the whole, full of understanding, able to help those who ask for help and ever at the service of God in man.

There are many who will ask, "Why all the trouble we find in life?" The answer is: read this book, study and ponder over its contents; for the life of Christ in His personality, and as a demonstration of His Divine Individuality is the life all human beings have to follow on the upward path, the way Home to God.

Such, then, is what the reviewer has seen in this work. The publishers' announcement on the dust-cover and handbill contains all the material which is usually to be found in a review, and repetition would be superfluous.

In view of its contents, this book might well have been



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published as the culmination of the career of this gifted writer, for however much she may have to give us further, there is only one summit to a mountain, and of all her works, this, surely, reaches the top. Had this splendid book been the last from her pen, it would stand for all time as the mark of her greatest achievement.

## BOOK REVIEW

THE GOSPEL OF HEALTHY-MINDEDNESS. By Charles Wase, M.A., Ph.D. London: John M. Watkins, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road. Price 5s.

It is difficult not to be prejudiced against Mr. Wase's book by the eccentricity of its presentment. This extravagance of emphasis leaves the same impression of indifference on the mind as a scolding woman, to whose unceasing nagging the ears become, in the end, mercifully deaf.

In order to appreciate the oak tree, it is necessary first to deny the reality of the acorn, says Mr. Wase. By which he intends to convey that we should affirm the reality of our union with God whilst denying anything lower than that ideal. Deny everything that is unlike God, he says.

There is, however, a certain danger in this doctrine. We would rather say: Do not *dwell* on that which is not of God. To deny its existence is too much like a running-away from truth, and comes too near the tenets of Christian Science, which denies the reality of anything it does not approve. If, for instance, we deny the existence of poverty, how can we improve the conditions of those who are poor?

But to adhere to our ideal, to assert its reality and hold it in the mind, is of course the best and most constructive thing we can do. As the author says: "*You can heal the sick, you can bring harmony to discord, and happiness to the unhappy. You can turn failure into success, and poverty to wealth.*" . . .

"*Watch your thoughts continually*", says Mr. Wase, and goes on to particularize exactly which thoughts are the best to think. He speaks of the superconsciousness as "*the great unexplored over-soul of things 'to be', the possibility of thoughts and actions which we have not yet manifested. The unexplored thought of the ideal*". This strikes us as a description as good as any we have seen.

The fundamental tenets of the Ancient Wisdom are put in so simple and digestible a form as to be attractive as well as practical and exhilarating to beginners on these lines.

We deprecate, however, the assumption that T. J. Hudson, an American psychologist, was the discoverer of the superconscious!

R. E. BRUCE.



## THE SPIRAL FLUX OF TIME

(A Speculative Survey by a Layman)

By R. E. BRUCE

While learned and abstruse Theories and Definitions of Time must be left to the Philosopher and Specialist, certain aspects and speculations, such as those of our Contributor, may be followed and tested by anyone of normal intelligence.

AS Rosalind said to Orlando : "Time travels in divers paces with divers persons. I will tell you who time ambles withal, who time trots withal, who time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal."

To every human being in the universe time means something different, and manifests differently. In fact, time appears to be both fluid and plastic. This apparent variety is brought about by the personal equation ; so that we might argue equally that the man who can bend time to his will has himself caused it to appear fluid and plastic, for him, whilst in itself time remains changeless and eternal.

There is a radius round every event, outside which it cannot occur. That radius is a time radius.

Each person exists in a time circle, and on a time line of his own making. These, however, can be shifted—within limits to be presently explained—under the influence of sufficiently powerful vibrations.

Time is closely connected with vibration. There is "happy" time, "dull, negative" times, "intellectual effort" time, and so on. All potential times co-exist, those most akin being nearest to one another. All round the circle of time and being in which we now exist are other interpenetrating circles. This goes on to infinity, thus making all time connected, more or less remotely, with every other time.

As a simple instance: If, when crossing a busy street, you project yourself mentally into "accident" time, visualizing yourself as under the wheels of a passing car—see the crowd, the policeman making notes, the ambulance drive up and take you away—you project yourself into the time dimension where such



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things occur. Your vibrations change. From your own normal time, your time sense becomes changed to accident time. According to the vividness of your conception, so will the ensuing disaster be. You have developed, by changing the vibrations of your personal time, that which psychologists would call "accident proneness". You have left your normal "security" circle, and stepped into the "accident" circle. But unless this "accident" circle has at one time been normal, it cannot occur.

For though each life is made up of innumerable time-circles, the sum total of those time-circles forms but one spiral of a man's journey upward. That is to say, one life is composed of countless intersecting circles, but one spiral contains the whole of one life from the cradle to the grave.

According to the circles into which we project ourselves, so shall we be able to alter each spiral slightly from the last. For each of our lives in the life spiral introduces us to the same people, and the same set of circumstances. Within the core of each event, however, there lies the germ of free choice. This choice can either bend time to slight divergence from its set route of exact recurrence or it can take the line of least resistance and repeat the past experience of a former life in every detail.\*

The reason why old people remember their early childhood better and more clearly than recent events is because they are nearer to the recurrence of that childhood which must take place for them in time's next spiral.

Each time that we have the courage to swing out of the "endless round" and initiate a new set of events, we increase our power of freewill, so that in our next return to earth, the life spiral will be more full of opportunities, the circles in which we exist being contiguous with more fortunate ones than those of our previous existence, and we can break still further away from the normal tide of recurrence.

We now draw near to the heart of the matter, the mechanism, which is thought—thought directed by will. Positive thought controls time. It can advance, retard, or hold it up.

Negative thought is controlled by time.

Time mocks the weak and licks the feet of the strong.

\* The theme of reincarnation has often been exploited in literature. Margaret Irwin's "*Still She Wished for Company*" is a modern example, but Priestley's play: "*I Have Been Here Before*" is the bravest attempt yet, though even he dare not use the word, but calls it "recurrence".

D



The idea of delaying time at will for one's own convenience sounds ludicrously impossible to those who have never experienced or have allowed such manifestations of time to pass unnoticed. Those who have experienced it, however, certainly know whereof they speak.

This is the same approach as that of the mystic to his God. He needs no outside proof. He has experienced the presence of God. He knows.

The Yogi never asks the *chêla* or inquirer to take anything on trust. He says in effect : "Do what I say, and if you experience the same results, it will be proved to you that what I have said is truth."

In the same way we venture to suggest that, before pouring scorn on the observations here, you should make the same experiments and see if you obtain the same results. If you do, provided you experiment faithfully, the theory is proved for you, without any specialized scientific knowledge whatever.

When preparing for an appointment with a minimum of time in its accepted sense, *we can deliberately stay this time on its journey by our concentrated thought.*

As an example : Suppose we expect our lawyer at three-thirty. Inevitable delays have occurred. At three-thirty we have still to wash our hands and brush our hair. By concentrating as above, we can definitely delay that lawyer the few minutes needed to be ready and on the spot. One moment's laxity in holding the thought, "Not yet, not yet" and he will arrive.

However fantastic this may sound, it does actually occur. We have experienced it not once but countless times, and have never known the rule to fail. It would be interesting to know of others who have had analogous experiences, and in what form they occurred.

From such apparently minor incidents we deduce the fact, or theory if you prefer, that time is influenced and controlled by thought just to the extent that the thought is strong, creative and mature.

Most people admit that events can be moulded or even induced by thought. Why then should time be an exception? But apprehension and control of time is more subtle and elusive,



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bearing the same relation to what so-called "practical" people call "solid facts" as atmosphere does to a table.

When once we understand time and its apparent fluidity, we can adjust ourselves to its motion as we adjust ourselves to the movements of a ship. We can bend time to our will, when we have penetrated and understood its rhythm, so that we work with that rhythm instead of against it. Until we do this, we are out of harmony with time, in varying degrees, according to the extent of our maladjustment. We suffer from a mental sickness, in the same way that we suffer from physical sickness on a sea voyage.

Such elementary understanding as this, of time's simpler workings, may come apparently by accident, but more often when the brain, through much thought and observation, has been prepared, as the earth is prepared for the seed to be dropped within it.

A woman belonging to a lazy family used often to exclaim : "I don't know where the day has gone. I haven't had it." Her thoughts and actions had been so leaden and uncreative that time had flown by unnoticed and unseen. By her very inertia she had become time's slave, unable to use or control it to the slightest degree. Yet, like everyone else, she had had all the time there was.

It is commonly assumed that time drags for those who have no real occupation. Actually, time is, *for them*, moving in both directions simultaneously. It passes by unseen, on swift and silent wings. But yet, *to them*, it seems to drag, until, suddenly, they find there is none left. They are bored. They yawn. Their movements are heavy with the lethargy of stagnation. Their day is wasted in a half-hearted pursuit of hours that have long vanished into the unknown. As though a man should run after an express train that was already well ahead of him. He would be breathless, weary, tired, ill and dissatisfied. *But he would never catch it up.* How much better to give up the idea, and start fair *from where he is.*

Nature, never static, makes the personality of such people retrogress—walk backwards, as it were. And whilst this retrogression continues, time conquers them. Where has the day gone indeed ! They have not had it, because they did not catch it in the passing.

A day that has been well planned, and its plans faithfully



carried out, will seem, by contrast, to have been a long day. Use has been made of every minute. Every interstice of time has been observed and filled. Not one moment of it has been allowed to dribble away unused and unperceived, like a single grain of sand in an hour-glass.

A curious phenomenon may sometimes be observed in a day where time has been thus controlled. When we look at our supposed time measurer, the clock, we cannot believe that it is no later than that. Sometimes we even think that the clock has stopped; because our work, though unhurried, has been so concentrated that the amount done seems impossible in the length of time just measured by the clock. This is the time in which great men always work. We average people only glimpse it occasionally.

Time can never be truly measured, because it varies with each person. Yet the most fantastic mechanized devices are practised in efforts to master time. Twice a year man changes the clock, in the quaint belief that time will change. This method has no more logic in it than if he were to steal five pounds from a till and put a piece of paper in it stating that the five pounds were still there.

To cheat is not to control.

Man juggles with time, and expects the sun, moon and stars to obey him. They do not. And the dew comes no earlier off the grass, because man's artificial mechanisms have been changed to mark an hour later on their dials.

In order to save time, the only possession with which we are all dowered equally at birth, man puts so many swift vehicles on the road that their average pace is often less than walking. To travel in fast buses often means waits of five to fifteen minutes each, and then—supreme irony—a frenzied rush to board the vehicle.\*

One of the first things the countryman notices on his arrival in London is its slowness. Rush and hurry abound, but everything takes longer. Much less can be achieved.

Yet London has the same allowance of time as the country. Where, then, goes the rest? In travelling partly, but chiefly in waiting.

\* On November 18th an old woman was trampled to death by two men in a bus scam. (*Vide Daily Express.*) Verdict: *Accidental death.* (*Italics ours.*)



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The average City man rushes through his breakfast, and buses or strap-hangs to his work. Unless he be a trained thinker, he cannot use that portion of his time. It does not fall either into the category of leisure, recreation, or health-giving open air. He breathes in petrol fumes or oily smoke continuously. All time spent in transit nowadays is therefore lost—so much taken from the physical time on earth of each one of us. Time consumed in waiting alone rarely amounts to less than over an hour a day—a total of 364 hours, or fifteen days, per year. And this is a minimum. It includes no wastage that could have been avoided, but is inherent in modern civilized life.

London is the city of Hurry-along-please, but those who master time are never hurried. The old proverb "More haste less speed" was never better exemplified than in the so-called civilized world today.

How often do we hear the words "I have no time" for this or that. In most cases the speakers are the wasters of the world, for it is notorious that the busy man has most time. This is because by his thinking time-sense the very texture of time is altered for him.

*"Like most great men," says John o' London,\* "Asquith had the faculty of getting through an immense amount of work without appearing particularly busy. No previous Prime Minister ever had to cope with so much, and he was nothing if not thorough." "But", Mr. Herbert Asquith remarks, "though I lived with him for two and a half years at Downing Street, I never discovered exactly how and when he did it."*

The man who bolts his breakfast, runs for his train, and so is in a state of constant fuss and rush, is dominated by his own fictitious sense of time. Time goes too fast for him. His life resolves itself into a running, breathless dash after something which eternally eludes him. Old people, whose internal mechanism is slowing down, often have the feeling of life going too fast for them, of whizzing by, as it were, so that they can never catch it up. For others to have it shows grave lack of character in their make-up.

In desperate illness, time, to the patient, literally appears to stop. The horror of this can only be understood by those who have actually experienced it.

\* November 12th, 1937.



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## THE SPIRAL FLUX OF TIME

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They go down to the black pit, to the depths of the abyss, from whence yawns blackness, and a horror of darkness. A misery, a suffering, a chaotic impotence of agony. There is no bottom. It yawns. A horror, a cavern of great darkness. . . .

Desolation. Time stands still. They ask (and it is evening), "Isn't the night over?" "Scarcely begun." Ten thousand years of aching wait. "Tomorrow?" "Tomorrow? Why, it's only five minutes since you asked before." Ten million years. "The dawn?" "Not yet. It is still today. . . ." *Still today. . . .* The pit again . . . down . . . down . . . surely it will never end. . . . Time has become a relentless enemy. *It will never move. Despair. . . .*

And then life opens like a golden-coloured dawn. Too wonderful to contemplate. Too exciting to be believable. A vividness of impressions unutterably transcending anything ever known before. . . . They hear a 'plane, and immediately—in the mind's eye—they see its sun-tipped wings, its shining, gleaming surface . . . its dip and swoop, its curve and turn. . . . Life is too unutterably exciting almost to be borne. God is good. *Time has begun to move again.*

Another aspect of this change in time values is shown in dreams, where a whole day of crowded thought, action and events may occur between two strokes of the clock.

Today, tomorrow and yesterday  
So runs the beautiful world away.

Some people are born with an instinctive sense of time as generally understood in our present state of growth. Some people are born without it. The majority, perhaps, have it only in a minor degree.

To be born into a realization of time is one of the best gifts that the gods can bestow. Without some germ of it, our lives can only be spent in "shallows and in miseries".\*

\* Years ago we used to stay at a homely *pension* in Bruges. Two years once elapsed between one visit and the next. "You haven't changed," said the *femme-de-chambre*. The shock was indescribable. We had never yet considered that two years was a measurable period in terms of time. Young, we had dreamily taken for granted that youth would last for ever. That remark

\* Julius Caesar



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## THE SPIRAL FLUX OF TIME

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marked for us the end of an epoch. From then on we began to examine time more carefully, and to use it with more economy and discretion.

Time is not remorselessly arranged for us, a thing we cannot change. To us it may be fluid and plastic, according to the degree in which we show ourselves able to mould it.

To be more accurate, we can experience at will different time values.

When we are absorbed—reading a book—studying—painting—the outside world ceases to exist. We come back to it with a sense of shock. Where then have we been? In a different part of time. In another time circle. That circle which was concerned with the eating of our breakfast, or what not, was non-existent. Mechanically our breakfast disappeared, because breakfasting can become a subconscious function. But if we had been fed with sawdust it would have made no difference. Because we were not there. We were living in a different dimension of time.

When a man travels in a bus, absorbed in thought, where is he? Surely not in the bus, where everything except his outer shell is elsewhere—his thought and mind and spirit.

Where then are these essential parts of him? In a different dimension of time. Time has slipped for him on to another plane, into another state of being. He lives on the plane his thoughts have created for him through will and mind and spirit. The crashing, noisy bus with its ear-splitting brakes; the crowds; the streets; the petrol-stink; the struggling, stumbling, lurching passengers, are outside his sphere of consciousness. He is outside that particular time circle, in another that may intersect it, or even be several circles away.

In reality we can make our own world and our own time. What a wonderful possibility if we only put it into action.

All events and incidents—past, present and future—are one, and co-existent, though the majority are only able to perceive the present. But a period will undoubtedly come in the world's history when man, more highly developed than now, will pick out events in time at will.

Even now, his thought, though unconsciously for the most part, can alter the sequence of time, whilst with the few, time is as plastic as the clay of the sculptor.



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## THE SPIRAL FLUX OF TIME

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Actually time and eternity are one. To attempt to regard them separately is like studying an arm without realizing its dependence on the whole man. Eternity owns time in the same way that man owns his arm. To separate them brings about disharmony, violence and pain, a jangling discord of Nature's paeon.

In reality time does not change. It is we who change. In the last resort, Time is an illusion. Only when it becomes merged into eternity does it become truth, and in so far as we can do this so have we realized its innate nature.

We cannot escape from time until we can control it. Then we reach the point where time for us merges into eternity, and all is in the eternal NOW.

On the creative plane where man functions superconsciously, he exists, not in time but in that timelessness which is beyond present mortal conception. He lives and has his being in the everlasting NOW of which we have spoken. And when he has come to fuller stature, that state will be his habitual one, and time, as we know it, will be no more. Over it he will possess so complete a dominion as not even to be aware of its existence.

He will be able to *"look into the seeds of time and say which grain will grow, and which will not . . ."*\*

\* Macbeth, Act I, Sc. 3.



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## A NORTHCLIFFE REMINISCENCE

By TOM CLARKE (Former Editor of the *News Chronicle*)

For the following Northcliffe Reminiscence, which will be perused with special interest by readers of the "*Occult Review*", we are indebted to the courtesy of the author of Tom Clarke's "*Northcliffe Diary*", and to his Publishers, Victor Gollancz, Ltd., of Henrietta Street, W.C.2. Beyond the remark that Astrology is not such a matter of pure superstition as the Author seems to think, no further comment is necessary.

WEDNESDAY, June 1, 1921 : I have suspected for some time that the Chief has a leaning towards the superstitious. Today I picked up a copy of the *Occult Review* containing his horoscope. When I spoke to him about it he appeared to be surprised, but I rather fancy he had inspired this attempt to read the starry indication of his fate and fortune on the eve of the start of his world tour.

I : I have been reading your fortune today, Chief.

Chief : My fortune ? Whatever do you mean ?

I : They have your horoscope in the current issue of the *Occult Review*, and—

Chief : How can they have my horoscope ? They don't know the time of day I was born.

I : Well, they say you were born at four in the afternoon.

Chief : They are about right, then. I believe I was born in the afternoon. My father, I was told, was sitting outside our house at Chapelizod—in Ireland, you know. He was in the garden. It was in the days when men wore smoking-caps, and my mother told me that as soon as he heard I was a boy he threw his smoking-cap in the air. I must see this horoscope. I am very superstitious.

I : Are you really ?

Chief : Yes. I don't believe people who pretend they have no superstitions. They are like people who say they have never had a day's illness in their lives. You know, there are many people like that.



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## A NORTHCLIFFE REMINISCENCE

63

*I* : The horoscope says you will always have to take care of your health.

*Chief* : I have been ill very often. Don't believe the man who says he has never had a day's illness in his life. . . . How are you today, Tom?

*I* : Very fit, thanks.

*Chief* : *Don't boast.* . . . Being ill does not worry me at all. I have been ill very often and for such long periods that it does not worry me. I have spent about three years in bed with illness—double pneumonia once, the year King Edward died; then operation two years ago. No, ignore the man who talks about never having been ill. Sir John Cowans—poor fellow, you know how he died practically in my arms at Mentone—used to say he had never had a day's illness. Beware of people who say that. Being ill is such a novelty to them that it kills them. . . . What is the name of this paper with my horoscope? Get me five dozen copies.

*I* : Sixty copies?

*Chief* : Yes, sixty. I want to send them away.

The horoscope compares Northcliffe with Napoleon, and points out as a "curious coincidence" that "the centenary of Napoleon's death and the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the *Daily Mail* occurred on consecutive days". It says that both Napoleon and Northcliffe were born under the same sign of the Zodiac, that "both began life with little prospect of the success that was in store for them, and both were members of large families and were the means of raising their brothers to positions of power and influence". Apart from this, the two N.'s had little in common. There is a lot of stuff of this sort which doesn't seem to lead one anywhere. The stars, however, are said to indicate that the Chief's enemies are more likely to play into his hands than to endanger his position; the promise of financial success is very strongly emphasized; there are signs of remarkable business aptitude—all of which surely needed no horoscope to reveal. It is pointed out that the "mid-heaven" is not sufficiently strong for the position of Prime Minister. The good influences in the horoscope do not come powerfully into operation till early middle life, and "the affliction of both the Sun and the Moon by the planet Saturn denotes defects in the constitution, and care will always have to be taken of the



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## A NORTHCLIFFE REMINISCENCE 65

health. In fact, if it had not been for the trine of the Sun to the ascendant and the natural virility of the rising sign it is doubtful if Lord Northcliffe would have lived to his present age. Death, when it comes, may come somewhat suddenly." London, the United States, Spain, and France are indicated as propitious countries.. Close friendships will be few.

## BOOK REVIEW

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS. By Geraldine Cummins. London: Frederick Muller, Ltd., 29 Great James Street, W.C.1. Price 5s. net.

GERALDINE CUMMINS is already well known as the author of several books, notably *Paul in Athens*, all of them dealing with Biblical themes. It has always been a moot point as to whether such books should be written in archaic or current English. It is, of course, easier to make the narrative sound impressive by adopting the archaic manner, and so all the more dangerous to the author with what highbrows call a "literary conscience". "*The vessel of Zireeta's son had sunk beneath the waves in the dusk of the day that was past*", for instance, is far more impressive than would be: "—'s boat had sunk at twilight the day before." It is also less concise. Between the faults and virtues of the two styles controversy rages.

Compilations of Bible stories are bound to be controversial in many directions, and Miss Cummins relates the early history of Mary with full belief in the Immaculate Conception, describing how, at the end of her long, hard day of housework, "*when no living man or woman was near to her she conceived within her spirit the One pure Spirit*". A footnote gives the authority of Meister Eckart, the German mystic, for this statement.

The author who invents actual sayings of Jesus takes upon him- or herself an almost terrifying responsibility. To those readers who feel a sense of reality in such sayings the result is wonderful and awe-inspiring. Others, to whom they do not convey this sense of truth and reality, will be repelled. As must needs be with work of this kind, some parts of the book ring more true than others.

The advice of Heli is in accordance with the laws of the Ancient Wisdom. "*Be not afraid*", he says, when sending Jesus out to raise his sister Leah from the dead. "*For the shaken mind and body cannot serve the Great Power*", he ends, as Jesus goes to do his bidding. He has warned him not to go whilst he is tired, for the power will have died down in him, and explains that "*Fear is nothing but the betrayal of the succour offered by the Spirit*".

Those who know and like Miss Cummins' work will find this book of interest.

R. E. BRUCE.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

[*The name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, are required as evidence of bona fides, and must in every case accompany correspondence sent for insertion in the pages of THE OCCULT REVIEW.—ED.*]

THERE MUST BE NO WAR!

*To the Editor of THE OCCULT REVIEW*

SIR,—The power of thought has often been shown by mesmerists, and sometimes injuriously. It has long been known in medical practice that the patient's will-power has much to do with recovery, especially in nervous and imaginary ailments. In recent years the more general acceptance of thought-transference as a fact has been due largely to radio.

Nevertheless, people generally do not recognize the far-reaching power of thought. Just as the ether carries radio transmission to all parts of the world, so will it respond to concentrated thought.

If assemblages of religious, mystical and similar societies were to unite for a few moments in silent concentration on the command "There must be no war!" it surely would have enormous effect in preventing a general war in Europe. The people of Europe do not want war and therefore would be receptive of the influence, even when not mentally aware of these thought-waves coming to them. Although it is doubtless true that even rulers and leaders in Europe do not actually want war, but are only trying to gain national advantage by warlike talk, nevertheless some unexpected, ill-fated circumstance might arouse them to action, since the psychology for war has been manufactured, as was done previous to the World War.

"There must be no war!" should be the fiat in moments of concentration by all, individually and in groups, who believe in mental radio. Let it be a shibboleth (in Sanskrit, mantra), a phrase used with power. If done extensively, it will have greater effect than we, of this materialistic age, can understand.

JOHN M. PRYSE.



## What Strange Powers Did The Ancients Possess?

**E**VERY important discovery relating to mind power, sound thinking and cause and effect, as applied to self-advancement, was known centuries ago, before the masses could read and write.

Much has been written about the wise men of old. A popular fallacy has it that their secrets of personal power and successful living were lost to the world. Knowledge of nature's laws, accumulated through the ages, is never lost. At times the great truths possessed by the sages were hidden from unscrupulous men in high places, but never destroyed.

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Only recently, as time is measured; not more than twenty generations ago, less than 1/100th of 1% of the earth's people were thought capable of receiving basic knowledge about the laws of life, for it is an elementary truism that knowledge is power and that power cannot be entrusted to the ignorant and the unworthy.

Wisdom is not readily attainable by the general public; nor recognized when right within reach. The average person absorbs a multitude of details about things, but goes through life without ever knowing where and how to acquire mastery of the fundamentals of the inner mind—that mysterious silent something which “whispers” to you from within.

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## UNDER THE READING LAMP: A CAUSERIE

NO sane person would think of attempting to drive a motor-car any distance, or to pilot an aeroplane, without having previously acquired a thorough knowledge of the mechanism of the machine and how to handle it! So illogical is man, for all his boasted powers of reasoning, that he is, however, content to journey through life knowing next to nothing of his own body, being almost entirely ignorant of the working of his mind, and paying the least attention of all to that elusive factor, his soul. Indeed, the majority of us make deliberate and persistent efforts to avoid facing the reality that lies behind the superficialities of our mundane existence. For to look into the mirror of conscience and see one's true self, disrobed of its flattering adornments, is the most difficult of tasks, as well as one that demands much courage, and most of us are cowards at heart.

There are two ways of escape from oneself: that of the West is to direct one's activities outward, to exhaust one's energies in the pursuit of worldly interests, speeding no matter where so long as one kills time and covers space; that of the East is the exact reverse, one seeks peace by retiring inward, disposes of problems by shutting one's eyes to them. Both attitudes, as modes of escape, are wrong, since it is as impossible to shake off one's personal responsibility as to get rid of one's shadow by turning one's back upon it. But both roads lead ultimately to the same end, merely starting in opposite directions round the circle: at long last, one must find the reflection of one's real self in the outer world; similarly must the latter become mirrored, eventually, in the Being within.

In *Yoga: A Scientific Evaluation*, by Kovoort T. Behanan (Secker & Warburg; 10s. 6d.), the author, whilst emphasizing that the first requisite of contemplation is a withdrawal from the hazards and responsibilities of a life of action, admits that "this may appear to be an escape from reality". If we penetrate deeper, he argues, we shall realize that in the case of the yogins, as with most men, what impels them to substitute solitude and contemplation for action is the positive conviction that by no other means than spiritual emancipation can security and happiness be gained. Which is undoubtedly the fact, but the pity is that what should be the instrument of liberation is so often misapplied and turned into a bondage. "No one could deny that self-immolation is regarded as a method of spiritual salvation in India", grants Dr. Behanan. "The error lies not in believing that such practices exist in India, but in attributing all that is revolting and mysterious to yoga." He tells us that he has witnessed men lying for hours on a bed of nails, others gazing steadily at the bright sun, piercing the body with nails, or rolling under a scorching sun for miles on dusty streets. The West, too, he contends, has many instances of like austerities to offer. He refers us to the lives of Heinrich Suzo, St. Bernard, and St. Teresa in support of his statement.

Dr. Behanan does not put much credence in the alleged "miracles"



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## UNDER THE READING LAMP

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of yoga ; most of which will, he thinks, on scientific investigation, turn out to be fictions. The yogins themselves, he informs us, are reticent about their power to "do things" which are contrary to the known laws of nature. However, he does concede that the mind under certain conditions may be capable of reacting strangely, causing one to see apparitions, hear curious sounds, and smell specific odours. His denial of the claims of yogins to the performing by them of miracles is not, however, in agreement with the instruction of Patanjali, who makes quite definite reference to the eight *siddhis* or high occult powers. They are, we are taught, *anima* (the power to assimilate oneself with an atom), *mahima* (to expand oneself into space), *laghima* (to be light as cotton), *garima* (as heavy as anything), *prapti* (that of reaching anywhere, even to the moon), *prakamya* (realization of all one's wishes), *is'atva* (the power to create), and *vas'itva* (to command all).

Still, Dr. Behanan makes it clear to us that mind and matter are regarded by the yogins as only parallel developments of *prakṛiti*, the ultimate elements in both being the three *gunas* ; when it is said that *citta*, the psychic apparatus, modifies itself and assumes the shape of the object perceived, he insists that we should take this not metaphorically but in a literal sense. Such being the case, we fail to see how he can fix mental and material modifications in their relation to each other, so as to define what is possible within spacial and temporal limits and what is not—since "the modifications of the *citta* to assume the form of an object are invariably due to the conjoint influence of two sets of factors : sense impressions coming from the outside and the previous potencies that were already in the *citta*".

Nor can we accept his sweeping rejection of the practices of mediums as a whole, while we are perfectly aware that a large number of fraudulent mediums exist ; his disrespect for the findings of "Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, and a host of other intellectuals who have an abiding faith in the genuineness of psychic phenomena" not bearing much evidence that the exercise of yoga has freed his own mind from bigotry. Dr. Behanan draws interesting comparisons between yoga and psycho-analysis. The trivial and uncritical chapter on "Yoga and Psychic Research" is the sole blemish in this otherwise scholarly and practical exposition of a fascinating subject.

Joseph Ralph—who has produced something of a novel description in psychological literature, a book on *How to Psycho-analyse Yourself* (Watts & Co. ; 7s. 6d.)—is no whit less contemptuous of the yogin or Indian fakir, a freak of humanity sitting amid filth and flies, than is Dr. Behanan of the psychical researcher. According to Mr. Ralph, the wise man of India, "apparently concentrating very concentratedly on the tip of his finger with all of the concentration that his concentrator is capable of concentrating, is not really concentrating at all. He is simply in a state of complete *mental vacuity* ; a form of self-hypnosis". This rather elephantine effort at humour shows that there are some "flies" on our psychologist also, otherwise he would not have ticketed all Indian ascetics as of one inferior brand ; a cheap sneer, in place of sympathy and pity, does not betoken any deep intellectual solidarity.



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## UNDER THE READING LAMP

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Actually, Mr. Ralph has written a helpful and excellent little book, so far as it goes, but he should not conclude there is no just foundation for mystical experiences, that all which impinges itself upon the consciousness can be reduced to logical analysis and mere words. But such experiences he would doubtless classify as simply uprisings in the reservoir of the unconscious. Introspection is negative, passive, tending to fatalism; the analytic method is positive, strenuously active and deterministic, in his distinction. He contends that no one can persistently think of any one thing to the exclusion of everything else, without dropping off into a state of self-hypnosis or slumber. A continuous stream of ideas must be kept passing before the mental vision, or else the mental eye itself must be kept moving from one object to another, to prevent this. "Disabuse yourself of the idea, however, that you can *create* anything by thinking. Nevertheless, you have more combinations of possibilities stored away in that great unconscious mind of yours than you can very well exhaust in a dozen life-times. . . . Reduced to a terse definition, we can say thinking consists of (a) *stirring up buried memories by attention*, (b) *utilizing those ideas that we want*, and (c) *throwing aside those that do not meet our requirements*." Some might regard this summing-up as only a more extended form of fatalism, particularly as will-power is resolved into just *interest plus energy*. Seeing, however, that interest in a subject can be awakened by exertion of will, it would seem that we are less bound by prejudices and less slaves in our choice than Mr. Ralph imagines.

One disadvantage in psycho-analysis, as to a lesser degree in confession to a priest, is that the revelation of one's moral short-comings to another individual may aggravate a sense of one's own unworthiness, and induce an inferiority complex. This danger should disappear in the process of psycho-analysing oneself; so long as one resists, as Joseph Ralph insists we must, the slightest inclination towards moody introspection. By allowing one's thoughts to flow unrestrainedly, from some point of mental departure, then examining the resultant free associations of ideas, one finds they lead into the very core of the unconscious thought tendencies which fundamentally constitute the personality. Our vast store of buried memories can never be diminished, there is no such thing as mental elimination, says Mr. Ralph; though a memory may have descended to depths beyond voluntary recall, it none the less lives and remains extremely active. Any person of a normally sound mind should be able to employ this system to advantage; in the case of the neuropath, incapable of keeping a steady control upon the rudder of the mind, it might hasten to wreckage rather than direct the course through troubled seas.

That memories, though dipping out of sight beneath our mental horizon, are never really lost, is clearly evidenced by the psychometric gift. "In recovering primary memory by psychometry from an object," says Herbert Bland in *Psychometry: Its Theory and Practice* (Rider; 3s. 6d.), "the psychometrist is in touch with the Universal Mind which governs all, which records all, and remembers all. In recovering secondary or grafted memory the practitioner is in touch with the human mind, itself a part of the Universal Mind." Dr. Buchanan (who wrote a great work on the subject; unfortunately now for many years out of print) claimed,



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## UNDER THE READING LAMP

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this admirer of his informs us, after thirty years' study of psychometry, that, "given a highly charged object, a good psychometrist, and sufficient time", it would reveal a whole life's history and that nothing could be concealed.

Psychometrists refer glibly to "vibrations" while demonstrating their gift. "There is no conclusive evidence", comments Herbert Bland, "that there are any vibrations associated with any object. There is, however, much evidence of memory in, and surrounding, objects, and it is mental force and memory which is meant when the term 'vibrations' is used." We are rather of the opinion that the average psychometrist uses the term quite automatically, with about as much appreciation of its meaning as a parrot would have; it sounds impressive, and so little is known as to the actual functioning of psychometry that nobody in an audience is likely to lodge any protest. Spiritualists, too, are always ready to talk of "vibrations". Some, the more devout, of this brotherhood may resent, by the way, Mr. Bland encroaching on their preserves; for he widens the field of psychometry so as to account for a good deal of phenomena that might otherwise be attributable to spirit intervention. "Psychometrizing an object, perhaps a brooch or a wrist-watch or a string of beads or almost any personal object, the reader will describe as 'presenting itself' a figure or face which you may recognise as that of your departed mother or father. . . . These details", he explains, "are not necessarily coming from the spirit world, and your mother or father is not necessarily presenting his or her appearance in spirit form nor reproducing in the mind of the psychometrist the details of a last illness." When you have profited by all this writer has to say, you will be as wise as any to the wonder of psychometry.

Just as mysterious as psychometry and nearly allied to it, if not essentially the same, is that strange power of the mind called "psychographology". *Secrets of Handwriting*, by Rafael Schermann, translated by Prince S. Lubomirski (Rider & Co.; 5s.), reveals something of how the author, a veritable wizard of calligraphy, performs his miracles. By means of a sample of handwriting the psychographologer, he claims, can read the very soul of the writer, get, as it were, into both his brain and body, he can see "even the subconsciousness unknown to the man himself, his habits, the round of his everyday life . . . in a word, all the ins and outs of the human being may be found in his handwriting". Does not this again afford proof of the permanency of thoughts, the close affiliation of object to subject, that mind and matter are rooted in the *gunas*? Most definitely so when one takes into account the fact that Rafael Schermann cannot only reconstruct the main incidents in the past life of a person, as well as sometimes peer into the future; but, more amazing still, he is often able to picture a person's handwriting so clearly by just looking at his face that he can produce a perfect copy of a signature he has never seen. *Secrets of Handwriting* compels us to the conclusion that we have, deep down below the surface of waking consciousness, a mine of hidden resources, as yet unavailable to most of us.

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## UNDER THE READING LAMP

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visions that are but projections of a distorted imagination ; the religious fanatic, with as blind a faith in his own mental creations, sees and lends ear only to what gives substance to his prejudices. Fortunately for most of us we have the art of deceiving ourselves within judicious limits. When this licence is exceeded, the subconscious plays havoc in the realm of the conscious.

*The Maniac*, by E. Thelmar (published by the American Psychical Institute), is a realistic study of madness from the maniac's point of view. Being possessed of an unusually strong will-power—*interest plus energy*, with all due respect to Mr. Ralph's opinion, could not have been here alone involved—the sufferer, a woman, destroyed her own demons by courageously facing them ; she did not try to deceive herself that, for her, they had no real existence ; which is the origin of most mental disease, for the trouble merely spreads its roots by being planted deeper. She, in effect, psycho-analysed herself, a stupendous achievement for one in her state and, as we have already stated, likely in most cases to drive the derelict soul right on to the rocks. As the result of her investigation into the various stages of her illness, she advances an interesting theory which adds strength to the assumption that there is, in addition to the physical, an astral body. "Throughout an attack of acute madness," she insists, "the patient is out of his mind, and out of his whole physical body, continually, in varying degrees of completeness." Whereas this volume should be of much value to the alienist, one cannot exaggerate the danger of placing it in the hands of anybody addicted to nerves.

Very refreshing in contrast is the singularly sane outlook of Alan W. Watts, whose "Study of the Middle Way", entitled *The Legacy of Asia and Western Man* (John Murray ; 6s.), should be a healthy stimulus to those beset by religious doubts through the confusion caused by warring creeds. He advocates an approach to the Western Wisdom neither as outworn superstition, nor a metaphysics or a body of esoteric and inaccessible mysteries, but viewing it "as a natural growth of the soul which we of the West can develop out of our own roots without any resort to imitation".

We need not, he urges, go to the extreme, as not a few have done, of discarding Christianity and embracing Buddhism, Hinduism, or Theosophy, as beliefs far superior to that of our own people. No one religion can take the place of all others ; a variety of faiths is as desirable, to keep the world spiritually alive, as a variety of foods to sustain one physically. Briefly, we must assimilate the best that is in all religions, even while we retain our own preference for some particular form of spiritual diet.

Among missionary religions, Mr. Watts acclaims Buddhism to be unique "in that it is almost entirely free from the desire to eradicate the indigenous faiths and cultures of the peoples to whom it spreads". Proselytism has this fault, he points out : an unwillingness to learn from others, hence a lack of humility. Zen—which is the final development of the Mahayana, the Chinese synthesis of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism—he informs us is the chief Eastern alternative to the Christian doctrine of Grace. "The paths, though different, lead to a common Goal, and while the same experience is found in perhaps lesser degree in all the



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great mystical religions of Asia, only in Zen is it set forward alone, free from all symbolic and philosophical associations." No matter what religion one may follow one can apply Zen. Joseph Ralph might learn from reading this book that immobility of body and blankness of mind are not fair estimates of Nirvana in Buddhism or *kaivalya* in Yoga.

Buddhism is too intellectual and abstract a philosophy to flourish in the cold and stony soil of the West. So it is not surprising, since there are few Christians with such a broad outlook as that of Alan Watts, that the history of *The Development of Buddhism in England* (recently issued by The Buddhist Lodge, London) is the record of a noble, almost futile struggle against ceaseless opposition and apathy. Christmas Humphreys, who is the author of this chronicle and President of the Lodge, laments that so many of the pioneers in the thankless task of giving to the West a knowledge of the Buddha Dhamma have, like Spence Hardy, been Christian missionaries. They have, therefore, naturally been prejudiced in their interpretation, which was what must be expected of rival tradesmen marketing competitive wares.

Difficulties arose, though, within the movement, from the start, as well as outside it. Ananda Metteya, the first Buddhist missionary to these shores, had no sooner landed than he was met by the problem of how to keep his Bhikkhu vows in a Western city. "He was not allowed to sleep in a house where a woman slept", which showed a limitation of enlightenment where sex was concerned. "His food could only be eaten at specified hours, with nothing later than noon. He slept on a bed on the floor, to avoid breaking the precept against 'high and soft beds'." Furthermore, he was not permitted to handle money, so he could never travel without a companion. The bright yellow robes of the Sangha attracted wondering crowds and evoked impolite comments. Consequently it was decided that he should be taken to and from meetings in a cab. This method of locomotion would have been prohibited if motor-cars had not been available, for to ride behind a horse was forbidden as spelling lordly pomp and circumstance. Even Buddhism cannot free itself from the burs of ritual! Howbeit, though man must dirty his knees by genuflections to the earth, it is something if he lifts his eyes to heaven.

FRANK LIND.

THE LITTLE MYSTIC-MAGIC PICTURE BOOK. For the industriously practising Abecedarian of the Fraternity of the Rose Cross. Translated from the German by Nicolaus. Chicago: The Aries Press. George Engelke.

LIKE its title, this book is nothing if not quaint. It is apparently intended for the beginner in the occult arts—*vide* its title "abecedarian"—as applied to the Rosicrucian doctrine. It reads like obscure instruction in alchemy.

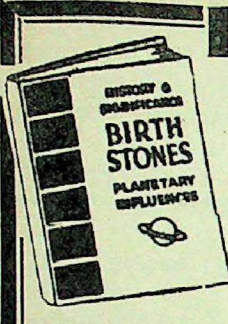
The plates are as quaint as the letterpress.

The verse sometimes has beauty, but little rhythm and cadence. This is probably due to the fact that, owing to translation, the verses do not rhyme.

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