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THE SEEKER MAGAZINE

MYSTICISM



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in this Issue:

- The New World Order—
The Editor.
- Reincarnation and the War—
"Dr. Lascelles."
- My Conscience and the War—
B. Arlen.
- The Parables—F. S. Combe.
- Priest or Physician?—F. S. C.
- The Harmony Prayer Circles
- Weather and Warfare.
- Witchcraft—B. N. L.

SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER, 1941.

(See Note to the Readers page 1.)

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<i>10.0/10.30</i>	<i>10.0/10.30</i>	<i>10.0/10.30</i>	<i>10.0/10.30</i>	<i>10.0/10.30</i>	—	—
10.30/11.0	10.30/11.0	10.30/11.0	10.30/11.0	10.30/11.0	—	—
11.0/11.30	11.0/11.30	11.0/11.30	11.0/11.30	11.0/11.30	—	—
11.30/12.0	11.30/12.0	11.30/12.0	11.30/12.0	—	—	—
<i>12.30/1.0</i>	<i>12.30/1.0</i>	<i>12.30/1.0</i>	<i>12.30/1.0</i>	<i>12.30/1.0</i>	—	—
2.30/3.0	2.30/3.0	2.30/3.0	—	2.30/3.0	—	—
<i>2.45/3.15</i>	<i>2.45/3.15</i>	—	<i>2.45/3.15</i>	<i>2.45/3.15</i>	—	—
3.0/3.30	3.0/3.30	3.0/3.30	—	3.0/3.30	—	—
3.30/4.0	3.30/4.0	3.30/4.0	3.30/4.0	—	—	—
5.0/5.30	5.0/5.30	<i>5.0/5.30</i>	<i>5.0/5.30</i>	—	—	—
<i>5.30/6.0</i>	<i>5.30/6.0</i>	<i>5.30/6.0</i>	<i>5.30/6.0</i>	<i>5.30/6.0</i>	<i>5.30/6.0</i>	—
<i>6.0/6.30</i>	—	—	—	—	—	<i>6.0/6.30</i>
6.30/7.0	6.30/7.0	6.30/7.0	6.30/7.0	6.30/7.0	—	<i>6.30/7.0</i>
<i>7.0/7.30</i>	<i>7.0/7.30</i>	—	7.0/7.30	7.0/7.30	—	—
7.30/8.0	7.30/8.0	7.30/8.0	7.30/8.0	7.30/8.0	—	—
<i>8.0/8.30</i>	<i>8.0/8.30</i>	<i>8.0/8.30</i>	<i>8.0/8.30</i>	<i>8.0/8.30</i>	—	—
<i>8.15/8.45</i>	—	<i>8.15/8.45</i>	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	8.30/9.0	—	<i>8.30/9.0</i>
—	—	—	—	<i>9.0/9.30</i>	—	<i>9.0/9.30</i>

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All correspondence concerning patients on all the Circles should be addressed only to—

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NOTE TO THE READERS.

Beginning with the present issue "The Seeker Magazine" will appear in September, December, March and June, instead of July, October, January and April. Besides certain technical advantages which will contribute to a more regular publication, it will enable us to produce a Christmas and a Easter number.

THE NEW WORLD ORDER.

THE EDITOR.

While the old world appears to be crumbling in a furious orgy of destruction, there is no lack of well-wishers and visionaries toiling at plans and projects of reconstruction. Indeed, the crop of new Societies, Groups and Centres aiming at a New World Order is alarmingly prolific, and the country is flooded with their propaganda, reaching from unassuming leaflets to comprehensive treatises.

Welcome as such a creative effort may be, it should be considered rather as the expression of a laudable aspiration towards a better future, than as a constructive contribution towards the solution of the problems involved. The suggested remedies deal generally with some variations of the League of Nations, with kinds of glorified Brain-Trusts, or with the social application of sentimental Christianity. The common features of these Panaceas consist usually in their oversimplifying the extremely intricate problems, and boldly assuming that, once their ideas are carried out, the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth will be realised without delay.

“ But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness ” was once proclaimed by a great Teacher, and mankind would undoubtedly have been spared many a painful cataclysm, had this lofty injunction been faithfully followed. Its essential truth is, however, no less applicable nowadays than it was two thousand years ago; but entangled as we are in the contradictions and paradoxes of modern life, the seeking of God’s Kingdom to-day entails more, and more complicated, exertions than in those olden primitive times.

“ Physician, heal thyself ” ought to be the slogan for the seekers of a New World Order. Children of a shattered epoch, we should first exert ourselves to discover the remedies for the diseases we are suffering from, rather than indulge in the anticipation and proclamation of the expected Utopias. Such a way is long and tedious, though definitely outlined long ago. “ I am the way, the truth, and the life,” was said. But also: “ And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make ye free.”

The New World Order will certainly come, and then we shall be free, free—through the knowledge of the truth. However, this knowledge will hardly evolve from political combinations, brain-trusts, economical reforms or sentimental religiosity: the way towards the New World Order lies through Christian Initiation.

Reincarnation and the War.

By "DR. LASCELLES."

You may think it strange that incarnation on the earth in the flesh could have any possible reaction or have any reasonable connection with a world war; and I want to try and show you how the incarnation of this period is for a certain purpose and that purpose—amongst other things—is connected with the war situation.

Some people have queer ideas as to what reincarnation really is: they have an idea that it is a kind of promiscuous entering into the physical form—a kind of hit or miss, as though souls were fighting one against the other for the possession of physical flesh. That is all wrong. God plans, and He plans well: He plans perfectly, and there is nothing hit or miss about His plan. You do not come to the earth promiscuously, you all come for a reason. You are born in the flesh for God's purpose.

It may seem to you that your life has been very purposeless, that you really have not done anything very much, and that when you die you will leave very little, if anything, behind you. The world has not been improved in any way because of your reincarnation. You may quite justly feel—that you have worked out in your life your Karma, or some of your Karma; but that it is individualistic, it has nothing to do with the world at large. It hardly has any orbit outside yourselves, it does not even stretch—some people will think—into the orbit of their own circle. They do not see that they have left any mark anywhere, any influence on the lives of other people, and they feel that their incarnation has gone amiss, that is has gone wrong.

I grant you that, with the incarnation into the flesh, one is given a certain amount of freedom. One is given the definite option of allowing either the world or God to have one's life. One may give one's life up to God, and say as it were: "God, here am I: Guide me, and do with me as Thou wilt!"—or God may not come into your scheme of things at all. You may live in the flesh and say: "I am here for a good time. I am here for myself, and myself alone. I am on the earth—the earth is my place, and I am going to make that place as comfortable as I possibly can for myself. I believe in survival of self, and above in Heaven and on earth I must keep that self alive." Then, in the end, there is nothing much left to believe in; for no one who believes in himself can hold on to that belief for very long—that is if he is honest.

If you have the capability of putting your ego outside your self, and making a true judgment of that ego, it is rather uncomfortable. It is not really what you would have it be. You may have surrounded yourself with what the world would call the best of worldly things, but the years have gone on, and little

is left in life. So, first of all, it is necessary to have the freewill that God gives you to build your souls, and God having given it to you, if you have given your life to the world, and not to Him, you have missed your opportunity of that particular incarnation. You may have unrolled some Karma, and yet again you may have added more for you to unroll in a future incarnation.

Let us suppose that God knew this war was coming. It is not supposition, and although I would fail to prove it—I can definitely state that God did know this; He always knew. He tried to tell the world, through the mouths of His prophets, that this war was coming; and His prophets—because of the flesh, and because of their lack of understanding—have spoken in a mythical language. If you read the prophecies carefully, you find that God is trying to explain something that is outside the ken of what was known in the world at that day. So the prophets tried to bring the things that they knew of at the time of the writing into the word of God, and they wrote in very mythical language. Supposing you accept, in the first chapter of Ezekiel, for instance, the description of that weird bird that has wheels and fins in its belly, and which roars like a lion, as the description of an aeroplane. It says the bird goes straight, and it takes its wheels with it. Ezekiel got a vision of something, something that was shown to him by God; so he described it in the best way he knew how. I do not say that that is a description of an aeroplane, but if you had never seen an aeroplane in your life before, and you suddenly saw one, I do not think you could describe it very much better. So the things that were known had to be fitted in to the prophecies, and I say that this war was known of at the time of the prophets, and has always been known. The first thing I daresay that arises in your mind is: If God knew the war was going to happen, why did He allow it to be? Wait a minute—I have an answer to that. God incarnated you into the flesh with freewill. Well, what has mankind done with freewill? What sort of a Kingdom has he built on the earth? What quality has there been? How far, or how deep has the milk of kindness flowed upon the earth? Look at your slums! Look at the world as it was yesterday! Yes; yesterday. Go further back than that, and look how the world was when I was in the flesh: when small boys were forced up into chimneys, and their eyes were full of soot, so that in time they became blind; and their knees were burnt by the hot bricks. Children had to work in the mines, and were flogged just as much or more than the mine ponies. Look at the disparity between the rich and the poor of my day! The slums that you have in your London to-day are very different, and really much better than the slums of the London of my day. Look at the cruelty of the slave trade, and the slaves of South America! The world was worse in my day.

So on looking back, you will not find a period when the

world was not worse than in the period which preceeded it. And if you asked me what was the cause of this war, I would say that the seed of it was sown during the time of the Roman Emperors, or maybe before that. And how do I account for that? Because this war comes from hell, and God did not make hell; mankind has made it over the ages; and it has been burning and burning, and getting into a more explosive condition as the years have passed. It has broken out into many wars right through to this war, and this is the final burst. God did not make the war. He gave man freewill; and science is the child of thinking man. Out of the brains, the study, and the work that forms science to-day, science has given you the bombing plane, the high explosive; and the wireless that was sent to you to bring music into your homes, to give you pleasant moments of time, is used to guide the planes over your cities, that children, and women, and old folk can be bombed, and maimed, and killed. So, out of the depth of this hell the things that are sent to the world, for the world's good, are being turned and fashioned for the purposes of evil. God did not send the war: God knew it would happen, because He saw the way in which mankind was heading; and God can wait, for He is a patient God. He knows, after all these struggles, all this distress, and all this evil, will rise His Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Now, I am coming to the point of reincarnation and the war. As I have said, God knew there was to be this war. There is no doubt about it. I cannot prove it to you—not even out of the mouths of the prophets, but I know that He knew. Now, a hundred years or more ago I died; and being dead, I watched. At first I did not understand, but I questioned, and was answered, and this was what I saw. I saw many of the higher beings drawing closer to the earth. Their light that shone so dimly, gradually became brighter. I noticed there was much going to and fro from the earth plane, there was much planning; and I noticed, too, that these spirits that seemed to have so much to do, and were planning so carefully, kept looking upward. In other words, they prayed continuously that God might guide them. And I saw a strange sight. I saw some spirits that must have been dead—oh, so long, maybe thousands of years—going to the earth, and then not coming back. I noticed, too, that it was not only over this country, but over many countries. And one day I was privileged to look into a place where the plans are made. At that time I had not sufficient knowledge to understand what the plan was, but I could see that there was a definite plan. Now, that started nearly a hundred years ago. And as I grew in spirit, and began to understand things better, I know that the plan was working, but at that time I did not know why. If some of you people came into the flesh, I daresay I might have seen you going earthwards—actually I did see some of you. What was the plan?

If you had the manufacture of some wonderful machine that needed most intricate work—a machine on which a great deal depended, you would be very careful, would you not, to choose your workmen? You would not let just anybody handle or make that machine. Well, there was evidently a very wonderful thing being done on the earth, and God was preparing for it. It was not war—war preceded it. It was the Kingdom of Heaven; the earth was being prepared for His Kingdom.

Now, most of you have fallen far short of that for which you were incarnated. God expected that, but there is no doubt about it, God has peopled the world so that the Kingdom can come, and you, if you only realised it, are the pioneers of the Kingdom of Heaven. He chose well, and He chose wisely. Now you who think you have done nothing, that you have left no mark behind, that you have grown into old age, and now the young people are taking on your work, do not go away with that idea. Do not. You may not have been a good workman, but you have been incarnated to work for God, and you must remember this—that the spiritual magnetic attraction between souls comes into this scheme. You are not just alone in the flesh, you have your guides, your Guardian Angel, your Door-keeper. And that is linked up with this great scheme. Many of these higher guides would be unable to be on the earth if you had not reincarnated, and so they are given to some of you, as they have their work to do. Now God is waiting, and you are waiting too. You do not know where you will be placed, you feel very much like the flotsam and jetsam. You do nothing, you are taking no part in the war, and the little you can do is so very little. Make no mistake, you are incarnated for a purpose, and your opportunity—mind you, free will still comes in—your opportunity will come to fulfill that purpose. No one knows where it will be, but there are very few people—and I can say truthfully that there will be none who give their lives to God—that will not be given the opportunity to do His work on this earth for His Kingdom of Heaven. Many will die: many have. They have not just gone and left the world. When we are taking them over, there are certain picked ones that have a particular colour, and they are left on the earth. The plan still goes on, and when this war is over God will want an account of you. You will know what to do. I think you will do it.

So I can say this, that never in the history of the world have God's messengers been so careful in the choice of the spirits which have come back to the earth as in your age—to the very baby that was born yesterday, to the very man or woman who was born seventy or eighty years ago. You have been chosen. When people speak of the Chosen Race, remember that it is not a particular race, it is a people—a people chosen by God to build His Kingdom of Heaven. Not chosen a hundred years ago, maybe a thousand; and the choosing has been going on, and the reincarnations have been going on, so that God's plan can be fulfilled.

My Conscience and the War.

By D. B. ARLEN.

(Continued).

THE MISSION OF CHRIST.

Among other problems confronting the Christian conscience, one is undoubtedly of special importance: Why did Christ appear on the earth, what did He suffer for, what mission had He to fulfill, what message did He bring?

No wonder that the theological and philosophical literature dealing with this subject is extremely rich, and no attempt can be made in this chapter even to enumerate the various interpretations existing. Instead, the original sayings of Christ and the Apostles will be resorted to, thus giving in a nutshell (containing, of course, the whole world) the essence of Christian eschatology. In the light of the latter, the mission of Christ proves extremely intricate and manifold, being both individual and social, human and divine, earthly and cosmic.

It is very characteristic that the ministry of Christ developed in accordance with the previously established law of moral evolution. At the beginning He did not go beyond the limits of the Israelitic community, considering himself as being sent only "unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—(*Matt.* 15, 24) To use His grace and forces for healing and relieving the pagans was for Him to take

"the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs."

—(*Matt.* 15, 26).

In the same sense Christ had also instructed the Apostles:

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not;

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

—(*Matt.* 10, 5).

But later on the field of Christ's ministry gradually expanded. He began to distribute His grace and to heal the sick regardless of race and cast. Finally, after His resurrection, in His parting words to the disciples, Christ not only confirmed this attitude, but attached to it an even wider, all-embracing universal meaning:

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations."—(*Matt.* 28, 19).

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."—(*Mark* 16, 15).

Still, the proper mission of Christ was announced (in the beginning of the New Testament) in a threefold way even before His birth. At first the angel of Joseph's dream heralded it:

"He shall save His people from their sins."—(*Matt.* 1, 21).

The second herald was the angel Gabriel, appearing before Mary with his annunciation :

“ And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.”—(*Luke* 1, 31).

The third—John the Baptist, emphasized in the most exalted words the divine element in Christ and the cosmic aspect of His mission, which largely exceeded the limits of every imaginable human achievement :

“ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world . . .

I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him . . .

I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God.”

—(*John* 1, 29-34).

Christ himself also made numerous allusions concerning His mission on earth. At the very outset He indicated by quoting the prophet *Esaias* in the following way :

“ And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet *Esaias*. And when he had opened the book, He found the place where it was written,

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

And He closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him.

And He began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.”

—(*Luke* 4, 17-22).

This statement was afterwards repeatedly confirmed by words and deeds, the descriptions of which are plenteously scattered through the Gospels. The mission of Christ upon Earth may be considered from two different angles.

1. As a DEED of Christ, accomplished by the mere fact of His incarnation into a human body, sufferings, crucifixion and resurrection.

II. As a MESSAGE to humanity, expressed both through His teachings and in the example of His life.

COSMIC MISSION OF CHRIST.

This first aspect of Christ's mission is connected with the deepest mysteries of the world and can hardly be grasped by the limited earthbound human mind. It was indicated in numerous sayings, the depth and grandiosity of which reflect the divinity of Christ. Thus, Christ came to save the world and to free it from sin:

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."
—(*John 3, 17*).

"Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—(*John 1, 29*).

Christ came

"to minister and to give His life a ransom for many."
—(*Matt. 20, 28*).

"that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."—(*John 3, 15*).

Very often the idea of saving the world is connected with that of judgment or retribution:

"for judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."—(*John 9, 39*).

For judgment of the world Christ had a divine authorization:

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."—(*John 5, 22*).

Still, while judging the world, Christ is constantly inspired by the Father:

"If I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and Father that sent me."—(*John 8, 16*).

Of course, this divine judgment is not identical with the lower kind of purely earthly legal justice, to partake in which Christ had repeatedly refused:

"Man, who made me judge or a divider over you?"
—(*Luke 12, 14*).

"For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."
—(*John 12, 47*).

EARTHLY MISSION OF CHRIST.

The more human part of Christ's Mission is expressed in the Gospels from various angles also.

Christ appeared

"to bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe."—(*John 1, 7*).

Christ was born to

“bear witness unto the truth.”—(*John* 18, 37).

Christ was sent to

“preach the Kingdom of God.”—(*Luke* 4, 43).

Christ came to

“call sinners to repentance.”—(*Mark* 2, 17).

Christ foresaw that His disciples and followers would face a hard inner struggle, and would have to overcome and sacrifice many earthly attachments, even those which are often considered the most sacred:

“He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”—(*Matt.* 10, 37).

To avoid every misapprehension in this direction, Christ emphasized:

“Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division:

For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”—(*Luke* 12, 51-3).

Everything has to be relegated into the background for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake—parents, children, house, wealth, etc.—implying rather the inner attitude towards them and not their actual desertion, as certain people are inclined to believe.

The fulfilment of Christ's mission on Earth was accompanied by unrivalled deeds of love and charity. The best description of what was happening was given by Christ himself as an answer to the quest of John the Baptist.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”—(*Matt.* 11, 4).

What is highly significant for the present study, is that notwithstanding the all-embracing scope of Christ's mission, there is no indication that it also included either the prevention, abolition or at least the definite condemnation of war or of the military profession.

(To be continued).



The Seekers

*In times of suspense and frustration,
Of agony, hardship and dearth—
We seek for supreme revelation:
For the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.*

*The tide is severe and distressing,
Compelling the inner rebirth—
We pray for remission and blessing:
For the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.*

*For freedom and peaceful fruition,
For happiness, laughter and mirth—
We live with the only ambition:
For the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.*

*Surmounting affliction and sorrow,
And striving for all that is worth—
We die for the glorious morrow:
For the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.*

D. B.

THE PARABLES.

AN ESOTERIC STUDY.

By F. S. COMBE.

*“ And with many such parables spake
He the word unto them, as they were able
to hear it.*

*But without a parable spake he not
unto them: and when they were alone He
expounded all things to his disciples.”*

—(Mark iv, 33-34).

The presence of numerous parables in the Gospels is generally explained by the incapability of the multitude to understand the whole and plain truth. Thus a part of the latter could only be revealed publicly in the rather disguised form of allegorical narrative, while the hidden esoteric meaning was entrusted to the chosen disciples, who were considerably more advanced in their development.

There cannot be much doubt that the disciples called upon were not only particularly benefited through their constant proximity to the Teacher, but had also received special instruction. Obviously, those to whom it was given “to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matt. 13, 11) were more prepared than the multitude for the comprehension of the new teaching. The Apostle Paul, also, openly admits this when speaking of “the hidden wisdom” which is not “the wisdom of this world” (1 Cor. 2, 6). Still, if the elucidation of the parables, as it was given to the disciples, had represented just that very esoteric substance, the “hidden knowledge,” which had to be strictly withheld from the uninitiated, it would have been, to say the least of it, very inconsistent on the part of the evangelists to disclose them in their writings. As a matter of fact, the parables, apart from their inherent meaning, point out between the lines, but clearly enough, the different gradations of comprehension peculiar to that definite epoch: that of the multitude, and of the advanced disciples.

The close study of the parables, as they were given to the people and afterwards explained to the disciples, is very instructive, but it shows rather a formal, than a substantial difference. In the first case, the spiritual truth was announced in imaginative, pictorial form, while in the second it bore a definite intellectual character. The disciples were apparently outgrowing

the age of imagination and becoming capable of comprehending the spiritual truth not only in mental pictures, like the rest of the people, but in abstract intellectual forms.

The parables, in the way they are represented in the Gospels, may be divided into three main groups. To the first belong those which, devoid of any subsequent interpretation, were meant to act directly through their imaginative power.

"Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field :

Which indeed is the least of all seeds : but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

(Matt. xiii, 31-32).

* * *

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls :

Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—(Matt. xii, 45-46).

* * *

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field ; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.—(Matt. xiii, 44).

* * *

The second group of parables consists of those, the main idea or deeper meaning of which was at once revealed to all the listeners :

"And He spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it ?

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me ; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repented, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."—(Luke xv, 3-7).

* * *

"And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves ;

For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him ?

And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not : the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed ; I cannot rise and give thee.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

For every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

—(Luke xi, 5-10).

* * *

Lastly, the third group is formed from parables to which the indication " And when they were alone, He expounded all things to his disciples " is directly referred to :

" And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, He spake by a parable :

A sower went out to sow his seed : and as he sowed, some fell by the way side ; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

And some fell upon a rock ; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bear fruit an hundredfold. And when he said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be ? "

Then follows the explanation. Note the difference in form : all imaginative pictures are transformed into abstract conceptions :

" Now the parable is this : The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear ; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy ; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."—(Luke viii, 4-15).

There are some highly significant indications, that even the disciples were not always ripe for the plain truth and had to be taught by parables.

" I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away : and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches : He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for without me ye can do nothing.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."—(John xv, 1-6).

It seems now and again that the Teacher often expected more understanding from the disciples, and for those of this present epoch, highly trained in abstract thinking, the difficulty with which the disciples grasped the inner meaning is almost incomprehensible.

"And He left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

And He charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

And when Jesus knew it, He saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread ? perceive ye not yet, neither understand ? have ye your heart yet hardened ?

Having eyes, see ye not ? and having ears, hear ye not ? and do not remember ?

When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up ? They say unto him, Twelve.

And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up ? And they said, Seven.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand ?"—(Mark viii, 13-21).

It was only after such reproaches that, what would be understood almost immediately in our time, dawned upon the disciples :

"That He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrines of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."—(Matt, xvi, 12).

This was also plainly admitted by Christ himself in his departing words :

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."—(John xvi, 12).

Yet simultaneously He assures them that:

“The time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.”

—(John xvi, 25).

This time, indeed, arrived when Christ, after his resurrection, met his disciples:

“Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures”—(Luke xxiv, 45)

and it culminated when

“there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.”—(Acts ii, 3-4).

Thus the Parables serve as a key to the proper understanding of spiritual truth, to bear witness unto which Christ was born and came into the world (John xviii, 36). The first degree of that comprehension is that of the multitude, both in the times past and present, taking the symbolical narrative literarily, in its imaginative descriptive form. This is the degree of the naive, childish acceptance of the Bible, without conspicuous efforts of understanding, without seeing or attempting to conciliate the existing contradictions. It has been said, and not without reason, that the Bible suits both the childish mind, and that of the sage—the first degree is just that of the “childish mind.” The next higher degree is that of the disciples, as they were before their spiritual initiation; this degree is that of the intellectual, judicious understanding. And the third one is that of the spiritual, intuitive comprehension, which in the normal ways of evolution may only be achieved after the two previous stages have been passed through.

There are voices heard nowadays saying, that the intellect deadens and destroys spiritual knowledge, and in order that the latter may be achieved, the former ought to be suppressed or extirpated. Still, from the Esoteric point of view—and the parables in the Gospels may serve as the best illustration of this—such an assertion is correct in so far only as the intellectual understanding *alone* is insufficient for the proper assimilation of spiritual truth. But the intellectual stage of development ought not to be omitted or neglected. It must be reached—even if superseded later on—and serve as a basis, a background for every further development, including also intuitive cognisance. Otherwise so-called spiritual knowledge, or intuition, if left without a firm intellectual support, generally degenerates into unfounded and unsound fantastic delusions and dreams.

Priest or Physician ?

By F. S. C.

The above question is put forward by Mr. George Godwin in a recent publication of "The Thinkers Forum." * His answer is: "Physician."

"The roots of the tree of medicine thrust deep down into the dark rich soil of magic and superstition, but its high branches breathe the free air of science and of truth. Sacerdotal healing survives here and there, but it is merely a relic of the far-distant past of man's childhood when he interpreted all suffering and sickness as punishment inflicted by angry gods, and all cure as the propitiation of offended deities.

That is all, the claims of the faith-healer have only an anthropological interest for modern man. When we see such claims accepted, then it is certain we witness a process fundamentally atavistic, and one that is an impediment to man's ascent of the high Hill of Knowledge, an impediment because it is contrary to common sense, to experience, and to science alike."

This bold statement could never be made had 'common sense, experience and science alike' been consulted, properly and without preconceived ideas. Indeed, some of the conceptions and deductions of the author seem so obsolete and misplaced, that one is surprised to find them in the progressive series of "The Thinkers Forum" and not in a mediæval scholastic treatise.

The faith-cult, in the author's opinion, implies that God "will set aside the mechanism of the physical creation, abrogate established laws, and permit exception to them." He believes that the results of faith-healing should be "considered as beyond human understanding and as constituting a cure wrought by faith's invocation of the supernatural." He doubts that God should "in answer to the prayers of the faithful, set aside the operation of natural law in favour of a few mortals."

Wherever the author picked up these archaic ideas from, he may be assured that among those connected with faith-healing there can be found only a negligible minority, if any, who expect God to break the natural laws or who believe that "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature" (as did Hume).

* "Priest or Physician." A Study of Faith-Healing by George Godwin.
(Watts & Co. 6d.)

In fact, there is no division between natural and 'supernatural,' normal and 'miraculous,' although there is a difference between the usual and unusual, sensible and supersensible, known and unknown. The phenomena, which appear at first sight to be miraculous, do not necessarily infringe the laws of nature, but are rather manifestations of still unknown forces and energies. Certainly, one of the most striking 'miracles' in human history was the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea; yet it was accomplished without violation, but just with the right application of the natural forces and laws: "And the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided." (*Ex.* 14, 21).

The very nature of those forces and energies, which appear quite normal to us, because of our being in constant touch with their manifestations, is in reality no less 'miraculous' than the so-called 'miracles' themselves. We are plunged into a continuous stream of miracles, both in our bodies and in the surrounding nature. Anyone, unless he is quite devoid of the sense of reality, will be forced to recognise that the innumerable known manifestations of life in nature are unimaginable without the active participation of transcendental intelligencies.

It is only because they are strange and at first inexplicable, that the 'miracles' produce their striking effects. For instance, it is a well-known natural law that every material object falls earthwards; yet birds and insects, though obviously 'infringing' that law, do not suggest miraculous interference, which sets aside the law of gravitation, since the sight of flying birds and insects is familiar to everybody. But a *man* seen flying would at first be considered a miracle; and it is not accidental that the story of Daedalus and Icarus held the imagination of numerous generations. The first appearance of an airplane produced a stunning effect on the wild tribes of Africa, but as they grew accustomed to the new kind of 'iron bird' the sight of a 'plane in flight did not impress them in the least.

So much for the miracles. The author then proceeds to call into question the existing evidence regarding faith-healing. He decided "to investigate two of the most astonishing" cures, claimed by the faith-healers in an East Anglian town, and in these investigations he was apparently unsuccessful (it is known how reluctant the patients generally are in disclosing their names and details of their ailments to strangers). But it still remains a question, whether it is in full accordance with 'common sense, experience, and science alike' to draw general conclusions from

two questionable cases, while many thousands have been proved elsewhere.

The spontaneous healings at Lourdes are also treated with suspicion. But even if the general percentage of recorded healings is exaggerated, the author should not have neglected to quote the existing reports of the special Medical Mission at Lourdes, which has established beyond doubt the fact of 'miraculous' healings. And his remark on regretful commercialisation of Lourdes, as also of other similar places, has nothing to do at all with the subject of his investigation and is, to say the least, misplaced.

Were it not for want of space, one could refute all the statements made by the author one after another. We suggest to students of spiritual—or faith-healing—to attempt this for themselves as a useful exercise of their power of judgment. If *such* arguments as those mentioned ought to be taken recourse of in order to discredit the faith-healing, then the cause of its adversaries appears rather weak. Yet this fact is still not a proof that the other side is completely right. Our answer to the question "Priest or Physician?" is: "Neither Priest nor Physician, but 'Physician-Priest,' as it was understood in the olden times of Priests-Initiates."



BUILDERS.

Before the rising tide of tribulation

Men stand aghast—

And stare at wanton desolation,

At all-consuming devastation,

At crumbling idols of the past.

We puny worms, in raging flames and thunder

Crushed down and lost,

We humbly pray, and watch, and wonder—

How can we serve throughout this holocaust?

We writhe in bloody wreckage of disaster

But from above

We hear a voice of hope . . . And ever faster

We gather splintered wood, and bricks, and plaster

To build a fane of brotherhood and love.

D. B.

THE HARMONY PRAYER CIRCLES.

THE POWER OF PRAYER.

Prayer is in the news now-a-days. This always happens in times of hardship and anxiety, when the customary foundations of comfortable and peaceful life are violently shaken, and the old values undergo drastic revaluation. Among the ruins of the old world, man is looking desperately for a new hope. He needs and expects help and guidance. He remembers again about the Higher Powers, God. And he strives for communion with Him through the medium of prayer.

Thus, every paper in this country has dealt in some way with the power of Prayer. It has been analysed from the religious, scientific, psychological and practical points of view. The possibility of God's intervention in human affairs is being considered. Should any results from Prayer be expected? Is it after all worth while praying?

Even in the midst of these passionate discussions *we* pray. And we had begun to pray long before the present calamity was inflicted upon mankind. We *know* that the Prayers are answered. We know this not only because we cannot imagine our Father in Heaven being deaf to the supplications of His Children; not only because, otherwise, the promise of Christ "All things, whatever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" would not be substantiated—but we know, because we have experienced this ourselves and observed others: that Prayers heal the sick, support the heavy laden, protect the endangered, bring help to the needy. There are at our Headquarters about twenty thousand original letters testifying to the help, healing, protection and spiritual upliftment received through our Harmony Prayer Circles.

The Harmony Prayer Circles were founded fifteen years ago to alleviate the troubles of men by means of scientific and organised Prayer. Throughout each day many half-hour services for the sick and heavy laden are held in chapels set apart and consecrated for this work. They begin with the Lord's Prayer, then simple appropriate Prayers are said for those in need—about eighty people at each circle are mentioned. The service is terminated by a Prayer for Universal Peace.

At the same time as a circle is being held, those who are linking with that particular circle say the same Prayers in the privacy of their homes. If those in need cannot link themselves, this can be done for them by their relations and friends.

If you are in need of help please write to us. If you know others who can be helped in this way tell them about our work, or send us their names and addresses so that we can post them particulars of Prayer Circles. And you have always the opportunity of participating in this way of helping others by taking part—regularly or occasionally—in the services of the Harmony Prayer Circles. No financial responsibility is undertaken by joining in any capacity the Harmony Prayer Circle. The membership is practically free, the work being supported entirely by voluntary contributions.

A few extracts from the letters received recently are reproduced below. A booklet describing this work more fully will be sent on application to The Secretary, "The Seekers,"

29, Queen's Gate, London, S.W. 7.

Some Reports of the Harmony Prayer Circles.

Among hundreds of letters which we receive weekly from the Members of Harmony Prayer Circles certain tell of results, vaying upon the miraculous. Very often remarkable relief, if not complete recovery, is obtained in chronic cases of long standing, which are considered as incurable and given up by the medical profession :

"I am very happy to tell you my son is quite cured of his trouble. We are both very grateful to the Harmony Prayer Circle for the wonderful prayers which God has answered. This trouble was nearly sixteen years standing, and at times we felt we must give up hope."

In numerous cases the admirable results of Prayer tell in such a swift and surprising manner that the doctors dealing with the case are utterly amazed :

"I am writing just a few lines to let you know that I am still improving. My doctor got quite a shock when he called in on Monday to see the great change in me; he said he certainly expected to see me improving but never like that; he was pleased. Of course, I put it down to your prayers more than anything else, as I distinctly felt the change come over me as I told you in my last letter."

"I am so pleased to be able to write and tell you that he is better and able to come home. He is terribly weak, and the surgeon says 'It is amazing,' that he has pulled through."

"Apparently she recovered from the operation so that the surgeons were amazed. (You must be so used to hearing this)."

The following extract tells of the decisive improvement in a man who was threatened both with gangrene of the feet and with blindness due to an obscure arterial trouble :

"You will, I feel sure, like to know that my brother-in-law has made a

wonderful recovery from the illness which attacked him last autumn. He could not use his legs and his eyes were affected, also his speech, some trouble due to the hardening of the arteries. I put him on the Monday 12-30—1-00 circle and my husband and friend saw him last week and found him wonderfully well, able to walk nearly a mile and only suffering from deficient sight in one eye 'as if it had a net over it,' he says. His wife said the doctor was quite astonished that he should have got over the trouble so quickly and hopes that he will be completely cured in time."

Here is another instance of improved eyesight :

"I am pleased to say my eye has improved, slow but sure. It seems a long time as I was nearly blind in my right eye, which was like a skin over the sight, but now the sight is coming back and I am very thankful."

As is characteristic in this country, very numerous are reports from those affected with different forms of rheumatism and arthritis :

"The prayers for H. have done untold wonders for him and my friend who was all seized up with arthritis seemed to loosen up as it were

almost as soon as I put her on the prayer circle."

"My feet are much better. I'm free from that dreadful pain that refused to allow me to bend my toes."

"I have to tell you that I am feeling stronger and better in every way. My muscles in particular seem much more flexible."

"I feel no pain in my arm now through the night, so I am able to carry on with my work."

The effect of answered Prayers is such as to produce the greatest enthusiasm on the part of those who witness marvellous results :

"My husband is so happy to be

TEN YEARS AGO.

This case of Pernicious Anæmia was considered hopeless by the Specialist. The patient had not eaten anything for weeks.

"The improvement she has made is indeed miraculous. I could not believe my eyes, she looked so different. She is so grateful and just held out her arms to me, and wept with joy. She can eat now, and the doctor says she has passed through the crisis and that she will get well."

(H.P.C. News).

home again and able to walk about, progressing in health and enjoying his meals. Its all so wonderful and marvellous that I want to shout with joy to the whole world of God's great mercy and love to mankind as sinful as we are."

Nervous and mental troubles recede before the healing power of Prayer no less than those which are organic and functional:

"It really was almost miraculous the way in which her troubles rolled away from her. She is her best self again, bright and charming. Her long protracted illness caused her to lose her job but she has another in view now and is quite happy and bright again."

In this particularly cruel war, when the civil population is no less in the front line than the fighting force, and when so much depends upon the general, and especially nervous, endurance, it is a very comforting fact that Prayer serves as mighty support in that direction, bringing immediate relief and spiritual upliftment:

"Was not only kept safe during the last two terrible blitzes there some weeks ago, but felt no sense of fear."

"My sister tries to keep the half-hour quite as well at her home and I know she is comforted and strengthened. She is so calm always even when danger seems imminent, that her husband says he is proud of her."

"The Prayers have made an astonishing change in my mental state. I find myself using them again and again, not only when I am linking."

To certain people it seems incompatible that Prayer should also bestow material help, and they even shrink from applying the respective Prayer. Still, as long as we are in physical bodies they must be fed and clothed in order to give us the chance of spiritual development and service. Thus, in cases of **genuine need**, Prayers for material help are also answered. Below—a few characteristic reports:

"I do not remember ever having so constant a stream of orders. No sooner have I finished one, than another takes its place. I know this is sheer answer to the prayers on my behalf and I am so grateful. It has given me such confidence in

the fact that God does answer the prayers for those in need."

"The help I receive is really wonderful. I always try, and really do believe that all will be well, and it has been, in spite of what appears to be almost insurmountable difficulties. Help seems to come from most unexpected quarters. Prayers are very wonderful and very comforting and united prayer must be even more so."

"I am sure the wonderful way we have been helped has been direct answer to prayer, for when linking for myself and husband I have also asked that help might be given to my daughter. I shall now add the prayer of thanksgiving for spiritual and material help."

"My affairs are going along very well, in fact, I seem to be getting help from every direction. I have had an unexpected and very good offer for the house."

Of course, healing, spiritual upliftment and material help may go side by side:

"I have good news. She writes that her leg is normal now and that she has got a very nice post. Very many thanks for your help by prayer which you have sent her."

"The old trouble which caused my illness seems clearing up and I am certainly better than I was before this last attack. Materially things have improved and I hope will more so."

Last, but not least, a few cases of protection against the dangers and destruction of war:

"We have not got a scratch though we have been in the thick of the bombing. The Lord has protected me and my wife and we had no fear. God and His Guardian Angels were with us which I can say for certain and we felt them with us."

"I am sure the Prayers must have helped my children, otherwise J. for one would not be here. She has actually been bombed five times, three bombs fell on the Hospital where she was on duty and two here. The last one was a landmine which has caused nine deaths and many injuries, except for our windows we were unharmed, and were able to do our First Air work until five o'clock."

Weather and Warfare.

The readers of "Earthquakes" by F. S. Combe in our January-March issue will be interested in the following article which we reproduce from the "Sunday Times," by kind permission of the Editor.

Adherents of the old belief that years of fierce and wide-spread warfare tend strongly to be characterised by peculiar weather have found during the last twenty-two months no less ample support for their tenet than they did from 1914 to 1918.

During the world war England experienced a remarkable series of meteorological vicissitudes. Among these were the hardest winter since 1894-95, the coldest April for eighty years, the most intense June heat wave for fifty-nine years, the greatest twenty-four-hour rainstorm known in our islands ($9\frac{1}{2}$ inches at Bruton, Somerset, on June 28-29, 1917), and the wettest September and December for nearly two centuries.

Having regard to its shorter duration (so far), this war has been even more prolific of weather freaks. January was the coldest for just over a century in the southern half of England; the minimum temperature of 10 deg. below zero logged at one place in Wales on the 21st was the lowest registered in Britain south of the Border since the historic frost of February, 1895; villages in Yorkshire were isolated for a period of five weeks by immense snow-drifts; and parts of the Thames estuary and the Wash were frozen over for a time.

Every month from last December to May was decidedly colder than usual, the deficit of warmth being most pronounced in January and May. For London and the Home counties January did not quite challenge comparison as regards severity with its Arctic forerunner in 1940; but in hilly regions of northern England this year's January was the more rigorous of the two by a substantial margin.

At a high-level observatory in Upper Teesdale the temperature failed to exceed 34 deg. on the "mildest" day, fell to zero on the 5th, and averaged $24\frac{1}{2}$ deg.—one of the lowest monthly values yet recorded in England. Many rivers in the northern half of the country—even fast-flowing ones—became frozen from bank to bank, while as far south as the Kent coasts thick ice formed on and near the beaches at slack water.

An outstanding feature of the 1940-41 winter was a succession of terrific blizzards in the northern, central and eastern counties of England. According to numerous reports, these

(Concluded on page 32.)

WITCHCRAFT.

By B. N. L.

In modern times men acknowledge only a selective Christianity, accepting what impresses them and ignoring the rest. In previous epochs they were less sophisticated and took Christianity as a whole. Therefore, side by side with God and good forces they also admitted the reality of the Devil and the forces of evil. With the logical consequence that, while the former were to be worshipped, the latter were to be combated and exterminated in every way.

Unfortunately, the struggle with the Devil often took the disgusting form of witch-baiting, the frightful details of which are vividly described by Charles Williams, author, playwright, mystic and theologian, in his recent book "Witchcraft" (Faber & Faber, 12/6). It begins with the study of divination and sorcery as far back as in the Græco-Roman world of the first century, and in Jewish tradition. Apparently, the first 'pact' with the Devil took place in the romance of Theophilus. By the middle ages there was a general belief in, and fear of, organised and unorganised witchcraft: the persecution and trials, of which that of Joan of Arc and Gilles de Retz (once her Field Marshall) are the best known instances, were quite usual. At the end of the xv century the famous 'Malleus Maleficarum' was compiled by two Dominicans, a grand volume dealing with witchcraft most thoroughly and scientifically. To-day it appears a product of the perverted imagination of dangerous sadists and maniacs, sinisterly resembling those who at present enslave Europe.

"Common justice demands that a witch should not be condemned to death unless she is convicted by her own confession." Consequently, the unfortunate victim had to be tortured to compel her to confess so that she could be put to death. Though the torture could be legally applied once only, it could be suspended and resumed again and again. Moreover, the confession under torture was not sufficient in itself; the presumably guilty party had to confess without torture. Therefore she had to be removed, after torture, to another place and there to confirm her confession; and if she denied this, the whole procedure was repeated. But if all failed, every other kind of effort was made to break down the victim's silence: she could be even promised mercy and life, yet generally with some mental reservation so as to enable the judges to evade the promise afterwards.

Though in modern times there are no trials of witches, and the horrible outrages committed on them are practically at an end, witchcraft itself is far from being extinguished: it lives and

thrives, not only, as could be expected, among the wild tribes of Africa or Polynesia, but also among the 'enlightened' population of the most civilised countries. "More than once I've told incredulous friends that I've encountered more horror, mystery, black superstition, mystical evil, and weird abomination in the shadow of New York's skyscrapers, London's Towers and Paris cathedrals (particularly St. Sulpice) than I ever did in the African jungle." The above statement, originating from such a famous globe-trotter and expert in different forms of aboriginal magic, as William Seabrook, cannot be lightly dismissed. His recent book "Witchcraft" (Harrap & Co., 10/6) consists of candid adventures among living witches in the world to-day; thereby he confesses not merely to have witnessed and studied their craft, but to have been a practitioner himself, both good and evil.

"I bought an ugly little doll, and dressed it as a little false priest in black robes, with a little crucifix reversed dangling from its neck, with a tiny symbol of a toad. I drove some brass-headed tacks into the region of its kidneys, and a couple more into its little belly. Then I photographed it, made one print, destroyed the negative, and had the print sent to the Abbé Penhoël . . ." This was the proceeding chosen by the author in defence of his wife, Marjorie, from the black-magic attacks of the mentioned Abbé. The results were not long to tell: in a few months Abbé Penhoël was 'in a hospital in Paris, and the doctors thought they knew what was the matter with him. He was suffering excruciating pain in the region of the kidneys, and they were thinking of operating. I repeat that I am devoid of superstition, and I guess I was devoid of pity too. I was elated, and it seemed to me that Marjorie, who had lost weight, lost her healthy glow all summer, was picking up and beginning to be herself again. I wanted no needless homicide on my conscience, but I didn't know what to do . . ." In fact, the tragedy was averted by the mediation of a common friend, who persuaded Mr. Williams to stop his magic attacks against the Abbé on condition that the latter did the same with regard to his wife.

Such is the 'atmosphere' of the two books: it could hardly be more degrading and disgusting. Still every spiritualist and spiritual healer is well advised to carefully peruse them, as they contribute considerably to a knowledge of the depths of human nature. Moreover, one might be faced one day with similar cases, and it would be easier to discharge the duty of a healer in full knowledge and understanding of what really happens behind the scenes. Of course, the right manner of acting in such circumstances is not to 'hit back' in the same unscrupulous manner, but rather to do one's best to free the unfortunate victim from the 'spell,' and pray for the salvation of the unhappy evildoer.

Modern Myths: Atchi.

By B. N. LADER.

(Concluded).

At eight o'clock precisely we arrived at the appointed house, A servant was waiting for us and accompanied us upstairs, from whence songs, laughter, and loud talking proceeded. The party, apparently, was large and very jolly.

We were shewn into a vast room, richly furnished and decorated. In the first moments we were dazzled by the numerous lights, by the sparkle of silver and crystal. At the table, laden with flowers and all kind of delicacies and wines, sat merry guests, smart ladies and elegant gentlemen. Clicking of glasses and popping of corks added to the general hilarity. Suddenly, as at the wave of a magic wand, silence reigned.

"The fakirs!"

"The fakirs are here!"

Everyone turned towards us. All eyes were fixed on us attentively and inquiringly. The servants respectfully made way for us.

"Peace be with you," said Urwasi. "The humble yoghi will show you the power and potency of the Almighty, whose obedient servant he is."

I unfolded the carpet. Urwasi sank down cross-legged and took out his flute. I put the basket with the snakes in front of him and sat down by his side. The audience was motionless. Complete silence reigned.

And then—the soft notes of the flute echoed through the room. Deep and mournful, they were repeated again and again—and the flute began to lament and to sob under the tremulous fingers of the old yoghi. A divine melody was drawn by Urwasi from his instrument. The boundless grief of a sorrowful heart, and a hymn of jubilant nature, solemn prayers of majestic priests, rambling cries of hysterical lunatics—all these were interwoven, changing, mingling, penetrating one another, and charming the assembly with a singular fascination.

Never before had I heard such wonderful sounds from the instrument of Urwasi—and even now, after the passing of many years, they ring in my ears, and I shall never lose them. I was motionless like the other listeners, and awoke only to find the penetrating gaze of Urwasi fixed on me. Then I noticed that the marvellous music changed into the usual melody, charming the snakes by its monotonous rhythm. I struggled to my feet and hastily opened the basket. The magic sounds already began to exert their influences—and some of the snakes, swaying easily, slowly crawled out.

Urwasi continued playing. The second cobra, then the rattlesnake appeared in turn. Now Atchi should come out. I was watching eagerly—when something flashed through the air—and with one bound our beauty sprang into the middle of the carpet. With the reflections on her skin of many coloured lights, shining, sparkling and iridescent, the largest and the most graceful of all snakes, she immediately arrested general attention. And when the other snakes, surrounding Atchi in a wide circle, sank down, leaving her alone in all her splendour, the spectacle was, indeed, of astonishing beauty.

I glanced furtively around, and noticed the same feeling animating the onlookers. The ladies turned pale and pressing their hands convulsively together, watched with dilated pupils each movement of Atchi and it seemed as though their whole bodies were twisted in unison with her. The concentrated gaze of the men was marked by the same feelings.

Meanwhile the sounds of the flute became slower and softer, and in time ceased completely. The snakes stretched themselves and lay motionless on the carpet—and I hurriedly put them into the basket. Storms of applause and loud acclamations shewed us what an impression had been made on those present.

“What a splendid specimen,” was heard suddenly, and a tall man rose from the table. “Still there is no danger at all in such performances. These snakes are completely harmless, their fangs and poison glands having been removed long ago!”

“You are mistaken, Sir,” answered Urwasi, “and we will prove it to you.” With these words he pushed his arm into the basket and drew out Atchi. Then he caressed her slightly and carefully opened her mouth: her fangs were dazzling in the light like carved ivory!

“You see, you were wrong, Sir,” said Urwasi, putting the irritated Atchi into the basket and raising the napkin high. “The humble yoghis have never been impostors.”

His words were greeted with loud applause. Some ironical remarks about the tall man were made, but the latter stood motionless, as if spell-bound.

“Impossible . . . unbelievable” . . . he uttered finally, “What a snake! what a snake!” And then the most unexpected thing happened: he offered Urwasi a huge amount of money for Atchi, a sum we could never dream of earning by all our future performances, however long we lived and however generously we were remunerated. And he added that no harm would come to Atchi, but use would be made of her poison, and in this way in his hands, she would serve humanity better.

I thought at first that Urwasi would flatly refuse this offer, and my heart ached when I saw him thinking silently. And then I suddenly grasped, oh I grasped, what this silence meant! It flashed into my mind—the crying poverty of the brotherhood to which Urwasi belonged, the heartbreaking lack of appropriate temples, the gradual decay of those existing for want of funds, the supreme sacrifices of those connected with . . . — when Urwasi turned towards me. “I am sorry, Inarada,” he uttered slowly . . . “No words needed . . . I know . . . Still Atchi must go” . . .

I shall not try to describe my feelings now, when this sudden blow fell upon me. Those only, who have lost their nearest and dearest could possibly understand how I felt taking leave of Atchi. Heartbroken, half-conscious, as if enveloped in a dense fog, I remembered but dimly the tall man patting us on the shoulders, handing Urwasi a packet of bank notes, promising to write about Atchi’s health and forward the results of his researches . . . Then a darkness embraced me . . . Urwasi led me away from this unlucky house . . . and I spent the whole night in tears and in prayer.

Urwasi was also apparently distressed, but he considered the loss of Atchi as our highest sacrifice towards the lofty aims of his brotherhood. Next morning he forwarded the whole sum received to its destination, and decided to leave Calcutta at the end of the week.

Still I was persistently haunted by one thought, and could not free myself of it in spite of all my endeavours. Why after all had the tall man paid such a sum for Atchi? What were his intentions? How will she be dealt with, once in his hands? Will she be happy?

Urwasi would not give me much information, and so I tried to obtain it in some indirect way. I went to the Zoo, to the medical society, to the veterinary assistance, to the public library . . . Everywhere I met with a compassionate smile, but no more—what else could a dirty, ragged fakir expect? Finally somewhere I was handed a booklet on the subject, and at the first glance I could not believe my eyes. But then, oh then I read it feverishly, petrified with horror, breath bated and heart palpitating, bathed in cold sweat . . .

What? I learnt that there are people who torture animals in the most inhuman, cruel, devilish manner. I couldn’t understand—as it was alleged—how the indescribable sufferings of those poor creatures could be deemed helpful to humanity—but even if so, the descriptions and few pictures given shook me to the core. Animals are preserved alive after their inner organs have been pierced with pipes and drainages, or cut away altogether; their brains, kidneys, stomachs are mangled, and artificial tumours inserted; purulent inflammations created; their

intestines and various ducts cut open or completely knotted; they are dropped down from great heights; slowly drowned, baked and scalded; burnt with molten metals and boiling water; frozen to death; deprived of food or liquids; subjected to poisoning, which results in convulsions, paralysis, death! . . .

When I finished reading I felt as though I had been awakened from a suffocating nightmare; yet my decision was ripe and unalterable. No! *such* a thing must never happen to my Atchi! Better punishment, imprisonment, death, than to know my darling stretched out helplessly under the lancets and syringes of the torturers. My beauty, my love—she was for them nothing more than a slimy poisonous snake, suitable for their devilish excogitations!

To cut a long story short; I knew that Atchi had a temporary abode in the cellar of that unlucky house where we gave our last performance; and the same night I succeeded in penetrating into the cellar. How my heart thumped when I noiselessly opened the basket and took Atchi out! She recognised me immediately and wound herself round my breast and neck, licking my hands and face. Unfortunately, when leaving the cellar, I stumbled and knocked against something, which crashed resoundingly. An uproar followed, with dogs barking and people dashing hither and thither. Now I had to slip unnoticed through the dark garden and jump over a wall. But at the last moment, close to the wall, I was caught by the dogs and felt that all was over. Then I tried my utmost to throw Atchi over the wall, so that she at least could be saved in the thick of the neighbouring woods, but she strongly clung at me, and I was unable to tear her away. Instead, she fiercely engaged the dogs, and defended me until the men arrived. Thus she saved my life, but had to pay with hers. Her carcass was then handed over to Urwasi, who felt himself obliged to refund the whole sum received, to the bitter disappointment of his brotherhood. Of course, I took the whole responsibility upon myself and had to bear the consequences. I am afraid my motives were never properly understood, but as a matter of fact I did not try to convince anybody. Still I had always with me this fang of Atchi, and found consolation in the memories of the past. Keep it now in the memory of our friendship and of Atchi, the servant of Kali " . . .

Inarada fell silent and seemed to be deep in contemplation. I reverently hid the cherished gift, meditating on the inscrutable paths of the Karma.

Meanwhile the first rays of the rising sun began to gild a narrow strip of the horizon. The morning fog was rolling away and the pious Hindus prepared themselves to plunge into the cooling streams, alleviating their sins, pains and sufferings.

BOOK REVIEWS.

THE WAY TO LIFE.

By 'The Soldier.' (A. Dakers Ltd. 5/-)

The best way to do justice to this little remarkable book is to quote extensively from the foreword to it by Sir Francis Younghusband:—

"The author writes of *The Way of Life*. But it is of no new way of life that he writes. It is of the old, old way. Yet that way needs to be expounded again and again, age after age, till it is finally and inexpungably stamped upon the heart and mind and soul of man so that he follows it as naturally as he breathes.

What is this way? It is the way of kindness and consideration towards all—animals being included with men. The way of a great loving kindness springing from the root conviction that just as God is within each one of us so also is He in all about us. And not only in all but high above and beyond and over-ruling all.

There is nothing new in this. Countless theologians and writers have said the same thing. The value of the present book lies in the fact that it comes neither from a professional theologian nor from a professional writer, but from a man of wide and varied experience of the world. From a soldier who has had the handling of men both in the last Great War and on Indian Frontier Campaigns. From a soldier who has had to lead and be dependent upon Hindus and Muslims as well as Christians. From a soldier who has not only served in a regiment but who has achieved distinction on the intellectual side of military service.

It is a man of such rich experience who has come to the reasoned conviction that the law of good-will and harmony must be the guiding motive in our lives—that the spiritual forces of justice and truth, good-will and harmony, can and will resolve all problems, and that therefore we must get into as close a touch as possible with them.

But simple as is the law, its practical application is a matter of vast complexity. For it severe training is essential. He therefore fervently appeals to religious leaders for a wider outlook, for an understanding and appreciation of other lines of religious thought than their own, and for a direct encouragement of their followers to embark upon independent investigation."

INNOCENT MEN.

By P. Howard. (Heinemann, 2/6).

The Oxford Group calls for a life of the highest standards: absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, absolute love. Nevertheless it has not escaped a whispering campaign of suspicions and accusations. To prove for himself how far the gossip regarding the Oxford Group is justified, or perhaps expecting some sensational revelations, a 'Daily Express' journalist, Peter Howard, set out on an adventure. He brought to his task long experience and a sceptical mind:

"My whole business for years," he says, "has been to drag the truth out of politicians reluctant to disclose it. I never begin an interview without expecting an attempt to put something over on me. I am on the look out."

However, an unexpected thing happened. Instead of exposing some doubtful characters and plots, he was converted himself to the Oxford Group. The adventure changed his whole life:

"As a result of my contact with the Oxford Group, I, who was a near atheist, have to-day a living Christian faith and experience. I have had contact with scores of ministers of all denominations in my time. None of them ever gave me that."

For the author the message of the Oxford Group is the only hope of a better future for humanity:

"I know that there is no hope at all for a better future of the world unless this message is learned by millions of men and women over earth's surface.

Here is the only remedy for the ills of the earth. I believe these ills will be cured.

Here is the only light, the only glint or glow of expectation for the future. There are many reflections of light, many moons of delusion and delight. Here is the only true, blazing sun. This great light is being tended. A minority watch over it, cherishing its flame.

Presently that flame will spread across the whole earth, setting the stubble alight, blazing in swift path from continent to continent, warming the hearts and illuminating the dark corners of the spirit of men."

This is, of course, a strong and a fine apologetic, duly expected from a new convert. If a part only of these promised blessings proves to be the contribution of the Oxford Group to the common welfare, it will certainly deserve gratitude and the honour of mankind.

B. D.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM.

By Harold Anson.

(Student Christian Movement Press, 2/-).

In this book the author having made a thorough investigation into Spiritualism proceeds to compare its teaching with those given and usually accepted by the Christian Church.

The first five chapters deal mainly with the growth of Spiritualism since 1865 to the present day and with established facts about phenomena and seances. The author believes that

"there is a small residuum of psychical facts which have happened in our own day, which can only be explained on the theory that certain individuals who have lived upon this earth are now alive, and are able to communicate with their friends, and that if we reject this evidence we ought also logically to reject the evidence upon which the great facts of Christian faith are founded."

He then comes to the interesting point: Is Spiritualism dangerous? and points out very clearly the many pitfalls that exist for those who engage in an adventure without adequate knowledge. Still, if people

"recognize the dangers of this method of communication, and are sufficiently strong-minded to use it only so far as it helps them and then put it aside, I could not say that it is never lawful to try and get this help."

In the chapter on "Immortality as understood by Spiritualists" the author sums up very well the reasons why Spiritualism is so popular: it is chiefly because its message often appears

"as good news to those who have been brought up upon the meagre conceptions of the other world as expounded by popular Christianity."

In the last three chapters he maintains that Spiritualism is no substitute for the Christian religion, as the communion with the departed spirits is not a substitute for communion with

God in Christ. And that

"while there is no reason to deny that messages from the other world may from time be given us, this is not the characteristically Christian way of achieving union with the Divine."

The book is well worth reading and should help many who are in doubt. The main purpose of the author seems to be to show that once having fully gained the certainty of Survival through the means that Spiritualism offers, it should then be left alone. The Soul, of course, should continue its way along the path through the much loftier means of love and of inner communion with God.

A. G.

DIPLOMACY AND GOD.

By G. Glasgow. (Longmans, 7/6).

Comte de Garden believed that diplomacy

"embraces the whole system of the interests resulting from the relations established between the nations; it has for its object their respective security, their tranquility, their dignity; and its direct, immediate aim is, or at least ought to be, the maintenance of the peace and of good harmony between the powers."

The author's comment on the above is that

"that particular catalogue of good things that ought to be achieved by diplomacy is precisely the catalogue of good things not only not achieved, but made impossible of achievement throughout its history by the unregenerate type of diplomacy so far visited upon mankind."

Accordingly, the whole trend of his book is to prove the fallacies of modern diplomacy. One has to admit that the picture of the latter as given by the author is very depressing and led us to expect that the present upheaval will not pass without a beneficial result also in this sphere. The author attempts to suggest the duty that ought to be faced by "firm, courageous Christians" in the face of the present emergency. His conclusion is that every true Christian must

"take advantage of his present opportunity by working for disarmament as the most important diplomatic objective, to be achieved before, not after, the settlement of territorial and other political problems."

Whatever the practical value of this vision of Utopia may be, it is

rather unfortunate that to support his thesis the author wanders in highly doubtful ways, treating extremely debatable problems in a very one-sided and biased manner. Still, the opinions of a man who for better or worse has been the Diplomatic Correspondent of the "Observer" for the past twenty-one years should not be lightly passed over, and those interested in Diplomacy and in God would not read this book without profit.

D. B. A.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW?

By Jane Boyd. (Longmans, 6d.)

This fine pamphlet deals with the elementary conceptions of Survival as received by the author first-hand from her passed husband. Though it does not pretend to give much that is new, its main purpose seems to impress upon those still in flesh the importance of their tasks on the earth:

"I want to impress you very especially with your own responsibility in the life on Earth, not only to those around you, but to yourself. I could have done a great deal more good than I did. I realize it now and am trying to make up for lost time."

"Understand that no striving or endeavour on Earth is wasted. All that is done there leads on to further efforts on similar lines here."

In the present epoch, when to many a man earthly life appears senseless

and desperate the above injunction may serve as a support and assurance.

IS GOD DEAD?

By Newman Flower. (Casell, 4/-).

This book deals with a very great present day problem. Is God dead that such a thing as this war can be?

It tells of a man, Justin Siddley, who believed in God implicitly until the supreme horror of this war kills his faith. Feeling there is no longer anything for which to live, he decided to commit suicide. Over his last dinner he and a close friend discuss this problem. At the close of the meal Siddley is informed of his son's death, and his friend asks him "Has he gone to God or has he not?"

Justin Siddley is then given a glimpse into the story of seven people's lives. All seven have been shattered by this war and yet, though not always easily, they have retained their faith in God. Found it in simple kindnesses, religion, love and in their discovery so has their faith been strengthened. Upon reflection of these lives Justin Siddley finds his answer.

This is a delightful book with everyday illustrations from everyday lives to carry the argument; and the conviction that God is there to help us, however lacking our belief, is such that one cannot but realize the truth which underlies the defence of the question asked.

R. S.

WEATHER AND WARFARE.

(Concluded from page 23.)

ranked with the fiercest in memory. The worst of them, lasting from February 17th to 21st, deposited an average depth of three to four feet of snow, with drifts up to twenty-five feet, over an extensive area in Cumberland, Westmorland and Durham, and locally in Yorkshire. Some roads remained blocked until late in April.

The spring of 1941 was one of the most backward known. In general, the season appears to have been from three to five weeks behind schedule, and for some parts of England it was almost certainly the latest since 1837, a year in which forest trees commonly did not come into full leaf before June.

For persistent cold this year's May had not been approached since 1902.

A drought accentuated the effects of winter's belated departure.

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