

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

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A LITTLE LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT OF EXPERIENCE



GREETINGS:



When you buy a car today, it is likely to be loaded with guarantees, service privileges, and replacement of damaged parts. There are exchange privileges in better stores, and daily warnings of the dangerous consequences of cigarettes, hard liquor, and habit-forming drugs. Three of the most expensive commodities which offer no assurances or protections are medical help, legal assistance, and religious consolation. We are accustomed to assume that losses in these fields--and they can be considerable--must be borne with resignation and charity.

In a small town where I lived for a year or two was a beloved physician. He had personally brought into the world nearly all the citizens who were under fifty years of age. He was not above serving as the local veterinarian. It had long been hoped that his son would succeed him, but he had accepted a position on the staff of a distant hospital. The legal patriarch, a Mr. Abercrombie, did not have an impressive library for legal research but had a considerable file in his own head. His specialty was to prevent litigation and he was usually successful. He repaired broken homes, and was the first line of defense against dishonest strangers who threatened to invade the town. His closest friends were the doctor and the minister; and the wives of these three "supports of the common good" were the pillars of the social set.

There were three churches in town, but the Reverend Smith was known to be the most firm in the doctrine. He was a tower of spiritual strength and had an appropriate biblical quotation for any emergency that might arise. He had graduated from a theological seminary with the degree of Bachelor of Divinity which was considered an adequate dignity. If any situation arose which did not seem to justify a formal appointment, there was also the town Socrates. By profession he carved the headstones for the local cemetery, but young people found his kindly advice available without cost or complication.

It is quite different in these complicated times. We may meet our doctor for the first time in the hospital. The attorney of our choice may have been selected from the phone book, and we are attracted to a possible spiritual comforter by watching television programs. Our only defenses against the unknown are common sense and experience and these have a tendency to lead to skeptical conclusions. As our primary interest at the moment is concerned with religion, we must advance with caution. There is something to be said in favor of major denominations that have enjoyed a good reputation, possibly for centuries. If spirit is so minded,

we can shop around a little when selecting a spiritual home. If orthodoxy does not meet your needs, you should first of all consider your own degree of integrity. If you are one of those who expects small efforts to be generously rewarded, you almost certainly face disappointment. In years gone by, thousands of well-intentioned individuals honestly believed that the basic purpose of religion was to bestow peace, power, and plenty to an entranced following. In the 1920s, God was viewed as the provider of limitless benefits until the collapse of the stock market in 1929 was corrective of this error.

As physical problems become increasingly complicated, millions of people in this country are seeking spiritual support. Cults are springing up like mushrooms on the Plains of Ardath. It is difficult to decide which are nourishing and which are poisonous, and it is often a tragedy to find out ~~too~~ late. There is a certain fascination in mystery, especially when it clothes itself with honest names and glamorous promotion. Some of these groups are certainly legitimate, some are basically well intentioned, but a goodly number have profit as their only intention. Lord Bacon declared that reason supported by experience was the only solution to factual uncertainties. A person joining a belief of any kind has a right to a simple and forthright answer giving the source of the instruction, the persons through whom it is being disseminated, and the obligations which believers are expected to assume.

In some cases, at least, the answers to these questions would not hold up in a court of law. An unreasonable degree of faith is necessary which may seriously affect those with neurotic inclinations and delusional tendencies. Secrets enveloped in mysteries can be dangerous to mental, emotional, and physical health, but persons under psychic pressures are most likely to become involved in dubious cults. It is hard to convince poorly adjusted individuals that they are not ready for advanced mystical instruction. After they have become absorbed in esoteric wonders, they have a tendency to retire from the human race, convinced that illumination is imminent.

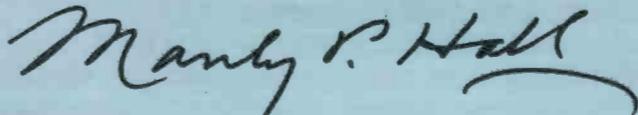
A few years ago, I received a most impressive epistle. It consisted of an engraved card, emblazoned with multicolored symbols, and stating that I had been elected to the inner circle of superhuman beings who were about to save the world. Of course, it also included the note that I had earned this exalted status. There was no address, but the letter had been mailed from a small California town; and I was told, as a postscript, that I would be contacted in due time. Something must have gone wrong. I may have been chosen, but I was never called.

In addition to organizations of uncertain origin and more uncertain destiny, there is an extensive literature dealing with esoteric matters. It is all very confusing, but sells well and contributes to mental disorientation. The entertainment field is overflowing with star wars, extraterrestrials, and metaphysical horror pictures. It is assumed that diabolism is box office, but even normally intelligent viewers can be emotionally disturbed. Unfortunately, we cannot share a lifetime of experience with those who are firmly determined to be self-deluded. Those who have a groundwork in comparative religion and have come to realize their social responsibilities are not likely to be captured in a web of self-deceit. An honest appraisal of the debits and credits in our own natures would protect us from most impostures.

Before aspiring to higher realms, have we learned the lessons of our present environment? What offerings of good works do we bring to the altar of the universal sanctuary? Can we say honestly that we have really forgiven those who have afflicted us? That we have been just in our weights and measures and helped the needy? Such achievements will be in our favor. If our search for truth is to escape from those daily obligations which we have voluntarily assumed and by hope of some belief or instruction that we can float into eternity on flowery beds of ease, we will be subject to a rude awakening sometime, somewhere.

In due time, we will all outgrow our limitations. We shall achieve our own liberation or have wisdom thrust upon us by our own experiences. It is a mistake to try to hasten this achievement. There is much joy and usefulness in this world. We can all serve God by serving the human need. We can balance our dispositions so that fanaticism can find no place in our hearts. We can earn happiness in this world and security in the life beyond the grave without involvement in complicated theologies. If you join some organization, you should do so because you believe that you have something to give and not because you hope for personal gain.

Most sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Manly P. Hall". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

MANLY P. HALL

RECOMMENDED READING:

Adler, M. J.	Angels & Us	(C)	\$11.95
Cayce, E.	Auras	(P)	1.50
Collie, E. S.	Quimby's Science of Happiness	(P)	5.95
Collin, R.	Theory of Celestial Influence	(P)	20.00
Cousins, N.	Human Options	(C)	9.95
Flammel, N.	Alchemical Hieroglyphics	(C)	12.50
Haeckel, E.	Art Forms in Nature	(P)	5.00
Heindel, M.	Astro-Diagnosis	(P)	4.95
Hodson, G.	Brotherhood of Angels & Men	(P)	4.95
Hodson, G.	Fairies at Work & at Play	(P)	4.75
Ikeda, D.	Living Buddha	(C)	7.95
Jacobi, J.	Psychology of C. G. Jung	(P)	6.95
Keyes, L. E.	Toning	(P)	3.95
Moss, R.	I That Is We	(P)	7.95
Mylonas, G. E.	Eleusis & Eleusinian Mysteries	(C)	25.00
Neumann, E.	Art & Creative Unconscious	(P)	4.95
Roberts, H. C.	Complete Prophecies of Nostradamus	(C)	10.95
Shealy, C. N.	90 Days to Self-Health	(P)	2.95
Smedley, W. T.	Mystery of Francis Bacon	(P)	5.50
Tierra, M.	Way of Herbs	(P)	8.95
Von Franz, M.	Puer Aeternus	(P)	10.50
Von Reichenbach, C.	Vital Force	(P)	15.00

All of the above books are available at the Arts of the World Gift Shop at PRS or order by mail by adding 6% of the total cost of the order (\$.75 minimum) for shipping and handling for 4th class book rate. Orders may be shipped by UPS, the fastest way, by adding 10% of the total cost of the order (\$1.50 minimum). California residents, please add appropriate sales tax. All prices subject to change without notice. Checks or money orders should be made payable to:

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