

# HORIZON



JOURNAL OF THE  
PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY  
SPRING 1947

Published quarterly by HORIZON PUBLISHING Co., 3341 Griffith Park Blvd., Los Angeles 27, Calif.  
 \$1. a Copy, \$3. a Year. Two Subscriptions, Your Own and a Gift Subscription, \$5.  
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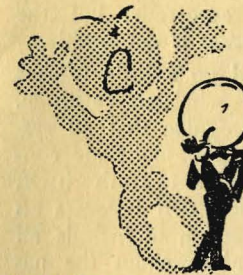
SPRING  
 1947



ISSUED  
 QUARTERLY  
 VOLUME 6 No. 4

HORIZON  
 LINES

AN EDITORIAL  
 BY MANLY PALMER HALL



Symbolism of the Subconscious

THE WORLD AS THE IMAGE  
 OF THE SELF

THERE are two terms used in philosophy which it will be useful for us to understand: concept and precept. Concept may be defined as a mental image of a thing or an action. A precept is a commandment, instruction, or admonition intended to serve as a rule or guide to action or conduct. It follows that precepts may result from concepts. For example, the Christian concept of life gives rise to the Christian precepts relating to morality and ethics.

A concept may be a simple image of convictions about the facts of a particular, or it may be a general image of convictions concerning the facts of universals. We are indebted to scholastic philosophy for the concept of *The Concept*, which seems rather involved at first reading but is in reality quite simple.

All philosophical systems are seeking truth, but philosophy itself is a proof that truth per se is not attainable. All the conflict which exists in the world of ideas, all schools of thought, all uncertainties in the mind, all religious systems, and all the diverse codes by which

we live, would cease their ageless conflict if truth itself could be known. The mind is an instrument of quest, and it must continue to form concepts about truth as long as the substance of truth itself cannot be obtained.

The word truth, though applied generously by all men to their own opinions, has become a powerful force in directing the mind away from reasonable doubts and toward a blind acceptance of concepts. The untrained thinker becomes the victim of his own desire to believe, and in this way various schools of opinion gain devoted followers. Knowing and believing become confused, and belief masquerades as knowledge.

The concept of *The Concept* is a wonderful idea to those who desire sincerely to think straight and escape from that sea of notions in which the reasoning faculties are too often drowned. Most concepts have to do with the substance of nature, or cause, and therefore deal with intangibles. The purpose of *The Concept* is to explain the reasons for things in themselves obvious but not un-

derstood in terms of cause. For example, grass grows, rain falls, the earth moves, men are born and die, and nature is subject to a variety of temperatures and climates. There is no question about the phenomena itself, but the mind is not satisfied with the mere acceptance of things seen, felt, or experienced. Nor is it willing to rest in secondary causes alone. It strives after first cause expressed in the question, why? Why did God create the world? Why did he create it as he did create it and not in some other way? Why are blades of grass necessary? Why must men suffer? Why good or evil? Why wealth or poverty? Why the Church and State? Why war and crime? For all these whys there are no solutions so evident, so undeniable, and so sufficient as to transcend controversy.

The mind turning from effect to cause and seeking to explore the metaphysical regions of the world discovers itself completely devoid of the means to accomplish its self-appointed task. The world of causes was defined by the Chaldeans as a "thrice deep darkness" nor have the moderns done much to dispel the gloom. That which was unknowable when the pyramids were being built remains unknowable in this day of atomic projects.

It is tantalizing almost beyond endurance to know that somewhere in the darkness lurks the magnificent machinery of the cosmos, and at the same time to realize that the human constitution lacks the equipment to examine that machinery. The hidden roots of all visible things, the hidden causes of all visible effects, the hidden reason for existence itself, is concealed by the veil of Isis which no man may lift. It is not difficult to understand the desperate sense of futility, the overwhelming inferiority complex, which obsesses a creation that cannot discover its own creator.

This state of affairs gives rise to the compromise solution of *The Concept*. Unable to know, we seek to explain. In the absence of the fact we search for reasonable, logical, and consistent explanation. The result is systems of thought, schools of philosophy, and bodies of re-

ligious doctrines. Each of these is developed from a concept, that is, an explanation of that which in substance cannot be explained. There is nothing wrong in building concepts or in addicting oneself to the precept which results therefrom. The error lies in overlooking or ignoring, or even denying the concept of *The Concept*. The moment we realize that our intellectual institutions are not built upon truth but upon a concept of truth, we are saved from fanaticism, intolerance, and that bloody conflict of opinions which has divided the human race into armed camps since the beginning of history. *The Concept* may be and usually is autocratic, but the concept of *The Concept* is democratic.

Perhaps we should go a little further in explaining the scholastic attitude. The moment we recognize that all systems of religion and philosophy are concepts of truth, and not truth itself, this mental acceptance itself becomes an over-concept large enough to include all convictions and opinions about the nature of first cause. The concept that all abstract conceptions are opinionial and relative rather than factual and absolute, is the concept of *The Concept* itself.

Take Buddhism for example. Buddha refused to define the nature of first cause or to devote any time or consideration to the activity of the gods in the sphere of cause; he declared such speculation to be controversial and without any practical value. Yet he definitely formulated a concept, a pattern in the world of causes sufficient to explain the apparent confusion in the world of effects. With his mind set primarily upon utility, he passed rapidly from concept to precept and set up a code of conduct grounded in his concept but calculated to improve the physical state of man. The Buddhists, however, soon forgot that the philosophic agnosticism of Gautama was a concept, and through familiarity and acceptance the followers of the faith came to accept the concept as truth itself.

At this same time Lao-Tse in China formulated a concept different in many respects from that of Buddhism. While he was still alive his fellow countryman,

the scholar Confucius, also developed a concept; the precepts or extensions of this concept in the sphere of moral action have dominated China for 2500 years. Zoroaster, in Persia, was a contemporary of the great concept builders of the Far East. He likewise evolved a pattern in the sphere of mind to explain the absence of pattern in the sphere of behavior, and sought in this way to organize the ethical institutions of his day.

Pythagoras was the great concept builder among the Greeks, and from him the line of the sages descended through the schools of Plato and Aristotle to leaven the loaf of European thinking. *The Concept* is the highest product of man's intellectual life and each philosopher, prophet, or seer who has ennobled a preceding concept or devised a more perfect one has gained for himself the enduring gratitude and approval and applause of mankind.

When we realize that all concepts are man-made explanations for a God-made state of affairs, we can appreciate how concepts must naturally be subject to various limitations. All concepts ascend from known phenomena toward the unknown cause; therefore each is subject to certain restrictions of time and place. For instance, at a time when men regarded war as an honorable avocation sanctioned by the gods, the concept of the divine plan must include a justification for war. Remember that concepts must always explain physical facts in a way satisfactory to the people abiding in a particular pattern of facts. The place factor was also important, as various parts of the earth emphasized various pursuits that have resulted in the production of certain arts and sciences. To the Eskimo the concept must explain cold, to the Egyptian it must explain the sandstorm, and to the Roman it must explain and justify the expansion of the Roman Empire and Caesar's invasion of Gaul.

Naturally, the increase of factual knowledge refines and perfects *The Concept*. The discovery of the heliocentric motion of planets enlarged the human concept of first cause. Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood,

Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, Newton's recognition of the law of gravity, the voyages of Columbus, the development of electrical formula, all reacted in the sphere of *The Concept*. The more we know of things knowable, the more we can imagine of things imaginable. In this way, hypothetically at least, concepts grow or unfold in the direction of the unknown truth.

It is in order to consider the anatomy and physiology of *The Concept*. First, the primary requisite is that the conception shall explain or give reason to the facts. A concept which denies the facts is untenable, although such exist and have gained temporary favor. All concepts are built upon certain hypotheses. An hypothesis is an unprovable, but apparently reasonable statement of belief or conviction necessary to sustain a concept. The great hypothesis in religion is the existence of God. The great hypothesis in philosophy is that God is wise, and the great hypothesis in science is that God is exact. None of these hypotheses are actually provable, but all are acceptable; in fact, to question them is to be declared unreasonable. If we accept God we can then build a concept as to how he operates, benevolently or despotically, according to our opinion of what constitutes an acceptable pattern of universals. If we accept God as a person of power and also a deity of infinite wisdom, we enlarge the concept. We can then have further concepts attempting to define the potentials of wisdom. The wise God can also be the good God, a God of justice, of beauty, of love, and we must create a concept to prove that the world as fact fulfills exactly the purposes of God as wisdom. If we conceive of deity as possessing the attributes of exactitude, then our concept must envision a machinery of the world existing first in the divine nature, and then, by extension, in the mundane sphere. In this concept there must be no place for accidents, exceptions, or personality equations.

The concept must not be deficient in any element necessary to maintain its own consistency. It is for this reason that very few minds are capable of

formulating a concept which will endure the test of application through the circumstances of living. The greatest conceptionalist in the world of philosophy was Immanuel Kant. By virtue of logic it is evident that the primary virtue of a concept is not its truthfulness, but its consistency. If truth itself were the absolute prerequisite there could be no concept, for if truth could be known there would be no need for conceptual thinking. It is also proved that in human conduct consistency of ideas meets the requirements of living. It is not the absence of truth but the absence of consistency in ideas held or believed which results in most personality confusion.

Plato's concept of the philosophic empire is a case in point. The great philosopher tells us that monarchy, the rulership by one, oligarchy, the rulership by class or group, and democracy, the rulership by the people, are equally benevolent if wisely administered, and equally dangerous if perverted. Each is a different concept, but under each a people may unfold, grow, find peace and security, perfect their external institutions, and enrich their internal lives. Each concept is benevolent if the rules of the concept itself are faithfully applied.

By the same reasoning Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Islamism, or any other great moral or religious system is satisfactory if its concept is beneficent and its followers act in conformity with the whole concept. The value of a concept is not so much to be determined by comparison with other concepts as by its own internal consistency.

So much for the universals of this fascinating subject. Let us now descend to those utilitarian particulars which are the tests of all systems and by which they survive or fail. Every human being functions from a concept, or from several concepts variously interwoven. First there is the world concept, the prevailing attitude of a time. In our day this concept is deeply involved in industry and economics. This concept in turn is modified by such particulars as the nation in which we live, the com-

munity where we dwell and our means of livelihood.

Second, there is the prevailing concept of the religious faith of our people. In the United States this prevailing faith is Christianity, particularized by the conceptual boundaries of 250 sects and denominations. Each one of us must struggle internally with the conflicts between our industrial and religious codes, a conflict extremely detrimental to our nervous and physical systems.

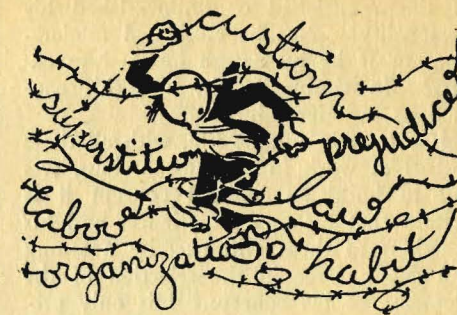
The third important equation is the rapid increase of individual concepts resulting from the evolutionary progress of the mind. More and more we are formulating our own concepts, deriving inspiration from a number of sources. Sometimes individual concepts are in advance of the collective concept; sometimes they are only different without additional merit, and all too frequently they are inferior to the collective concept because of the inability of the individual to estimate values. Here again it is true that the concept is secondary in terms of importance to the consistency within the concept. It is not as important *what we believe* as *that we believe*, and each is entitled to his own belief. But each may also reasonably be expected to live according to his belief, and conduct himself in a reasonable way.

In terms of religion a believer is one who adapts the concepts of a faith, and an unbeliever is one devoted to a different concept or who rejects the doctrinal authority of the sect in question. It is a mistake to assume that one who rejects our concept is a heathen or a pagan or in some way spiritually, mentally, or morally inferior to ourselves. The perspective on this subject is burdened by a misinterpretation of loyalty. Each of us feels that he must defend the concept which he has accepted, and if possible impose it upon others. Of course he always assumes that his concept is the truth, hence the importance of correcting this basic error. If we can rise to the democratic over-concept, we can live and let live in the sphere of belief and doctrine.

We make another serious mistake which confuses values and leads to a variety of errors. We do this by attempting to interpret one concept in the terms of another. We mistake apparent similarities for actual identities, feeling that by so doing we are exhibiting a generous and fraternal spirit. Students of Orientalism frequently fall into this error. Certain Buddhist schools teach a doctrine of a Buddha to come, a lord of enlightenment and compassion called Maitreya Buddha. Christian Orientalists have explained "...obviously, Maitreya is identical with Christ" whose second advent is expected by numerous sects. Having this identity the mind speedily conjures up supporting evidence by interpretation or invention until the conclusion is that the fact is certain. But Maitreya is not identical with Christ because the former is part of an entirely philosophical concept. The parallels are of the accidents and not the intent, for Messianic dispensation is not taught in the faiths of Asia. Eastern religions do not require this hypothesis for the completeness of their concept. To find out what Maitreya actually means it is necessary to examine impersonally and impartially the entire anatomy of the Oriental philosophical conception.

When we attempt to interpret other people's concepts in terms of our own we merely impose our own concept upon their system. We arrive at conclusions satisfactory to ourselves but unknown to the members of the other faith and contrary to their pattern of life. It is nice to believe that we all hold the same convictions under different names and symbols, but this is not true in the terms of particular convictions. We are united in one matter; we are all searching for truth, but we are divided by our concept of that truth and by our precepts of the means by which we hope to obtain ultimate identification with truth. This is not bad in itself but becomes destructive when we settle down to battles of opinion, and lack the grace to recognize our share and place in universal ignorance.

It would be wise for the serious student to examine the origins of the



elements which have come together to form his concept of truth. While the concept itself appears to be an internal birth arising spontaneously in the mental atmosphere, it is in reality the reasonable product of the circumstances which have conspired to shape the personality and the intellect. A concept, like every other form in nature, is an effect suspended from cause, and the cause itself measures the size and proportions of its own effect.

The human subconscious is burdened with a cargo of experiences, and conclusions drawn therefrom. We must inquire into the childhood of the person, the conditions of his home, the compatibility of his parents, the sicknesses and accidents which marked his early courses; we must estimate the religious life of his family, the conditions of his early schooling, his natural bent, and the community in which he lived, especially in regard to its size. Next we must inquire into his emotional life, his higher educational opportunities, his early experiences in the business world, the temperament of his marriage partner, his economic status, his outside interest and avocation, and the impact of current history such as wars, depressions, and the effect of political changes upon his personality. Still later we must observe the outworkings of his own natural concepts. Has he been happy in a moderate way? Has he met the challenge of responsibility; has he preserved his ideals under temptation; is he normal in terms of his psyche; have his concepts built neuroses, frustrations, or caused him to become antisocial? Have his religious convictions, or the absence

of them, enriched or impoverished his personality? Has he cultivated moderation, or is he by nature inclined to excess? In simple words, have his convictions sustained him?

If a man in middle life, with all these factors at work in his subconscious, sets out to build an internal concept it is certain that his own experiences and his reactions to them will exercise a strong but subtle force in the selection of the elements of his concept. His only protection is to know that this is true and to be ever watchful. If he ignores himself as an equation in his own ideas he is going to develop the concept which justifies his present state rather than one which will inspire him to better condition. Most personally developed concepts are an effort to prove that we are right when to others it is obvious that we are wrong. But we must define this last statement. We are wrong to others because our patterns have not solved our own requirements, not because we differ in concept from our neighbors.

It may well be that we lack the imagination to create a personal concept, and feel that we require the assistance and direction of some collective group. If such be the case we are likely to drift toward some religion or cult which appears to satisfy our instincts or inclinations. Again without realizing it we select according to our own taste or preconception. Several unsuspected circumstances may influence our opinion. The religious environment of early life is one of the most powerful sympathetic codes of life. If our growing years were made happy and secure we are inclined to feel that "the old time religion" is peculiarly suitable to our requirements. If, conversely, the family creed resulted in tyranny and despotism and led to real or seeming injustice, we will instinctively avoid any sect promulgating similar or parallel ideas. We estimate the creed by what it has done to us through those representing or misrepresenting its principles.

The reason that the present generation numbers so many agnostics is that the religious life of the preceding gen-

eration so consistently failed to bring beauty, kindness, and tolerance to our own childhood memories. Liberalism is not so much due to broadened perspective as to a saddened memory and experience. If childhood years were embittered by the creedal fanaticism of our elders, our first tendency is to break entirely with religion. This break is followed by the agnostic years, which may extend from the time of disillusionment in our late teens up to our 40th or 50th years. This long interlude is filled with objective problems and decisions. Ambitions are strong, responsibilities are numerous, and we are sustained by what appears to be an inexhaustible fountain of self-sufficiency. We may be tolerant of the spiritual questing of others but it seems a bit unreal, decidedly unnecessary, and overwhelmingly futile.

Then as we turn 50 our personality begins to show distinct symptoms of wear and tear. We are afflicted by the suspicion that our worldly purposes are themselves without substance or reality. We have sought happiness and found tragedy. We have striven after wealth and have been rewarded with burdens. We have fought the fight that no man can win, and discover within our own personalities an increasing sense of deficiency and traces of a rapidly developing feeling of futility. Often to our own surprise we realize a deep and growing need for spiritual refuge and consolation. It is then that we drift by an inner compulsion toward the open doors of one of those numerous and diversified sanctuaries which are the havens of the world-weary.

Our selection is determined by our own peculiar kind of weariness, and we may make a number of temporary affiliations before the discovery of the doctrine most suitable. Our agnosticism evaporates and we learn that a faithless life is deprived of much that is beautiful and significant.

This rather sentimental summary may conjure up visions of lavender and old lace, but the human being himself is incurably Mid-Victorian and a romanticist to the end. Hope springs eternal in the human breast, and we long to

exchange the passing glories of the world—glories which have lost their glamour—for the richer treasures of the spirit. The difficulty lies in our ability to select a spiritual course of conduct which will be more effective than was our previously chosen physical pattern of purpose. All we have to serve as a measuring rod is our own experience; in fact, even this is questioned. Experience is not merely what we have done or what has been done to us. The incidents themselves are comparatively unimportant. The deep concern is how have we interpreted these experiences? If we have interpreted them incorrectly we have labored and suffered in vain. Most of us worry about being misunderstood. We would profit more if we concerned ourselves with the problem of how much we misunderstand. I know a number of persons who have been able to misunderstand practically everything which has happened to them through long and eventful lives. If we base our future course of action upon a complete misunderstanding of the past, it is doubtful if we can obtain any permanent internal security.

The simple fact that we can reach our 50th year in a condition of almost complete discomfort might reasonably imply at least minor imperfections of judgment, theory, or practice. If we cannot live with ourselves and consequently are unable to endure the associations of others, some reforms of perspectives seem to be indicated. But when making plans for our future success we continue with ill-founded enthusiasm to depend upon a personality pattern which has already failed. This explains why the heaviest burden that a religious institution must bear is its own membership. It further explains why most religious systems are hopelessly misrepresented by their followers. We interpret our beliefs in terms of our own personality patterns, and the longer we belong to a doctrine the more that doctrine grows to look like ourselves.

Attitudes are habit-forming, and we can be addicted to our own mistakes as hopelessly as to a narcotic drug. Most psychologists are forced to admit that

the adult human being seldom changes his personality pattern to any marked degree. The improvement which we so desperately strive for may spread over the surface of our lives, but it seldom accomplishes a genuine penetration. We accumulate an assortment of new and wonderful ideas which are "simply revolutionary," but the revolution does not accomplish much renovation. We learn some grand things to do and a whole new philosophy of life, but our first instinct is to share it with our friends rather than to apply it to ourselves. In a moment of emergency when our new ideas might solve a delicate situation we do exactly what we have always done, and the battle is lost.

The impulses which arise within ourselves appear to take unfair advantage of our lives. We brace ourselves for an attack from outside and discover too late that the traitor is inside. The more we know the more disgusted we become with the consequences of our own actions. Having worked out all the factors to our complete satisfaction, and deciding heroically exactly what we should not have done, we go forth and again do likewise. It will always be this way as long as forethought comes behind.

Life will always remain uncertain until we gain an adequate working knowledge of our subconscious. Today even the psychologists cannot agree as to what constitutes this factory of inconsistent impulses. We do know that the subconscious never forgets, but there is nothing to indicate that its memory is essentially honest. It remembers incidents not as they occurred, but according to the interpretation we have given them. Somewhere in the subconscious there is a fabric peculiarly susceptible to impact. The more intense the impact the more permanent the scars which it leaves, and the normal functions of the subconscious are seriously handicapped by psychic scar tissue. We know that physical scar tissue is an ever present hazard and a detriment to function. Mental and emotional scar tissue is even more dangerous than that which may exist in the physical tissues. After

a life has been conditioned by 20 or 30 years of impacts, each of which has been interpreted without full knowledge or consideration of the facts, a serious condition has been set up in the subconscious. The whole personality begins to function from the motivation of the psychic scar tissue. The mind no longer thinks but becomes a servant functioning only to justify or explain the fallacy of conduct. Mentation takes the form of an endless cycle of self-excusing. We devote our attention to trying to prove why we are the way we are to the satisfaction of our friends, if not to ourselves, rather than using mental energy to discover an honest remedy.

A man whose career was especially distinguished for its unreasonableness spent several hundred dollars on an elaborate psychoanalysis. He told me that the money was well-spent, for he had been able to discover the real cause of his trouble. When he was a small child he had a nurse who threatened his infant mind and life with various horrible punishments if he failed to obey her instructions. Having been psychoanalyzed, the sufferer saw everything clearly. He was comparatively happy, at least for the moment. He was the victim of a great injustice, and such a realization would warm the cockles of anyones heart and give him something to live for.

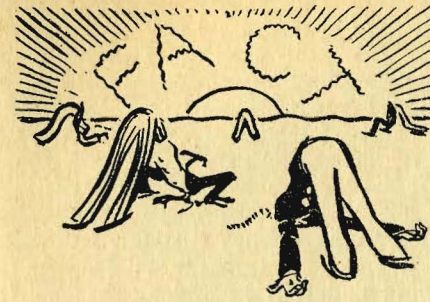
Psychology can become a rather dangerous instrument for justifying failure. Most psychologists work from the formula that the causes of a man's difficulties are external to himself. It is not what he has done but what has been done to him that answers all reasonable doubts about providence. While there is much truth in this line of thinking, some way must be found to capitalize upon the liabilities in the human personality. The individual must find a way to personality adequacy not in spite of his experiences but because of his experiences. While external pressure certainly exists, there is also internal power, and these contrary forces must be brought into equilibrium. Human beings who have run away from distasteful environment have not solved their

troubles by so doing. Those who have attained the highest degree of human admiration and respect have lived in the same environment as that larger group to whom such environment has proved overwhelming.

The human being must be taught to be himself. He must be instructed in how to release his own strength of consciousness. It is a mistake to emphasize only negative remedies. Simple psychology, preventive rather than curative, should be part of public school education even in the elementary grades. Instruction could begin with simple problems of behavior and conduct, and as the mind evolves deeper issues could be included. We can never have a healthy world while the majority of its inhabitants remain convinced that they are the victims of universal and inevitable injustice.

There is a will to do which can be strengthened and directed. This will must escape from the vicious circle of returning resentment for injustice. We can never be happy while we continue to function from the level of our hurts, nor can we afford to feel that we should return evil for evil with compound interest. Another person's misconduct can never justify our misconduct, nor can we afford to resent the world or the inhabitants thereof. Mistakes are not necessarily tragic, but the nursing of them, the fond remembering of them, and the instincts to share them, are tragic.

While hallucinations are a violent and critical phenomena of the subconscious, diagnosis is not especially difficult, and remedies are often available. It seems to me that a more dangerous form of morbid imagination is a life pattern which is without factual elements. Such a pattern may never be correctly diagnosed, and the patient himself is totally unaware of the urgent need for remedy. Disillusional life planning results in an unnatural approach to the simple issues of daily conduct. It is regrettable that so many of our institutions contribute to collective and individual disillusion. We have lived so long under a reign of fantasy that we have lost track entirely of essential values. Under such condi-



tions it is easy to see how numerous absurdities have come to be accepted as solemn truth. While the scientist is able to arrive at some facts or reasonable deductions therefrom about the world and nature in their physical aspects, the metaphysical implications are still almost completely disorganized, or unorganized in the popular mind. The spheres of morality and ethics and the higher world of spiritual causation are without any reasonable dimensions or boundaries. The moment we leave the obvious we verge toward fantasy. But man cannot live by the obvious alone without depriving his life of its most splendid values. Beyond the obvious he must depend upon his own integrity to guide him toward those universal truths which are the summits of human experiences. If his perspective fails, the truth seeker has no means left to him with which to explore the universal life in which he lives and moves. If man doubts, the universe is filled with doubt. If he fears, the universe is filled with fearful shapes and images. If he becomes hopeless, space becomes abysmal, and if he frames false doctrines, space becomes a network of false patterns. Hence the beginning of wisdom is the integration of the personality equation. We shall never understand the divine powers which we cannot see until we learn to understand the simple, natural circumstances with which we are involved day by day.

A certain man passed through an unfortunate romantic incident, and since that time has made it a policy never to vote for a woman candidate for public office. He brags long and often on the

consistency of his policy; in fact "he doth protest too much." It is inconceivable that this man who has enjoyed the reasonable advantages of his time should not be aware of the stupidity of his attitude. This is probably why he defends himself largely on the grounds of consistency. He knows perfectly well that the only intelligent way to elect a candidate is to choose on the basis of merit alone, yet he is proud of the fact that he has never allowed merit to influence his consistency. This kind of an attitude, by extension, becomes the basis of all party policy. When candidates are elected because they belong to our party and not because of individual fitness, we have little right to resent poor government.

A woman made it a point never to enter a church of a certain denomination because her father, who was a tyrannical boor, was addicted to that theological persuasion. It never occurred to her that it might have been the father and not the faith that was responsible for the family despotism. Faiths do not corrupt good men who practice their virtues regardless of their creed, and who live well even if they are members of a benighted institution.

A man, jealous because he believed the family dog received kind words to which he was entitled, poisoned all of the animals in the neighborhood. It never occurred to this man that the affection which he craved might have been withheld because of his own disposition, which did not compare favorably with that of the fox terrier.

A mother of two children developed a serious case of favoritism. One child could do no wrong, and the other was held responsible for every delinquency in the neighborhood. Under adroit questioning the mother admitted that the child she was neglecting and abusing bore a slight resemblance to a maiden aunt with whom she had difficulties 20 years earlier. But the confession did not clear up the difficulty, and she still carried on the irrational procedure of attempting to punish the likeness or similarity which brought up unpleasant memories of a person actually deceased.

A middle aged man who had always lived temperately suddenly and for no apparent reason settled down to a well-planned program of drinking himself to death. His daughter had married a man whom he did not like. Research showed that he had never liked any of the young men who had shown an interest in his "little girl." The "little girl," who was approaching 30, had finally rebelled, and the father was drowning his grief. The psychological thinking here was rather complicated. The daughter strikingly resembled her own mother at the time of her marriage to Father. Daddy's circuitous reasoning was something like this: She is very like her mother and I am desperately in love with her mother; therefore I am in love with anything like her mother. Therefore any man who falls in love with my daughter falls in love with the likeness of my wife and is my deadly rival. Such reasoning in itself is almost enough to drive a man to drink. It is all rather stupid if it happens to someone else, but if it happens to us the salt of life has lost its savor.

A man, 60 years old and married for 35 years, consistently refused to permit his wife to drive an automobile. She finally learned as a result of a conspiracy with her married daughter. At last the truth came out and threatened to break up the home. The enraged husband thus cruelly deceived ordered his auto-driving wife out of his house with all her chattels. When I asked the irate spouse if his wife suffered from optical, cardial, or nervous disorders that might justify withholding from her the privileges of the open road, he was indignant and insisted that his wife was in the best of health. With him it was a matter of principle. It was the duty of a faithful wife to stay home and take care of her husband and not gad about the countryside at 40 miles an hour. If there were any places she had to go, he would take her. It is easy to understand why this man had chronic dyspepsia and hardening of the arteries. His attitude was just as much an hallucination as is the tendency of an alcoholic to

discover snakes and elephants where they do not exist.

Lists of this kind could be continued and amplified indefinitely. The world is made up of folk who are consecrated to tasks of increasing their own difficulties. They all know better and would be the first to condemn in others the foibles dear to their own hearts. But they have grown so accustomed to themselves that it is easier to continue to wear ill-fitting dispositions than to exchange them for newer and better styles. The impulse is always to follow the old and the accustomed, and to go contrary to that impulse is just too much. If the impulse gets us into a lot of trouble then it becomes especially precious to us. The man and his impulse have gone through so much together that they have grown closer than kin, and have a mutual understanding that defies outside interference. It has been proved on numerous occasions that it is much easier to die than to change one's mind. In fact, to die for one's opinion or in defense of one's mistakes is a beautiful martyrdom.

An elderly lady on her deathbed had the look of one about to pass out of this life at peace with all things. She had been feuding with one of her children for 50 years and was dying in this child's house. It was a glorious fulfillment. She was causing all possible inconveniences, and her last words were, "Te-hee! She will have to pay for the funeral." What a consummation! What a magnificent finish! The old lady passed to her reward firmly convinced that God was in his heaven and all was right with the world.

Then there was a dowager who would never tell her age even to the family physician, and who had carved out quite a public career for herself. She told me why she had joined a religious movement which had been gathering momentum under the leadership of a sad-eyed Asiatic. We think he may be still sadder when his new convert gets into action. She explained it all to me this way: "You know," she announced firmly, "I'm a woman of action. I'm never happy except when a

great cause is at stake. I'm a fighter, always have been. That is how I got to the top. This is my big opportunity. Now that I've joined this group think of all the people I can be against." She never sensed any inconsistency in her grand program of being for God and against the universe.

While we cannot agree with those who insist that the world is an illusion existing only in the human mind, it is impossible to deny the rather obvious fact that most of us live in an imaginary world. Not far from Jaipur City in the Rajputana agency, Central India, is the deserted city of Amber which crowns a long range of hills. Among the buildings of Amber is a guest palace where the old rajahs used to entertain their friends. The interior of the grand salon is decorated with elaborate designs made by inlaying fragments of mirror mosaic-like into the white marble walls. If a person stands in the middle of this room at night and strikes a match the tiny flame is reflected back to him from ten thousand shining surfaces, until it seems that he is in the midst of a heavenly space and surrounded by countless constellations. It is difficult to realize that all these tiny reflected flames have no light except the match that he holds in his own hand.

By analogy we know that the moral, intellectual, and emotional universes reflect from an infinite number of surfaces the light which is within our own natures. Always it is our own flame that we see, although it appears that there are a thousand different forms and patterns for us. The universe must always be as good and as bad as ourselves. If we are wise the world is filled with wisdom. If we are foolish life reflects our own stupidity in an infinite variety of ways. If we are happy the world is bright. If we are unhappy the world is miserable. To the sick in mind all space is sick. To those inclined to fearfulness every facet of infinity reflects fearful images. If we believe in universal law the cosmos reflects order. If we have lost our own sense of values and proportions we behold about us only the chaos within ourselves. Yet

surely we cannot imagine that our own attitudes and opinions change in any way the real substances of our environment. People remain themselves no matter how we interpret them. The universe proceeds according to its own schedule regardless of our attempted renovations and improvements. Not one of us has the slightest power to change the unswerving course of the cosmic plan. All we can do is to change the pattern as it refers to ourselves by interpretation. We have no power to alter the substance of a single fact as that fact relates to itself or to any creature other than ourselves.

It would appear that the universal recognition and acceptance of the immutability of the divine plan would have moderated, in the course of time, the human tendency toward imagination and distortion. Theoretically it has, but theory is far in advance of practice. In the course of years each of us builds his own world, populates it with those who agree with him, and regards this creation as an ethical Noah's Ark for the preservation of the species. A prominent evangelist stated publicly some years ago his pattern of endeavor: "If I can't do it and my wife can't do it or the children can't do it, it can't be done." We have no record as to what it was that only this family could accomplish, but the general perspective was certainly not entirely factual. Nearly always when a man creates a formula for living, his invention is inferior to the design set up in space for the management of creative things.

Year after year people bring their troubles to the several classes of psychologists and counselors available for consultation. In nearly every case those in trouble have attempted to function contrary to the rules of the game of life. Some have a superficial understanding of the reason for their troubles; that is, they have an intellectual comprehension of the real facts. But beneath the surface of this honest thinking is a confusion of instincts and impulses. These submerged factors are impelling conduct contrary to reason, but so forceful and inevitable is this urge toward the

gratification of impulse that the mind is unable to defend the reasonable in the presence of the desire. Years of study and high spiritual persuasions do not always correct a condition. Too often this is because the very study itself was wrongly motivated and therefore could not accomplish its proper purposes.

The lady who becomes a pious churchgoer because she is secretly infatuated with the minister is a fair example. She may gain considerable reputation of piety from being so frequently seen in the front pew, but there is some doubt as to how far her spiritual fortunes are advanced. Deep down inside, this lady is perfectly aware of her true motives, but after a time she will deliberately choose to confuse the issues. Finally she will convince herself that her personal and impersonal motives are identical even though it be necessary for her to fabricate a universal scheme of her own, rearranging the whole pattern of celestial dynamics to justify her ardent interest in the preacher.

Most imagination is involved in self-justification for wish fulfillment. It is prevalent in neurotic, introverted types. Self-justification is not necessary to those who accept themselves as they are, admit their faults, acknowledge their shortcomings, and try to live useful lives within their natural limitations. Wish fulfillment is a vicarious existence enjoyed by those who have little actual existence. If the daily life is filled with a proper proportion of interest, responsibility, and activity, there is neither time nor inclination to indulge in elaborate daydreaming. To daydream successfully it is necessary to cultivate aloneness. This is easy to cultivate if we are super-sensitive to the shocks of living. To escape what may appear to be the evils of the world we retire into ourselves only to discover that by this procedure we come into the worst possible association. Finding our own company scarcely less unpleasant than that of the horrid world, we start creating a fool's paradise of our own. The more we populate this inner daydream with the products of our own mental ingenuity the more difficult it becomes to live in the outer

world of brusk realities. The result is that we become more and more wrapped up in ourselves, and as one wit observed, a man wrapped up in himself makes an extremely small package.

Wish fulfillment involves a technique elevated to the degree of a fine art by the frustrated. It is usually associated with a conviction of personal superiority. If this superiority is not recognized and acknowledged by others, the ego suffers a grievous insult. Egos inclined to demand recognition are least likely to merit praise. The man too timid to stand for his own rights in a business world finds consolation in imagining himself a tycoon of industry, rewarding his favorites and sweeping away his enemies with empiric gestures. The more despotic he becomes in the internal management of his affairs the more bitterly he resents his humble place in society. More and more he is convinced that he is not appreciated; that he has never had a chance. It is then only a step to a perfect persecution complex. The world is against him; his superiors are afraid to reward him lest he excel them utterly; he is the victim of a conspiracy; every one is jealous of him. He takes out his righteous indignation upon those beneath him, thus accomplishing a vicarious revenge. In the end all his facts and footings are lost, and he may drift into the chaos of an unbalanced mind.

Once we lose orientation we become hopeless victims of our own delusions. Although most of us regard the modern economic system as little less than a disaster, it has accomplished one important service. It is about the only anchorage by which many persons are bound to factual living, and as a result it is the object of a wide resentment. The punishment for drifting too far from the practical is the loss of economic security. The drifter may curse the system, but it accomplishes nothing. Here one must play the game or take the consequences. By his economic needs the man is bound to the society of his time. He must share in the common responsibility or else be branded as a shirk and a ne'er-do-well.

The world is not nearly as bad as it seems to those who attempt to live contrary to its codes, but if we insist on remaking it to our own desires the process may prove rather exhausting. If we must be influenced by imagination why not imagine things to be a little better than they are? Why not assume that the rank and file of humanity is much like ourselves, trying to do good with evil ever nigh unto them? Why not recognize that other people have problems also, and that it is not any easier for them to be placid than it is for us to preserve an even temper? Why do we so consistently forget or take for granted all the good things that happen to us, and keep a detailed and perpetual record of every misfortune that has come our way? A small boy tried to solve one of the most distressing problems of childhood. "Why is it," he reasoned, "that I can be good even at great cost for months and no one ever has a nice word to say about it, but if I am bad just once I get a sound thrashing?"

Gradually it dawns upon the thoughtful person that his mental processes have transformed his concept of the world into the likeness of his own repressions and compulsions. His philosophy of life is a symbolic extension of his own psyche. Whichever way he turns, whatever subject he considers, and however he may be trained or schooled, he remains the dominant equation in every one of his patterns and purposes. The universal plan is seen as the lengthening shadow of his own personality. He lives and has his being in the gloom cast by his own shadow.

But it is not good to leave a consideration of this kind without some hope of remedy. There is an answer for every problem in the life of man. Although recognizing and admitting his own ineptitudes, the average person will never change his ways until the present pattern becomes utterly and completely unendurable. Hence it is that in great moments of crisis the individual can accomplish important renovations within his own personality. A man confronted with a total loss of his economic

security or a woman threatened with the total loss of her emotional security may rise gallantly to this supreme challenge. Such critical periods prove conclusively that the human being can change his mind and mend his ways, but the end must justify the effort. He will never reform simply in order to become better.

When reformations are accomplished they result from a clear-cut decision and the acceptance of internal experience of certain undeniable and unalterable facts. It is the final impact of fact, and the simple but uncompromising ultimatum issued by the fact, that awakens the human mind from its program of wishful thinking and daydreaming. It is necessary therefore for every truth seeker to become acutely fact-conscious. This does not mean to become materialistic, for many facts are abstract. The priceless ingredients in all facts are their honesty, their intrinsic integrity, and their permanent establishment in principle. Facts never change to meet the requirements of erring mortals, but mortals must change their ways to meet the needs of the facts.

One day a gentleman who had been battering himself to pieces trying to alter the complexion of inevitables discussed his problem with me. He had an interesting viewpoint. He resented violently the pressure of the universal plan, not because he differed with it but because he felt that obedience implied subordination. It wounded his ego not to be able to do exactly as he pleased. To bend his own will to the will of the infinite threatened his concept of self-





sufficiency. He felt frustrated and inhibited. He insisted upon regarding the world as a sphere of raw material existing only for him to use or abuse as he pleased. To him liberty was freedom from law. It has never occurred to this man that the only freedom possible to created things is freedom under law.

In each of us there lurks a bit of the chronic reformer. First we try to reform our friends, and finding this impossible, or unsatisfactory if accomplished, we turn our attention to a general reformation of the entire world. When the world in turn fails to recognize the merits of our recommendations we become vexed and annoyed, and may even comment upon the stupidity of the gods who abide in the seven extensions of space.

Nature, the mother of gods and of men, has one infallible remedy for the conceits of mortals. This is the evolutionary program by which she wears out the revolutionary instincts which obsess her creatures. The gods never preach to men. Their very divinity implies a larger wisdom. The universal pattern contains an incorruptible machinery by which mortals teach themselves by the process or trial and error. We can cling to our mistakes for a long time, but not forever. We can hold false opinions for a hundred lives, but in the end our own conceits become unendurable. Humans are always in a hurry, but nature is a reservoir of patience and unaging time. We can carry our faults uncorrected to the grave and appear to perish without hope, but that which is not cured in time will be remedied in eternity. The rule is simple: Man must suffer until he learns to obey.

I made this little speech once to a metaphysician who was having a difficult time adjusting to the facts of life. "I know it" she murmured bitterly "but it isn't very pleasant to look forward to hundreds of lives of unhappiness and pain." There seemed only one thing to recommend, so I tactfully suggested an immediate and dignified surrender to the inevitable. She shook her head. "I know, I know, but I just can't give up the things I want." Argument was

useless, and the matter had to rest with the gods.

Lord Bacon built his great scientific system upon one vast and all-embracing formula. The end of wisdom is that men shall learn to obey. All learning is to justify complete and unquestioning obedience to the inevitable laws of our kind. All institutions built contrary to nature's design must fail; all systems of philosophy or religion that teach contrary to the universal design must inevitably fail. When we depart from nature we deprive ourselves of our natural birthright of life and security. We have the right to search out the secrets of nature and we have the added right to practice those arts by which we anticipate and perfect the world of nature, but we have no right to any opinion that conflicts with nature's God or nature's law.

There is one other complication. Too often we hold that our own conceit is the truth. We alone see more clearly than the rest, and by the virtue of this clarity we are entitled to impose our opinions upon the majority. Fortunately there are means by which we can prove or disprove the merits of our own convictions. Nothing is true because we believe it to be true, but those obsessed by their own opinions are seldom inclined to test the quality of their notions.

Before accepting the convictions that press forward from the subconscious parts of ourselves and demand acceptance, each vagrant speculation should be tested by means of a simple critical process. The threefold instrument of criticism is tradition, observation, and experimentation. We should ask the following three questions:

What is the common conviction of mankind about the notion that we hold? That is the proper use of tradition.

What is the common state of those of our own time who practice the theories that we advocate? We gain this knowledge by observation.

What is the direct and immediate consequence of our principles when we apply them systematically to a variety of particular circumstances? This is the

experimental method, and against the results of experiment there is no appeal.

This is the threefold measuring stick. Has it worked, does it work, and are its results uniformly the same? Unless these three questions can be answered in the affirmative without exaggeration or compromise, excuse or evasion, under a wide variety of applications, our ideas have little practical value regardless of

their dramatic contents.

The end of evolution is that men shall discover fact and shall abide by, respect, admire, venerate, and love that which is eternally true. When the consciousness has attained this the world no longer will be the mirror of human opinion, and man himself shall become that which he was intended to be, the mirror of divine purpose.



#### THE HORSE THAT BECAME A GOD

On October 12th, 1524, Hernando Cortes set out with an army from the City of Mexico to bring the blessings of civilization to the Mayas of Yucatan and gather glory for himself.

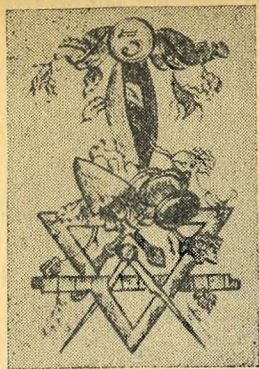
During the expedition the commander's favorite horse, by name Morzillo, went lame because of the rough and stony country. With a truly touching display of emotion Cortes entrusted the horse to a friendly group of Itzas (Mayas), beseeching them to nurse his beloved Morzillo back to health. His mission completed, the general would send a delegation to reclaim the animal.

The Indians, knowing nothing of the ways of horses, treated the beast as though he were a supernatural creature. Upon the advice of their priestly physicians, the Itzas nursed the horse as they would a sick member of their own aristocracy. Delicious bowls of stewed poultry were set before Morzillo to tempt his appetite, and the women and children brought bunches of wildflowers to gladden his heart. Songs and dances, and other displays were arranged to keep the horse's mind off the injured leg.

Like the cockney mentioned in *King Lear*, who out of kindness for his horse buttered the animal's hay, the Indians were solicitous to a fault. As the result of the unaccustomed type of medical treatment Morzillo languished, faded and died.

The Indians were heartbroken when the heavenly horse breathed his last. So they made an image of him in stone and plaster "very perfect" and placed it in their temple, worshipping it as a divinity. Although the horse seems to have been of the male persuasion, the Itzas named the statue Tziminchac, meaning "the bride of thunder." The title was inspired by the fact that the Spaniards fired their guns from the backs of their horses, and the Indians assumed that the animals were responsible for the noise.

The image of Morzillo, alias Tziminchac, must have been wonderful to behold. The horse was represented seated on his hind quarters supported by rigid forelegs, and with his head raised majestically. As a god, Morzillo was a great success. Even the missionaries were silent in his presence—there were just no words appropriate to the situation.



# The Illuminati

## THE INTELLECTUAL REVOLUTION IN EUROPE

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SECRET SOCIETIES

CONFEDERATIONS of men and women bound together by certain obligations into esoteric fraternities have existed since the beginning of human society. A practice so ancient and so universally venerated must have more than passing significance.

Today we are inclined to resent secrecy, especially in the field of learning. We feel that the knowledge of spiritual and philosophical principles should be available to all. Esoteric groups reserving for their own use information which might advance the general security of the race, at first thought appear to be practicing a policy of exclusiveness contrary to the best interests of the average citizen. Is there any justification for the long-established practice of withholding higher knowledge from the masses, and conferring the privileges of wisdom only upon specially selected persons?

The oldest of secret societies was the tribe itself, into which each child must be initiated with appropriate ceremonies. The ancients did not regard birth as bestowing equality; the individual must prove himself to be entitled to his share in the common opportunities and responsibilities. *Citizenship must be earned.* The boy or girl must be tried and tested, and must recognize and accept the duties of maturity.

The tribal initiations were for the most part trials of courage to prove that the young person was worthy of a voice in the mature decisions of his people. With membership into the tribe was bestowed the lore of the tribe—its religions, arts and sciences, and the statutes regulating conduct. In tribal life each member could endanger the entire group if he failed to abide by the laws of his people. In the process of voting, the ballot of the foolish man could cancel the ballot of the wise man, thus weakening the collective judgment. The citizen was not permitted to exercise influence in the government until he could prove conclusively the honesty and ability of his mind and motives.

In Egypt a child received two names. The first was called his *milk name*. It was given at birth and was used until he reached the age of discrimination. At adolescence the child-lock of hair was cut, and he was initiated into the social and political life of the empire. Then he received the *man name*. This was given to him in the temple when he took his oath before the gods and dedicated his life to the service of the state. No one could become a ruler over the people until he had been initiated into the Mysteries. The child was not baptized at birth because he lacked the powers of choice and decision. He must be old enough to understand and decide in all matters religious and political before he could be held accountable for action.

As the human family grew up natural divisions took place within the collective structure of the race. Specializations of interest and ability resulted in castes and classes. The members of each of these various groups came to be recognized as possessing certain knowledge in common. Originally this knowledge descended through families, but under certain conditions outsiders might be accepted, or adopted, if they displayed extraordinary aptitudes. Practical considerations influenced this policy. Originally, education was largely a matter of association. The son of a physician grew up in an atmosphere of healing and medicine, and might reasonably be expected to absorb a certain amount of the information so readily available. A carpenter's son would not be so likely to attain a medical perspective. Therefore it would require considerable additional time and effort to equip him for the profession of healing.

Secret societies of antiquity were usually closely identified with the tribal or national religion. The basic knowledge of arts, sciences, and crafts was believed to have been bestowed by the gods in a remote age, and patron divinities presided over the several branches of learning. The practice of a profession or trade implied the acceptance and worship of its presiding deity. Prayers for the success of various undertakings were addressed to the divinities and tutelaries associated with the respective enterprises.

Obviously, many of the motivations which inspired and perpetuated the esoteric fraternities of long ago are no longer valid. Modern man selects his vocation according to taste and ambition, and is trained as completely as possible regardless of innate disability. At the graduation exercises of a college which was bestowing one hundred medical diplomas a dean whispered to me: "Ninety of these young men and women have passed their grades successfully. They have studied medicine for only one purpose—to go out and make money. God help their patients. The other ten will be real doctors because they sincerely desire to serve the sick." This is the fundamental difference be-

tween the ancient and modern concepts of learning.

The world has lost interest in the divine origin of its cultural and economic institutions, and no longer pays homage to orders of guardian spirits. As the fashions in human thinking changed, secret societies altered their natures and appearances. Foundations were shifted from the solid rock of things spiritual to the shifting sand of things material.

Political fraternities are leagues dedicated to reformation with, or without, revolution. They come into existence whenever and wherever government degenerates into tyranny or fails in the central strength necessary to arbitrate the disputes of factions. Minorities driven underground by persecution are united inevitably by the mystic tie of oppression. As long as injustice rules civilization there will be a substratum of organized resistance.

Ancient China has had very little contact with the cultural systems of other nations, and it offers an excellent field of research for those interested in social motion. The earliest notice of a Chinese secret society is found in the records of the Later Han Dynasty. About 185 A. D. an organization called the Red Cap Rebels, composed entirely of intellectuals, attempted a secret rebellion against the throne. The Red Eyebrow Society, so named because the members painted their eyebrows with vermilion, began about the same time, with similar purposes. The Triad Society, or Heaven and Earth Association, which used many Buddhist and Taoist symbols, was formed much later in an effort to overthrow the Manchus and restore the Ming Dynasty. The Golden Orchid Society was an organization of young girls who had sworn never to marry. It was a secret revolt against the heartless Chinese marriage customs. More recently the Boxers, originally given to magical rites and the practice of hypnotism, developed into an antiforeign league.

Political secret societies arose in Europe during that part of the medieval period known as the Dark Ages. The almost complete absence of a public

program and the universal disregard for the life and rights of the private citizen led to the creation of several powerful fraternities, the members of which were brought together, like the beggars of Paris, for the purpose of mutual protection. Some of these groups have survived to the present time, but for the most part the reasons for which they were created have failed of significance.

All secret societies are not by nature benevolent. If liberal and generous attitudes prevail in a social order they become an affliction to those who desire to enslave their fellow men and profit at the expense of the public good. Unscrupulous factions organize their resources in private and attempt to overthrow the existing regime. Such groups are properly regarded as subversive, but they will exist as long as selfishness inspires activity. Secret orders to perpetuate racial and religious intolerance, rather prevalent in our times, can all be traced to economic motivations.

Secret groups naturally align themselves under two general headings. The first seeks to improve humanity by fostering a program of universal progress and improvement. The second group would limit opportunity to privileged political, economic, or religious classes in order that these classes might continue to dominate and exploit the collective interests. The struggle between these two groups is reflected in the conflict between progress and the *status in quo*.

The psychological power of secret orders originates in the aura of mystery which surrounds them. They assume vast proportions because their boundaries cannot easily be estimated. All men naturally fear the unknown, and when this fear is intensified by a bad conscience the effect of a small group upon a large delinquency can be devastating. There are several occasions recorded in history where a handful of secretly organized idealists operating quietly have succeeded in overthrowing a strongly entrenched but corrupt ruling class.

One of the first acts of the Axis dictators prior to the Second World War was to outlaw all secret societies, except

their own, in the areas which they dominated. The dictators were afraid of the power of secret assemblage, and even forbade more than three persons joining in conversation on the open street. This effort to break up groups and lodges resulted in the creation of an undercover movement which contributed a great deal to the ultimate discomfiture of the Nazi-Fascist league. Secret organizations remain to this day a powerful weapon against exploiting groups and classes, especially where the privilege of the ballot is absent or corrupted, and for this reason such fraternities are loudly condemned by all would-be dictators and their followers.

Governments are ever alert to the activities of secret orders functioning within their boundaries. Where these orders are naturally benevolent every effort is made to prevent them from being dominated by political groups within the countries themselves, or by foreign influence which might be intent upon undermining duly constituted authority. Many countries now require that the rituals of even fraternal organizations be available for inspection by authorized officials at all times. This requirement has brought curious and disquieting facts to light on a number of occasions.

European secret societies are much more involved in religious or political intrigues than are the corresponding groups in England and America. This is due primarily to the carefully nurtured feuds which obsess the composite mind of Europe. Most all English and American organizations are fraternal and benevolent. There is a utopian quality present, and a generous vision for human improvement. Reforms in education, the dissemination of useful knowledge, a general thoughtfulness about serious matters, and broad charities are the dominant issues.

The esoteric philosophies have always been taught by means of secret organizations to which candidates are admitted only after appropriate initiatory rites. These spiritual brotherhoods are called Mystery schools. Such schools exist in all parts of the world, and are the prop-

er custodians of the esoteric lore which descended from the distant past.

Here again the modern tendency is to resent the existence of secrets so important as to require almost complete concealment. Fortunately for the human race the initiates of the Mystery schools are fully aware of their responsibilities and cannot be induced to expose the arcana of their orders. But it would be entirely false to accuse these initiates of selfishness or any other ulterior motive. They have no desire to reserve their knowledge to themselves; they have assumed the obligation of administering wisdom for the greatest good of all the peoples of the world. In some instances this means that the information can be given freely, but in most cases the human being must be protected against the misuse of those spiritual forces which are beyond the understanding of the average person.

The program of the Mysteries is comparatively simple. Man must grow up to truth, for truth by its nature cannot be brought down to the level of a selfish and intolerant humankind. It is a mistake to assume that man would grow in virtue if he became more powerful; his education in motives must come first. The individual must accept knowledge as responsibility rather than as opportunity before he can be entrusted with the secrets of universal life.

It has happened in the past that secrets belonging to the Mystery schools have been revealed prematurely through the perfidy of some member who has assumed his own right to break the vows of his order. Perhaps his motives were well-intentioned, but the result has always been unfortunate. For example, the breaking down of certain classical institutions has resulted in the emergence into the light of modern misconception of what we call the materialistic sciences. We should remember that biology, physics, chemistry, anthropology, astronomy, and medicine originally formed part of the esoteric sciences of the temples. In order to forward the temporal state of man the Mysteries as institutions were profaned, and the sciences per se were separated from their spiritual and philo-

sophical foundations which by their very natures could not be profaned. The result has been an increase in temporal empire, an intensification of skill, and a tremendous increase of competitive and destructive tendencies. The human being came into the possession of skill without the wisdom to administer skill. He became strong without virtue, and has used his strength to become rich without principle. We can scarcely prove that this program has been entirely beneficial.

What might have happened had the sciences remained a part of the esoteric doctrine? Consider the modern university. It opens its doors magnanimously to all who have the necessary high school credits and the equally indispensable tuition fee. Through the broad portals of higher learning the youth of our world flows in and out. Why do the young men and women of today go to college? Some seek social connections; others desire to fit themselves for economic superiority; still others are athletically inclined, and only a small percentage sincerely desire learning for its own sake. There are no special standards either demanded or expected other than a fair scholastic standing. We graduate millions of young men and women somewhat skilled, but still deficient in those basic character requirements which alone can bring them security.

Suppose the modern universities were administered as were the Mystery schools of antiquity. The young man or woman who desired a higher education would be met at the door by a priest who would ask the simple but all-important question: "Why do you seek learning?" If the applicant replied that he wanted to become rich, or respectable, or superior to his neighbors, or wished to improve his social condition, or be made a gentleman by an act of the board of regents, or would like to show his diploma to his friends, the great door would close in his face. He would be advised to engage in some useful trade which would employ his hands, because it was evident that his mind was unemployable.

If, however, in reply to the question the applicant replied simply, honestly, and with all sincerity that he desired knowledge in order to become of service to his fellow men, the priest would open the door a little wider and permit him to enter the vestibule. Here his credentials would be examined. First a letter from his father or guardian would be carefully considered. The letter would read something like this: "I have brought up my son in the love of truth. I have taught him that there is but one just ambition, the desire to be of use to mankind. My son has always been honest, obedient, gentle, and kind. He has been taught the love of God and his fellow men, and he is resolved to devote his life to useful learning. It is my prayer that you receive him and educate him that he may give all of himself to the works of God, the service of the state, and the good of humanity."

A second letter would then be demanded, this from the magistrate of the town in which the young man lived. It would read thus: "This is to certify that Philo, the son of Glacos, is a freeman born, of respectable family, that he has committed no offence against his community but is recognized by all who know him as possessing upright character, high integrity, and good morals. From childhood he has been studious and suitable for learning. As magistrate, I testify that this young man is of sound mind, clean heart, and blameless character."

Having contemplated these letters the priest would ask for evidence of the applicant's scholastic attainments. This would be in the form of a certificate from the youth's previous teacher, and would read in substance: "I do swear upon the name of Zeus that my pupil, Philo, the son of Glacos, has received adequate foundation in the three indispensable sciences, mathematics, astronomy, and music. He has also been educated in the sublime theology which reveals the nature of God, the substance of the Beautiful, and the practice of the Good. Furthermore, he has been taught all physical arts for the perfection of his

body, and comes to you without serious defect, either mental or corporeal. I have examined and tested him in every way, and he has satisfied me that he will not abuse learning, nor permit the secrets of the Temple to pass into the keeping of the unworthy. He understands responsibility, possesses discrimination, and can be entrusted with the substance of wisdom. His word he will keep, and his honor is above reproach."

Thus recommended, the young man would be brought into the presence of a group of instructors for examination not only as to his abilities, but especially as to his motives. If these masters were satisfied, he would be accepted, and would remain a student in the temple over a period of from five to ten years.

At the end of his time of instruction the graduate would take his final oath, as follows: "I Philo, the son of Glacos, do swear by all the Gods, my witness, that I will live only so long as I can live honorably, and I will choose death above dishonor. Neither promise of reward nor fear of pain can induce me to reveal the secrets of my School. I will never employ learning to further despotism, nor enslave my fellow men. I will never use knowledge to accumulate wealth, but will live simply, dedicating all that I know to the glory of the Gods and the good of mankind."

We cannot but wonder what might have happened in this sad, tired world if the scientists who invented the atomic bomb had been bound by such an oath. This is the answer to those who insist that all knowledge belongs to all of the people. Knowledge belongs to those who use it wisely and well. If a man desires to gain more knowledge he must be able to prove that wisdom can be entrusted to him, that he will protect it with his life and sacred honor, and possess a strength of character above all personal concerns.

Suppose doctors, lawyers, and those of the teaching profession, ministers, politicians, and leaders in every bracket of our complicated social system, had such convictions in their hearts. Yet without such convictions, without such dedications, without such consecrations,

can any human being be entrusted with the skill and power by which he can change the course of empire?

#### MASONIC SOCIETIES IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

As the rise and fall of Bavarian Illuminism were closely associated with the condition existing within the larger pattern of Continental Freemasonry, it is necessary to examine in some detail the separate parts of this confused picture. During the 18th century a variety of private societies came into existence within the auras of Freemasonic bodies. Most of these irregular groups were invented for the purpose of expanding the study of ancient philosophies and religions. Only a few of the most important of these orders survived their inventors. In some cases these private fraternities created elaborate rituals and developed ambitions toward independent existence. The terms "clandestine" or "irregular" have been applied by Masonic historians to these unauthorized or spurious rites. In most cases these unorthodox groups were reabsorbed into the larger body of Masonic descent.

The clandestine rites arose principally at a time when the boundaries of craft Masonic speculation were ill-defined. In the presence of reasonable doubts concerning orthodoxy these irregular lodges were able to justify a number of pretensions, and held considerable fascination for those dedicated to recondite speculations. Lacking internal vitality, or dependent for their survival upon one or two dynamic intellectuals, these private societies lacked a general appeal and were limited in their sphere of influence to certain times and places. Freemasonry watched these irregular groups attentively, and as they faded out, their characters, certificates, diplomas, trestle boards, rituals, symbols, and related documents were withdrawn from public availability and stored in the archives of the European grand lodges. The principal motive for this procedure was to prevent further scisms from developing, based upon these high-sounding but mostly vacant documents.

In addition to the groups arising within Masonry there were a number of outside movements which attempted to attach themselves to the Masonic order for protection or for the advancement of their own purposes. In some cases these groups were drawn toward Freemasonry by overlapping memberships or parallel interests. In other instances efforts were made to exploit Masonic influence for religious or political ends.

Many of the clandestine rites were inspired by deficiencies within the body of the legitimate Masonic descent. Masonry made use of a variety of ancient religious and mystical symbols, and claimed, at least by implication, a participation in the esoteric traditions of antiquity, a subject of never-ending appeal. There were many high intimations, hints, and promises regarding the philosophical content and occult lore. After initiation the new member was usually disappointed. His questions were left unanswered, and the rituals served to further confuse the already obscure symbolism. The new brother was not always impressed by the scholarship of his fellow members or the intellectual acquirements of the officers of his lodge. Instead of finding himself in the company of an order of supermen he discovered that the Brothers of the Mystic Tie were much like himself, confused and uncertain, and given to aimless discussion of unattainable abstractions.

Eighteenth-century Europe was still dominated by the hermetic speculations which had intrigued the minds of the 17th-century intelligentsia. Rosicrucianism, alchemy, cabalism, astrology, and magic and pagan mysteries had lost little of their earlier charm. Freemasonry came to be regarded as the legitimate descendant of the gold makers, the sorcerers, and the mystics.

It was a day of dupes and disappointments, of large promises and small fulfillments. Pseudoesoteric societies abounded, and frenzied dilettanti, seeking desperately for the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, and the secrets of universal wisdom, were initiated by fantastic rites into societies that promised

everything, collected a high fee, and bestowed nothing.

One Rosicrucian order that flourished for a time in Italy presented a strangle-cord to each of its initiates with the injunction, solemnly intoned, that the brother was to use this cord upon himself rather than reveal the esoteric and priceless secrets of the lodge. It is unlikely that any member was driven to this extremity, as he could take all of the degrees without learning anything worth concealing or revealing. Needless to say, about all that he had to show for his original investment in time and money was an elaborate parchment covered with cabalistic designs and bearing the signatures, real or feigned, of The Right Worshipful Hierophants.

These bogus organizations followed a systematic program of competitive pretension. Each was more elegant and more esoteric than the other, until the whole pattern reached the outermost circumference of the conceivable. At last there was nothing further that could be presumed, pretended, or previewed, and the enthusiasm burned itself out.

In the last quarter of the century the public mind, more and more disillusioned in its quest for mystic lore, settled down to the pressing problems of social revolution and representative government. Esoteric orders continued to exist, but they were reserved for the edification of small groups of thoughtful scholars, and little effort was made to attract public attention. Freemasonry gathered up the remnants and records of the earlier exuberations, pronounced the clandestine rites to be extinct, and retired the magnificent vellum charges to the estate of literary curiosities.

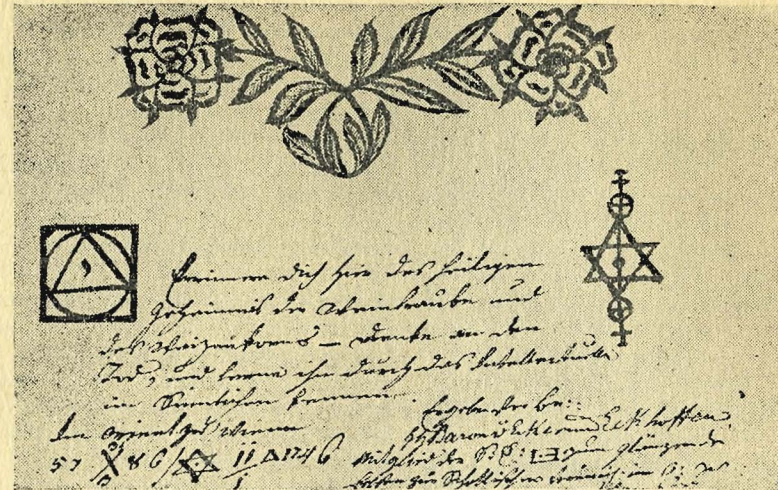
The condition in Germany was typical of that in the other countries. Secret societies of all kinds—religious, philosophical, political, and social—sprang up like mushrooms after a summer shower. Most of these organizations were short-lived and of limited membership, but the atmosphere of mystery which surrounded them was far-reaching in its consequences. Possibly the lack of political unity among the German states was responsible for the disorganization

present among these fraternities. Each group included a few distinguished patrons and a membership limited by the initiation fee to those in prosperous circumstances. Too many of these groups were catchpenny cults founded by itinerant impostors who fleeced one community after another. By insisting upon the utmost secrecy charlatans protected themselves from unfavorable publicity, thus insuring a ready reception in the next town.

Most of the victims were too chagrined to publicize their own stupidity by exposing the frauds of which they had been the dupes. And of course they could not reveal the true state of things without compromising other respectable or illustrious persons. So these disillusioned ex-members licked their wounds in private, or still hopeful of better fortune cast their lot with another group making attractive pretensions.

Take the case of the Baron Ecker und Eckhoffen. He seems to have gotten himself involved with pseudo-Rosicrucian orders which were doing a flourishing business in fees and special expenses. The baron, in search of the master secrets of cabalism and alchemy, was lured on from grade to grade by frequent promises that the next degree would reveal all. At last he ascended to the top of the ritualistic ladder only to find that this ladder ended in empty space. The supreme secret was that the simplest way to make gold was to filch it from the purses of the gullible.

The good baron took his disillusionment seriously, and under the name Magister Pianco, probably the one bestowed upon him by the societies, he wrote two scathing exposés of what he termed "The Rosicrucian in his Nakedness." He tells us that he himself and thousands like him, sincerely seeking wisdom, had been subjected to the vilest possible imposture. He could think of nothing lower than the exploitation of man's spiritual aspirations. Yet even the baron was a trifle dazed. There was so much of legendry and lore, so many beautiful symbols and solemn rituals, that it seemed impossible that all could be false. Somewhere the true wisdom



LEAF OF A MASONIC FRIENDSHIP BOOK WITH DRAWINGS AND WRITING IN THE AUTOGRAPH OF BARON VON ECKER UND ECKHOFFEN

The combination of Rosicrucian, Hermetic, and Cabalistic symbols is indicative of the Baron's broad philosophic interests. The abbreviations and ciphers accompanying the signature prove his Masonic affiliation. In the Rosicrucian society he wrote under the name Magister Pianco, and his book *Der Rosenkruutzer in seiner Blöße*, or *The Rosicrucian in this Nakedness*, is one of the first exposés of fraudulent secret societies. This rare and curious autograph occurs in the same album with that of Mozart, reproduced later in this article.

of the ancients must have been preserved. There was nothing to do but seek further, so the baron continued his search, the results of which, unhappily, have not been recorded.

Baron Ecker und Eckhoffen seems to have been a chronic joiner interested in Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, and Illuminism. Always he was disappointed. He sought substance and found only a shadow. Everywhere there were the deep and mysterious hints, and traveling rapidly under the surface of the intellectual class they gained new color and probability en route. Everyone knew of someone else who had attained the *magnum opus*, and these legends kept hope alive. Each new society that sprang up was created apparently to rescue frustrated metaphysicians from their deep-seated dilemmas. Central Europe was set already in that introversion which a hundred and fifty years later was to involve the world in two great wars. There was too much daydreaming and imagining, and too few opportunities for the

human mind to develop along normal and natural lines.

Regardless of the motives which brought them into being, the secret societies of that time nearly always broke up on political rocks. As soon as a group gained an influential membership it was invaded by fanatics determined to direct its resources to the fulfillment of their own particular program. These fanatics were either extreme liberals seeking to rescue Germany, Europe, and the whole world from the insidious machinery of the State and Church, or else extreme conservatives resolved to protect the State and Church from the rising tide of philosophical realism and political anarchy. In the resulting confusion the philosophical aims of the organizations, if any, were quickly submerged.

Among these secret groups there were some whose purposes were entirely sincere. Often they were forced to glamorize their objectives in order to compete successfully with the fraudulent lodges. Almost any subject, from chemistry to

botany, and from legal reforms to literary criticism, required a secret society for its very existence. It was impossible to sit down and discuss Boethius, Boehme, or Bacon without the paraphernalia of red plush curtains, high altars, mystic grips, and secret passwords. A humorous work was published ridiculing this fashion. It showed how the members of a certain circle had to pass through an elaborate series of contortions, including darkened chambers and fiery ordeals, in order to assemble for a quiet dinner of potted chicken.

In our files is the complete set of documentations relating to a pseudo-Masonic rite, elegant but of short duration, which flourished in France in the closing years of the 18th century under the intriguing title *The Rite of Zoroaster of the Aeons*. It is a good example of the general situation. This collection of curiosities includes two large vellums written in cipher and ornamented with curious designs. Needless to say, a secret society had no standing unless it had its own cipher. Most of the ciphers were ridiculously simple and therefore most appropriate for the quality of material they were intended to conceal. The burden of the secret papers of *The Rite of Zoroaster of the Aeons* is that the degrees are of extraordinary antiquity, incredible profundity, superlative excellence, and sublime import. With the mysterious parchments to back it up this rite could be revived today with considerable financial profit. Very few would have the presumption to ask embarrassing questions as to who was responsible for the vellums.

From the foregoing it is not difficult to understand why it came about that in 1782 a Masonic congress was convened at Wilhelmsbad, under the presidency of the Duke of Brunswick, to end the discord among the various groups of German Freemasons and related orders. This conference was concerned partly with the discovery of the secrets of the higher degrees of Freemasonry, which several grand lodges claimed to possess but were unable to produce. Although it settled the point as to whether Masonry was to be considered a con-

tinuation of the Order of the Templars, by a negative vote after thirty sittings, very little of actual value was accomplished. The secrets of the higher degrees were not discovered.

#### PROFESSOR ADAM WEISHAAPT AND THE BAVARIAN ILLUMINATI

Adam Weishaupt was one of the less known persons who received the impact of what may properly be defined as the Intellectual Revolution in Europe. It is important that we consider for a moment the tangle of circumstances which motivated his extraordinary career. This quiet little professor was destined to play a strange part in the political and social drama that eventually resulted in the overthrow of most of the monarchies of Europe, and broke the temporal power of the Church.

The intellectual revolution was like a stream raised to torrential proportions by innumerable rivulets, hidden springs, and tributaries, originating in distant mountains. The irresistible motion of art, literature, science, and philosophy, starting from Byzantium and flowing through Spain, Italy, and France, and finally reaching central Europe, was called the Renaissance. It was the revival of civilization in Europe after those long, dismal centuries known as the Dark Ages. A parallel motion, with a somewhat more complicated background, led to that great scism within the religious life of Christian nations generally termed the Protestant Reformation. It was inevitable that the Renaissance and the Reformation should bear fruit, each according to its kind. The first of this fruit was the impulse to liberty, the emancipation of the human mind from the limitations imposed by static institutions which contested the inalienable right of the human being to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

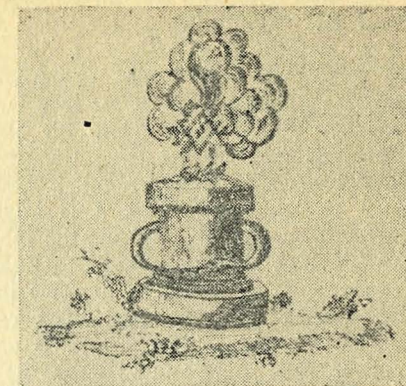
Natural sciences contested the solemn pronouncements of empiric scholasticism. Printing was invented; William Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood; Copernicus defined the proportions of the solar system; Galileo overthrew the fallacy that the sun moved about the

earth; Andreas Vesalius corrected the prevalent errors regarding the internal structure of the human body; Ambroise Pare elevated surgery to a science and rescued it from the barbers; Francis Bacon established the foundations of inductive reasoning; René Descartes turned men's minds to the analysis of themselves; and Sir Thomas More envisioned a utopian society for mankind. Each of these changes in attitude and viewpoint attacked long sequences of errors, and the total result was a loss of veneration for the sanctity of *status in quo*.

In the years when newspapers were a single sheet, sometimes written by hand and copied by professional scribes; when there was no telegraph, telephone, or radio, very little travel and no means of rapid transportation, it required centuries to circulate new ideas. The glad tidings of the rights of man were carried to distant places by dignified gentry riding on gayly caparisoned mules. A little later the stagecoach took over, but still the process of indoctrination was slow. There were not only natural difficulties to overcome, but also artificial barriers of human prejudice and intolerance. Even after the seeds of freedom were sown throughout Europe it required a long time for the harvest to be ready.

Not until the second half of the 18th century did the new conception of life gain a following sufficient to bring about a radical change. Then suddenly the slow-growing discontent burst forth in a thousand places at one time. This sudden manifestation of a conviction that had been gaining strength for ages brought about a violent revolt against authority.

Under the leadership of such men as Rousseau and Voltaire a school of thinking came into existence which questioned the infallibility of every man-made limitation imposed upon the universality of knowledge. The moving spirit of their philosophy was a sincere dedication to the basic premise that only education could release the human mind from bondage to ignorance, superstition, and fear. The whole school was dominated by an earnest humanism, an unshakable



conviction that man himself was important, and most of all, was important to himself.

Professor Adam Weishaupt responded to the challenge of this broad humanism, and he soon found that his students in canon law, fired with the natural ambition of youth, were also quick to respond to its stimulating cultural perspective. It was a day of new ideas, new courage, and new attitudes toward the known and the knowable. It became fashionable to think rather than merely to accept the thoughts of other men. The intellectual world suddenly discovered that it had a mind, and that the power of the mind could be used to advance the cause of civilization.

Adam Weishaupt was born at Ingolstadt on Feb. 6, 1748 and died at Gotha in 1830. Surprisingly little is known of his parentage and his early life. He received his education in Jesuit schools, but while still a young man he developed a sentiment of the utmost animosity against the order, a feeling which appears to have been mutual. In 1772 Weishaupt became a professor of law, and about the same time he was expelled from the Jesuit college. Three years later he was appointed professor of natural and canon law in the University of Ingolstadt. He was the first secular professor to occupy this chair, which tradition held belonged to an ecclesiastic. This circumstance in itself excited the anger of the clergy and widened the breach between Weishaupt and the social structure of his day.

The little professor was an outspoken liberal and progressive, and quickly involved himself in a variety of difficulties. Even in this more enlightened century a progressive professor in a large university might quickly lose his chair if he departed very far from the smug and conservative curriculum. Every school teacher knows that it is impossible to impart to his students the information which they most need to know, because to do so would be to come into open conflict with the formalized concepts of education. The teacher is paid to teach what he is told to teach; he is not paid to think.

Dr. Weishaupt was master over a classroom filled with the sons of well-to-do burghers and merchants, and the scions of wealthy aristocratic and noble families. These young men were keenly aware of the social motions of their time. Most young people are progressives until disillusioned. A revolution was pending in America where taxation without representation had turned an enraged group of Colonials against their motherland. There were rumblings of rebellion in France, whose citizens were organizing themselves for a struggle to the death against the tyranny and corruption of a decadent aristocracy.

The young men in Weishaupt's class asked questions for which no satisfactory answers could be found in the approved texts of the University. The little professor answered these questions according to his own convictions, which appear to have been somewhat to the left of the dead center, which to his mind was dead indeed. As might be expected, the professor of canon law was called to account by the faculty for his radical pronouncements, and it may be assumed without fear of exaggeration that his enemies, political and clerical, made sure that his radical opinions were well-publicized.

The faculty handed down a simple edict. The language was classical but the meaning was obvious—"Shut up, or get out." Weishaupt did the unexpected; he shut up. But his silence was more eloquent than his words. The members of his class fully realized that

his silence was imposed by the Board of Regents, and the faculty lost cast with the student body. According to one account the students demanded a continuance of the professor's liberal doctrines, but the discussions were moved from the classroom to apartments off the campus. The college itself was at a disadvantage. Many of Weishaupt's pupils came from influential families, and these pupils wanted Weishaupt and his message. The University could not afford to displease its noble and wealthy patrons, and was forced to overlook certain irregularities in the class on canon law. Backed, however, by a religious party, it set to work to destroy Weishaupt by organizing a secret machinery against him. It was this underhand method that brought matters finally to a head.

Weishaupt decided that one must fight fire with fire. The entrenched conservatives of Europe were organized secretly to maintain *status in quo*. Liberals must also organize, and if necessary, with the same secrecy and with equal intensity of devotion and purpose.

The little professor had undergone a long period of persecution. Naturally the University wished to be regarded as progressive, and was not of a mind to expose its hand or reveal its league with the body politic and the body cleric. It followed a well-recognized pattern. The Board of Regents had patted Weishaupt on the head with one hand and stabbed him in the back with the other. The Church, already shivering in its robes at the prospects of the intellectual emancipation of its followers, was willing to go to any length to prevent such a catastrophe. So Weishaupt was the victim of two groups of secret *saboteurs* dedicated not only to the elimination of Weishaupt himself, but to the destruction of the whole humanist program, of which he was a humble representative.

As there were secret forces at work in society to prevent the spread of intellectual liberty, why should the liberals remain unorganized? Why should they not band together as a group of intelligent and freedom-loving men, uniting in a fraternity which could work in

secret? It was a splendid notion considering the times and the circumstances. Unfortunately, Weishaupt, though apparently a well-informed man, had not the skill to work out all the details himself. Like most intellectuals he had no clearly-defined concept of practical ways and means, but he had infinite enthusiasm, and on May 1st, 1776, he founded the Order of the Illuminati.

At the very beginning of his enterprise Herr Professor was fortunate enough to gain the assistance of two important and influential gentlemen. The first was Baron Adolf von Knigge, a brilliant and amiable intellectual, a celebrated novelist, a lovable enthusiast radiating gentility, a born diplomat, and privy councilor of Saxe-Weimar. He had been initiated into the Masonic Order at Cassel in 1772, and received his Templars degree a few years later. He was introduced to Illuminism by the Marquis Costanzo von Costanzo and entered heart and soul into the project. Knigge's enthusiasm converted many outstanding Masons to the new order. He took Weishaupt's basic material and elaborated the degrees and rituals of the society.

It was the Baron von Knigge who converted Bode, the second of the two men intimately connected with the creation of the Illuminati ritualism. Johann Joachim Christoph Bode was a man of the most upright character, of good social position and a highly cultivated mind. He was an earnest seeker after spiritual truth, and an uncompromising enemy of superstition and priestcraft. It was only after Knigge had convinced him that Illuminism was free from all taint of the Church that he would connect himself with the society. Bode began life as a musician, and later became a bookdealer and translator. He translated the English writers Sterne, Burney, Montaigne, Fielding, Smollett, Goldsmith, etc. He was initiated into Masonry about 1753. He had an extensive knowledge of ancient religious and Masonic rituals, but his theories were regarded as vague by contemporary scholars.

These three men Weishaupt, von Knigge, and Bode fashioned a secret society patterned after a hundred already in existence, some of them dedicated to parallel purposes. The success of Freemasonry in surviving a variety of persecutions may have inspired the selection of a broad Masonic pattern, and the well-oiled Jesuit machinery offered advantages which also could be emulated. The primary purpose was simply to profit by experience, and to build a structure that could endure the constant and intense pressure of the Church and State.

Weishaupt was not a Freemason at the time he proclaimed the Illuminist Order, but a year later, in 1777, he was initiated into the Lodge Theodore of Good Counsel at Munich. After this new affiliation he made every possible effort to incorporate Illuminism into the structure of Freemasonry. In this work he was assisted by Baron von Knigge. The Freemasons, however, were having many troubles of their own, and feared to incorporate so controversial a society into their own organization. There was considerable unofficial fraternization, and in most cases where Illuminists and Freemasonic lodges flourished in the same community the memberships overlapped.

As early as 1782 Weishaupt and von Knigge developed a program for introducing Illuminism into France. Already several adepts of the cult existed in that country. The mayor of Strasbourg was one of them, and Mirabeau was another. He was initiated in Berlin when on a secret mission for Louis XVI. When he returned to France he initiated Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord. There is no doubt that Illuminism spread considerably throughout the petty principalities of the German and Italian states and found some footing in the larger countries.

The Illuminists originated in Bavaria, where the secret institutions set up by the clergy had been officially abolished. But the Church was still strong and was able to exercise a wide influence in the politics of the country. The pressure groups, as we would call them today, set

industriously to work to destroy Illuminism root and branch. First of all, the Illuminists were branded as anarchists. Their doctrines were distorted and documents were forged to create the impression that they were attacking all constituted authority. By this procedure the members were made to appear criminals and outcasts so that they could be imprisoned for years without trial.

The Church fell back upon its favorite theme—heresy, and improvised upon the theme with a number of ingenious variations. The Illuminists were obviously pagan because they opposed the clergy—a hideous crime which no good Christian would condone. The Order was therefore pronounced anathema. The Illuminists were evidently in league with the devil, another well-worn artifice. Investigation indicates that nearly all human progress can be traced directly to His Infernal Majesty. Any mind which dared to oppose prevailing prejudices, or had the courage to explore into the mysteries of nature, was obviously in league with the powers of evil. The Illuminists were accused, like the Templars before them, of indulging in Bacchanalian orgies, nocturnal sabbats, and a score of other obscene sorcery. It was therefore the solemn duty of a vigilant church, ever mindful of the need of her children and ever striving to preserve the human soul from contamination, to rise in all its venerable and virtuous might to eliminate these heretics from the face of the earth—or at least from Bavaria.

The touching solicitude of both the Church and State in this respect is typical of the loving care with which sacred and profane aristocracy sought to preserve the ignorance of the common man, but all their effort was in vain. Humanism was an irresistible force; persecution only strengthened its purpose and bound its leaders into a stronger fraternity of objectives. The doom of dogma had been sounded. Light was breaking through in so many places and in so many ways that even the strongest weapons of the incumbent power were useless to prevent the motions of destiny.

It has been said that the French Revolution was directly traceable to the rise of humanism in Europe. The revolutionists cast off Church and State and set up the Temple of Reason in the sanctified shrine of Notre Dame. The Revolution was not solutional, but it was inevitable. The government passed into the hands of the mob, and for a time the pressure of ages blazed forth in uncontrollable fury. Men who had never known liberty had no way of administering its power. The good was swept away with the bad. Culture and decadence perished together. The arts, the sciences, and the philosophies were leveled at the guillotine. The beggar was on horseback; it was his first ride, and he rode himself to death.

The method used for breaking up the Bavarian Illuminists was simple and traditional. Two or three members of the outraged clergy obtained membership in the society by misrepresentation. After perjuring themselves, and apparently subscribing wholeheartedly to the Illuminist program, they turned traitors, exposing as much of the work as they knew and misrepresenting the entire enterprise. Four professors of the Marianen Academy also joined them and withdrew, admitting that they had not advanced beyond the first grades. These malcontents issued statements to the effect that the Illuminists condemned all religion, country, and property, and that during the lodge session speeches were delivered advocating liberty and equality as the inalienable rights of mankind. The elector of Bavaria, unable to estimate the extent of the societies, decided to meet the situation by a general edict against all secret associations within his domain.

The elector was motivated by a variety of considerations. First and most important was the tide of revolutionary organization rising across the border in France. Then Strovel, a rejected candidate, printed a pamphlet in 1783 denouncing the Illuminist Order and accusing it of subversive activities. About the same time a Masonic Lodge, the Lodge of the Three Globes, issued a circular warning Masons against the Illuminists. This resulted in several influen-

tial members withdrawing from the Weishaupt group. The Freemasons realized that the Illuminists were receiving more publicity than was healthy at the moment.

On June 22, 1784, the blow fell in the form of an electoral edict suppressing both the Illuminati and Freemasonry throughout Bavaria. Both groups obeyed the law immediately and offered to produce all their papers as proof of their innocence of political intrigue. The courts, however, were in the hands of their enemies, and they were not permitted to clear themselves.

A second edict followed on March 2, 1785. The reason for this edict is not clear, as it is an historical fact that both societies had disbanded in obedience to the first proclamation.

The second edict was followed by an era of persecution. The accused were denied the privilege of trial, with the exception of a few of high birth or position. Many languished in prison for years. Among the punishments it was noted that the Marquis of Costanza and another Italian, Count Saviola, were banished with pensions of 800 florins. The Canon Hertel was deprived of his benefits; Baron Magenhoff suffered a month of imprisonment in a monastery, and Weishaupt was deprived of his professorship and banished from the country. He repaired to Gotha where he was kindly received by Duke Ernest, who made him a councilor and gave him a pension for life.

While at Gotha, Weishaupt wrote and published many books on philosophic subjects and in defense of Illuminism. Among these were:

- A picture of the Illuminati—1786
- A complete History of the Persecutions of the Illuminati in Bavaria—1786 (First half only was published)
- An Apology for the Illuminati—1786.
- An Improved System of the Illuminati—1787.

A typical example of the methods used in stamping out Illuminism in Bavaria can be gathered from the mis-

fortunes of the Bavarian advocate Franz Xavier von Zwackh. In 1786 the house of von Zwackh was broken into and searched without a warrant, and a number of original papers and correspondence confiscated.

The papers included such choice items as the following: a description of a strong box, which if forced open would blow up and destroy its contents; a recipe for invisible ink; a means for taking impressions from seals, and a collection of the same; a set of portraits of 85 distinguished ladies of Munich with recommendations of some of them as members of a Lodge of Sister Illuminati; a recommendation that all superiors learn to write with both hands, and some data about ciphers.

Von Zwackh, who was a judge, published a letter denying all charges, declaring that the documents were extracts from celebrated writings useful to him in the practice of law. The portraits of the 85 ladies were stolen by the police from the private wardrobe of Frau von Zwackh. Under the conditions, however, it seemed advisable to leave the country, and the von Zwackhs went into the service of the Prince of Salms, who shortly afterwards was a ring-leader in political disturbances in Holland.

The physical history of the Bavarian Illuminati extended, in all, over a period of twelve years. It is difficult to understand, therefore, the profound stir which this movement caused in the political life of Europe. We are forced to the realization that this Bavarian group was only one fragment of a large and composite design. Each of its members became a champion of human rights, and although its memberships were scattered about Europe, the spirit of the organization exercised an influence far greater than its numerical strength would seem to justify.

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF ILLUMINISM

The name "Illuminati" has been assumed by or bestowed upon various groups of mystics and metaphysical intellectualists claiming to possess an in-



ternal enlightenment about God or divine matters. A number of sects may be included under this general title, as the *Alumbrados* of Spain and the *Guerinets* of France. In present usage, however, the term Illuminati is applied especially to the order founded in Bavaria in 1776 by Adam Weishaupt. This movement was regarded with favor by a number of brilliant and outstanding men, including Goethe, Herder, Nicolai, Ernest II of Gotha, and Karl August of Weimar.

According to Kenneth Mackenzie, the Masonic author, the object of Illuminism was the advancement of morality, education, and virtue, by the mutual assistance of good men. The society was advanced as a means of organizing the idealism of the race to combat the corruption and materialism resulting from the ignorance and selfishness of society.

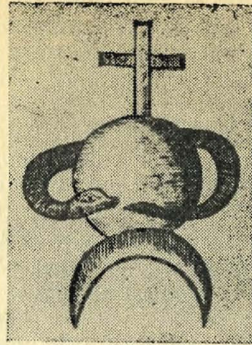
In presenting the work of Adam Weishaupt to the modern reader, the fair and proper course is to let the little professor of Ingolstadt explain his purposes in his own words. "I have contrived a system," he writes, "which possesses every advantage. It attracts Christians of every communion, gradually frees them from all religious prejudices, cultivates the social virtues, and animates them by a great, feasible, and speedy prospect of universal happiness in a state of liberty and moral equality, freed from the obstacles which subordination, and the inequalities of rank and wealth, continually throw in our way."

Weishaupt's definition of Illuminism proves conclusively that he was neither a materialist nor a political nihilist as has been charged. "This is the great object held out by this association [the right of the common man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness] and the means of obtaining it is Illumination—enlightening the understanding by the sun of reason, which will dispel the clouds of superstition and prejudice. The proficients in this Order are therefore justly called the Illuminated. And of all illumination which human reason can give none is comparable to the discovery of what we are, our nature, our obligations, what degree of happiness we

are capable of enjoying, and what are the means of attaining it. In comparison with this, the most brilliant sciences are but amusements for the idle and luxurious."

A little later the professor discusses the means by which the society itself is to be accomplished. "The association must be gradual. Its first task must be to form the young members. As these multiply and advance, they become the apostles of benevolence, and the work is now on foot and advances with a speed increasing every day. The slightest observation shows that nothing will so much contribute to increase the zeal of the members as secret union.... It is needless to inquire into the causes of the zeal which secrecy produces. It is an universal fact, confirmed by the history of every age. Let this circumstance of our Constitution, therefore, be directed to this noble purpose, and all the objections urged against it by jealous tyranny and affrighted superstition will vanish. The Order will work silently and securely; and though the generous benefactors of the human race are thus deprived of the applause of the world, they have the noble pleasure of seeing the work prosper in their hands."

The structure of the Illuminist order as it was perfected by Weishaupt, von Knigge, and Bode, consisted of twelve degrees advancing sequentially from a simple statement of aims and purposes to an elaborate ritualism based upon the Mystery schools of ancient Egypt. The Illuminists presented some of their ritualistic work at the Masonic congress at



Wilhelmsbad. So magnificent was the pageantry that the Masonic brethren were profoundly impressed.

#### Degrees of the Illuminist Order:

##### NURSERY:

Preparation  
Novice  
Minerval  
Illuminatus minor.

##### MASONRY:

Symbolic  
Apprentice  
Fellow-craft  
Master mason

##### SCOTTISH:

Illuminatus major, or Scottish  
novice  
Illuminatus dirigens, or Scottish  
knight

##### MYSTERIES:

Lesser  
Epopt, or priest  
Prince, or regent  
Greater  
Magus, or philosopher  
Rex, king, homme roi, or  
areopagite.

There is some uncertainty as to the working form of the higher degrees, as those attempting to expose the order never progressed into the section called the Mysteries. Also it appears that certain lodges introduced symbolical elements not included in the general pattern.

Candidates for initiation were selected from those possessing such qualities and temperaments as Weishaupt regarded indispensable. He thus defines those worthy of admission: "Whoever does not close his ears to the lamentations of the miserable, nor his heart of gentle pity; whoever is the friend and brother of the unfortunate; whoever has a heart capable of love and friendship; whoever is steadfast in adversity, unwearied in the carrying out of whatever has been

once engaged in, undaunted in the overcoming of difficulties; whoever does not mock and despise the weak; whoever has a soul susceptible of conceiving great design, desirous of rising superior to all base motives, and of distinguishing itself by deeds of benevolence; whoever shuns idleness; whoever considers no knowledge as unessential which he may have the opportunity of acquiring, regarding the knowledge of mankind as his chief study; whoever, when truth and virtue are in question, is sufficiently courageous to follow the dictates of his own heart, despising the approbation of the multitude—such a one is a proper candidate."

After a candidate had been accepted and was informed of the full designs of the order he signed the obligation of admission which read as follows:

"I, . . . . ., hereby bind myself, by my honor and good name, forswearing all mental reservations, never to reveal by hint, word, writing, or in any manner whatever, even to my most trusted friend, anything that shall be said or done to me respecting my wished-for reception, and this whether my reception shall follow or not, I being previously assured that it shall contain nothing injurious to religion, the State, or good manners. I promise that I will make no intelligible extract from any papers which shall be shown to me, now or during my novitiate. All this I swear, as I am, and as I hope to continue, a man of honour."

Each of the grades had its own aims and obligations. The highest grade of the first division was that of Illuminatus minor. The philosophical instructions of this grade aimed "to make of the human race, without distinction of nation, condition or profession, one good and happy family."

Those taking the grade of Illuminatus minor signed the following obligation: "I, . . . . ., protest before you, the worthy Plenipotentiary of the venerable Order into which I desire to be admitted, that I acknowledge my natural weakness and inability, and that I, with all my possessions, rank, honours, and titles which I hold in political society, am

only a man; I can enjoy these things only through my fellow-men, and through them also I may lose them. The approbation and consideration of my fellow-men are indispensable, and I must try to preserve them by all my talents. These I will never use to the prejudice of the universal good, but will oppose with all my might the enemies of the human race and of political society. I will embrace every opportunity of saving mankind, by cultivating my understanding and my affections, and by imparting all important knowledge, as the statutes of this Order require of me. I bind myself to perpetual silence and unshaken loyalty and submission to the Order, in the persons of my superiors; here making a faithful and complete surrender of my private judgment, my own will, and every narrow-minded employment of my power and influence. I pledge myself to account the good of the Order as my own, and am ready to serve it with my fortune, my honor, and my blood. Should I, through omission, neglect, passion, or wickedness, behave contrary to the good of the Order, I subject myself to whatever reproof or punishment my superiors shall enjoin. The friends and enemies of the Order shall be my friends and enemies, and with respect to both I will conduct myself as directed by the Order, and am ready in every lawful way to devote myself to its increase and promotion, and therein to employ all my ability. All this I promise and protest, without secret reservation, according to the intention of the Society which requires from me this engagement. This I do as I am, and as I hope to continue, a man of honour."

The lectures read to the initiates of the society probably were prepared by Weishaupt himself. An extract from a discourse delivered to those receiving the Masonic degree of Illuminatus dirigens, or Scottish knight, is indicative of the social program advocated by the society. "Men originally led a patriarchal life, in which every father of the family was the sole lord of his house and his property, while he himself possessed general freedom and equality. But they

suffered themselves to be oppressed—gave themselves up to civil societies, and formed States. By this they fell; and this is the fall of man, by which they were thrust into unspeakable misery. To get out of this state, to be freed and born again, there is no other means than the use of pure Reason, by which a general morality may be established which will put man into a condition to govern himself, regain his original worth, and dispense with all political supports, and particularly with rulers. This can be done by no other way but by secret associations, which will by degrees, and in silence, possess themselves of the government of the States and make use of those means for this purpose which the wicked use for attaining their base ends."

Here is a fragment, supposedly from the degree of rex, the highest in the order written by Weishaupt, but distinctly reminiscent of the conviction of Thomas Paine: "Every peasant, citizen, and householder is a sovereign, as in the patriarchal state, and nations must be brought back to the state by whatever means are conducive; peaceably, if it can be done so; but, if not, then by force—for all subordination must vanish from the face of the earth." These were strong words in 18th-century Bavaria. But in our more generous time the rights of man are taken for granted, and groups of all kinds are laboring industriously to overcome the false barriers of pride and prejudice.

In order to conceal their purposes and protect their members if records and correspondence fell into the hands of the uninitiated, the Illuminati created a system of feigned names for persons and places. In the archives of the order Weishaupt was referred to as Spartus; Baron Knigge was Philo; Bode was Amelius; Prince of Brunswick was Aaron, and Count Saviola was Brutus; and so for all the members. Cities and countries were carefully confused geographically to make identification difficult. Munich became Athens; Ingolstadt was Eleusis; Austria was Egypt; Wurzburg was Carthage, and Vienna was Rome.

The Illuminists also had a special calendar which they called hegira, from the Islamic, but they calculated their dates according to a Persian era which began in 630 A. D. Their year began with the vernal equinox, and they had little respect for the orthodox calendar. The order also adapted, or invented, a number of cipher writings which could serve their purposes. The esoteric activities of the society have never been revealed, but their import can be gathered from their association with the work of Count St. Germain.

The reference (in a geographical symbolism) to Austria as Egypt opens an interesting field of speculation which is worth further notice. Freemasonry in general had a difficult time in Austria. It was introduced in 1742 in the Lodge of the Three Cannons, but was immediately suppressed. The Empress Maria Theresa was devoutly religious in theory, if not in practice, and further prohibited Freemasonry in 1764. In 1780 when Joseph II acceded to the throne the fraternity was tolerated, and so continued with certain restrictions throughout his reign. Francis II, his successor, was a religious reactionary, and his hostility ended the brief period of Masonic toleration. As late as the opening years of the 20th century Masonry was carried on only in a quasi-secret manner among the Austrians.

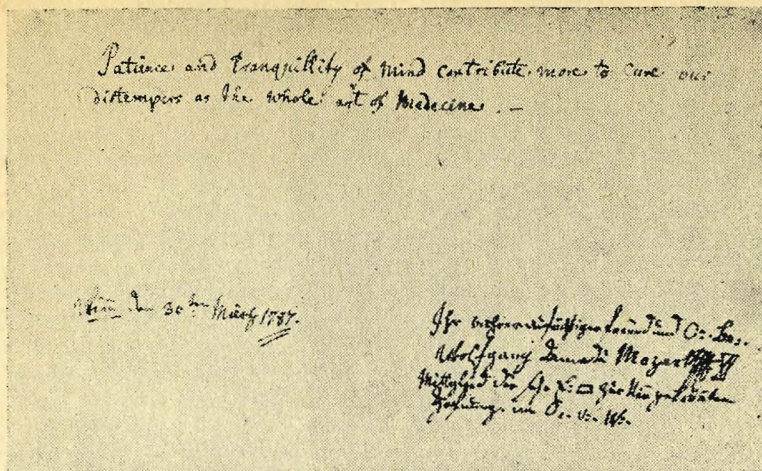
By these interesting facts it is evident that the only period in which Masonry in Austria received any official sanction coincided with the rise of Illuminism in Bavaria. Religious feeling in Austria ran high, and may be summarized in the conflict between the Catholic empress and her husband, who was himself a Freemason and inclined to view the rite with enthusiasm. On one occasion the empress sent a hundred dragoons to break up a Masonic Lodge. The emperor was present at the time and was forced to make an undignified exit through an open window in a back staircase.

At this point we must introduce a talented gentleman and Freemasonic brother who succeeded in surviving the tantrums of Maria Theresa, Ignaz Edler

von Born (1742-1791). Von Born was a mineralogist and metallurgist, educated in a Jesuit college, and a member of the society for sixteen months. He gave up a religious career and studied law at Prague. In the significant year 1776 von Born was appointed by Maria Theresa to arrange the Imperial Museum at Vienna. He wrote several scientific books, museum catalogues, and even attempted satire. Some of his works were published anonymously. He was learned in languages and took an active part in political changes, especially in Hungary. At the time of his death he was at work on a political book. There is every indication that von Born was a member of the Illuminist order, although his position in Viennese society was such that he dared not reveal his affiliations. He was the moving spirit behind a group of liberals furthering the cause of intellectual revolution.

Through von Born we are introduced to three interesting characters, Carl Ludwig Giesecke, Emanuel Schikaneder, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. These three Masonic brothers contributed in various ways and degrees to the production of a Masonic opera, *The Magic Flute*. This opera has been the subject of considerable speculation and controversy among music lovers. Presumably, it is based upon a curious pseudo-Egyptian novel entitled *The Life of Sethos, taken from the Private Memoirs of the Ancient Egyptians*. The first English edition of this work was published in London in 1732, translated from the French original of the previous year.

The libretto of *The Magic Flute* is attributed to Schikaneder. There can be no doubt that he made liberal use of *The Life of Sethos* in both ritualistic and romantic elements of the story. As there is nothing to indicate that Schikaneder was deeply versed in ancient lore or legendry, it is quite possible that he merely acted as an intermediary between a political secret society and the Austrian public. When modern critics refer to *The Magic Flute* as a comic opera they reveal a complete ignorance of the times and circumstances during which the musical drama was composed



THE SIGNATURE OF WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART  
FROM A MASONIC FRIENDSHIP BOOK

The autograph of Mozart, which appears on the lower half of the sheet, was written in 1787 in Vienna and is accompanied by Masonic symbols and ciphers in the hand of the great composer. The friendship book, in which this signature appears, contains many distinguished names associated with Freemasonry and Illuminism. The small symbolic designs, which illustrate the present article are from this same book.

and produced. There was little humor in the struggle of Austrian Freemasonry for survival. Nor was it with light mind that the intellectuals of that day sought devious means to reach the public with their ministry of mental emancipation.

*The Magic Flute* belongs to a cycle of neo-Egyptian metaphysical speculation which occupied a prominent place in the Masonic thinking at that time. Cagliostro's *Egyptian Rites of Freemasonry* had produced a profound stir a few years earlier. St.-Germain, past master of esoteric ritualism, had focused attention upon the magic and mystery inherent in the initiatory dramas of ancient Greece and Egypt. He was in Vienna at the time *The Magic Flute* was being written. Weishaupt had sounded the clarion call of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which had already overthrown the French monarchy. The characters of Mozart's opera tell a story not to be explained convincingly without recourse to the undercurrent agitating public opinion. As Weishaupt had

introduced the name Egypt to represent Austria, we realize that the story of *The Magic Flute*, supposedly laid in Egypt, is really the unveiling of the political corruption of Austria and the exposé of the elements dominating Austrian politics.

The principal characters of the opera are: Queen of the Night, superficially Isis, factually Maria Theresa; Sarastro, High Priest of the Mysteries, actually Ignaz Edler von Born, previously mentioned; Tamino, the hero supposedly an Egyptian Prince, represents the Austrian people, the composite hero of a vast political drama; Pamina, the heroine, represents the principles of liberty and equality which Tamino is attempting to obtain for himself; Monostatos, the black man, the villain of the drama, signifies the religious orders which are attempting to catch the soul of the Austrian people; Papageno, the bird catcher, a curious sprite, is the lower octave of Tamino, and signifies the unintelligent masses whose fickle devotion is inclined to favor the simple pleasures of life.

Although the opera is obviously Masonic it is far more flamboyant and symbolical than the sober society with which it has been associated. There is only one explanation which fits all the requirements of the facts, and that is that *The Magic Flute* is substantially the rituals of the high degrees of the Illuminati. Of course certain esoteric materials were deleted from the public spectacle, but the substance is there, challenging the imagination. Tamino, the hero, was the personification of Weishaupt's scheme to unite the young intellectuals of Europe and form them into a body of progressive and courageous youths fired with the resolution to overcome the tyranny of the Church and State.

Sarastro, the hierophant, represents the governing body of the Illuminists in the person of von Born, who was the moving spirit in Austria. Von Born died the year the opera was produced. He was the high priest of civil liberty, the agent of the industrious little Bavarian professor of canon law.

If we accept the rather obvious fact that *The Magic Flute* was an Illuminist production, we will understand why the opera departed from orthodox Masonry but retained many of its symbols and terms. Weishaupt had already used Masonry as a principal vehicle for the dissemination of his own ideas. There is much more to the matter than shows on the surface, and we are forced to suspect that the entire program of Illuminism had many implications other than those regarded as reasonable by unimaginative historians.

The skeptical reader may ask for proof that *The Magic Flute* is actually the work of the Illuminati. Naturally an organization moving secretly is not going to label such a work. The proof is in the actual text itself, the libretto as it was originally written. To those who understand the symbolical language of the Illuminati the opera is marked beyond any doubt. We can recommend it heartily to those who wish to improve their knowledge of the Illuminist rituals.

#### CERTAIN MEDITATIONS CONCERNING ILLUMINISM

Are we correct in assuming that Adam Weishaupt, a young and sincere college professor smarting under the injustices and discriminations heaped upon him by the faculty and the clergy, concocted with his own ingenuity alone the framework of a secret society which caused a brief but profound stir among European intellectuals? Certainly the ideals which Weishaupt promulgated had already received wide, if cautious, dissemination. He inherited his toga from the tattered mantle of the Templars, and crystallized into an organization the scattered but far-reaching discontent against prevailing tyranny and intolerance.

It should also be pointed out that all efforts to discover the members of the higher grades of the Illuminist Order have been unsuccessful. It has been customary, therefore, to assume that these higher grades did not exist except in the minds of Weishaupt and Knigge. Is this assumption necessarily true? Is it possible that a powerful group of men that resolved to remain entirely unknown moved behind Weishaupt and pushed him forward as a screen for its own activities?

When the Bavarian Illuminati was scattered to the four winds Weishaupt took refuge with the Prince of Saxe-Gotha, where he found haven, protection, position, and sufficient means. What did he do then? We hear little more, except that he wrote books explaining his society. Safe under the pinion of one of the German eagles, he apparently settled down to a comfortable and uneventful existence. We are assured that his organization disbanded and the various brothers who escaped persecution turned their attention to other noncontroversial labors. Everything is very nice and smug and obvious, but entirely out of character with the dispositions of such of these men as are known.

The Illuminist Order never attracted a large membership. Historians hazard the guess that its strength did not exceed two thousand heads at any time.



But they were distinguished heads. The role of membership is reminiscent of the *Almanac de Gotha*. A considerable percentage of the brothers were men of consequence, including reigning princes, noblemen, prominent educators, scholars, scientists, and men of letters. Most of these intellectuals were addicted, at least in private, to the opinions expressed so eloquently by Rousseau and Voltaire. It is not easy to picture such a group as quietly recanting their most cherished beliefs and renouncing forever their deep-seated tendencies toward benevolent conspiracy.

Some writers have nursed the happy conviction that the French Revolution with its Illuminist motto "Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite" ended forever the need for political secret societies in Europe. A world outwardly convinced of the need for social change no longer required esoteric motivations in that direction. Here again it seems that the conclusions are not consistent with the facts. France, after a brief interlude of disorganized independence, fell victim to the imperialistic opportunism of Napoleon I. From the collapse of the Second Empire to the present day the political life of France has tended to prove that strong, just leadership remains a necessity unfulfilled.

Nor were conditions in post-Weishaupt Germany much better. It can scarcely be said that the German States entered the 19th century solidly established in unified democratic purposes. The small principalities and free cities were focal

points for countless petty intrigues until Bismarck perceived the advantage of welding them into a military and political unity under the policies of Prussia. It may be worth noting that Bavaria was one of the last of the free German States to be absorbed into the *Deutsches Reich*. This final absorption did not take place until after the First World War.

Other European countries were no exceptions to the prevailing difficulties, unless we wish to exclude Switzerland and the Scandinavian group. For the rest, the problem of attaining honest, representative government remained comparatively unsolved on the Continent.

Why then did this secret order of intellectual Illuminists, who must have possessed the vision necessary to take cognizance of the obvious dilemma, discontinue their well-organized activities and leave mankind to the mercy of the politically corrupt? Shall we say that self-preservation dictated their course? Against this explanation is the well-established fact that persecution binds men together in the most abiding kind of fraternity, and intensifies resolutions to accomplish the ultimate overthrow of tyranny.

The ideals of Illuminism were old when Weishaupt was born, and it seems an exaggeration to assume that these long-cherished convictions perished with his Bavarian experiment. The work that was unfinished in 1785 remains unfinished in 1947. As long as the cause remains groups of human beings will unite secretly or otherwise for the preservation of themselves and of their kind, and for the improvement of posterity.

Illuminism illustrated another important factor connected with social motions. Reforms come not from the masses, but through the masses. Progress originates among idealistic members of the privileged and autocratic classes. These men have the perspective necessary to realize the injustice caused by their own class; they also have the training and skill required for successful organization and planning. It would be important that these leaders escape the net cast by their enemies so that there could be an un-

broken line of secret motivation behind the outward program of social change.

Like the Knights Templars before them, the Illuminists were accused of practicing diabolic rites, but in those days what could be more diabolic than to suggest that the common man had a right to respect and consideration? It is true, however, that an aura of esotericism emanated from the society, but it is difficult to find the source from which these magical overtones radiated. Presumably, the Illuminati was composed of intellectual agnostics—if not atheists—imbued with the principles familiar to us in Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*. An agnostic transcendentalist presents a curious conflict of ideas. These sober Bavarian followers of Spinoza seemed to have little in common with the disciples of Faustian demonism and the worshippers of the Goat of Mendes.

Rationalists have suggested that the cry of sorcery was a familiar ecclesiastical contrivance to justify the proceedings of the Inquisitional Court. Cagliostro had a taste of the temper of this august body when he was arraigned in Rome for the heresy of attempting to found a Masonic Lodge in the Eternal City. The prosaic-minded easily can persuade themselves that with the Illuminati the term "occult" implied only the secret nature of their activities, and had nothing to do with the hateful religious implications associated with the word.

The Illuminists are in this way pointed out as sober scholars, adventuring in the ever dangerous and thankless pursuit of attempting to apply the principles of the brotherhood of man. Reformers have never been especially popular even when their reforms were good. If experience is of any value it would appear that only a supreme knowledge of magical arts, including sorcery, demonism, and animal magnetism will prove sufficient to weave the spell that can convert the world to the doctrine that honesty is the best policy.

We might concur in the belief that the Illuminists were merely political idealists were it not for a weight of evidence to the contrary. A good ex-

ample of this weight presents itself for our consideration in the person of a man intimately associated with Illuminism by his contemporaries—the elusive Comte de Saint-Germain.

The political activities of Saint-Germain would fill several closely printed volumes, and all these activities were dedicated to the improvement of the human state. He was both admired and feared for his skill in managing difficult situations. He was the confidant of kings, and displayed a delicacy of technique that filled the statemen of his day with envy. Rich, powerful, and untouchable, Saint-Germain never was discredited, exposed, or successfully calumniated. When the French Court started to gossip about the amiable Comte the king wagged his finger disapprovingly, and threatened to withdraw his favor from anyone caught repeating the stories.

Saint-Germain's intimate friends included two kings of France, the king of Prussia, the Czar of Russia, the Shah of Persia, and such English notables as Horace Walpole and Lord Clive. It hardly can be supposed that such persons would have succumbed for any great length of time to the wiles of an impostor. European courts were well-supplied with secret agents to solve mysteries and weed out deceivers, and they loved their work. While we have no record that the notables with whom Saint-Germain mingled were given to an unusual degree of superstition about magic, alchemy, or astrology, it is certain that Saint-Germain did claim to possess supernatural powers, and proved these claims on numerous occasions. He practiced yoga meditations in caves along the Rhine River, passed through doors without the formality of opening them, manufactured artificial gems that could not be detected by experts, and transmuted metals. He dabbled so successfully with the elixir of life that one modern authority has suspected that he was acquainted with the Steinach operation.

Seated upon a throne in the Chateau of Ermenonville, a diamond-studded peccoral hanging on his breast, and sur-

rounded by a thousand candles, Saint-Germain received the adoration of the faithful in mystical rituals so spectacular that they appear incredible. If he were one of the heads of the Illuminati, and the historian de Luchet seems to think that he was, it bespeaks much more than can be gathered from the impetuous enthusiasm of Professor Weishaupt.

It was at Ermenonville, which incidentally was the shrine of Rousseau, that Saint-Germain initiated Cagliostro, a strange character who also combined political activity and mystical practices. He lacked, however, the supreme genius of his master, and fell victim to his own imprudence. Cagliostro was widely accepted as being a member of the Illuminati.

Certainly there was an undercurrent of things esoteric, in the most mystical sense of that word, beneath the surface of Illuminism. In this respect it followed exactly in the footsteps of the Knights Templars. The Templars returned to Europe after the Crusades, bringing with them a number of fragments of oriental occult lore, some of which they had gathered from the disciples of Hassan Sabbah, the old wizard of Mt. Alamut.

The Rosicrucian societies that sprang up during the 18th century were of doubtful origin, but there is little doubt about their purposes. They were activated by powerful political convictions, and it is impossible to divide their love of liberty from their addiction to the occult arts. We are compelled to assume that in at least some instances the two apparently diverse ends were aspects of a single purpose.

The pagan initiatory rites not only

introduced candidates to the secrets of God and nature, but they taught that the real work of the initiates was to apply the mystical philosophy which they had learned in the temples to the temporal improvements of the human race. Nearly all great religious leaders have also concerned themselves with the misfortunes of the socially underprivileged.

Throughout the long span of history materialists have not been especially distinguished for the pure quality of their idealism. Nor have materialists, for the most part, exhibited a sufficient strength of internal resolution to bind them to the unselfish service of the human need regardless of personal consequences. It would be a crushing blow to the physical-minded if one of these days it should be generally admitted that the progress of the race is due largely to those mystics and metaphysicians who are not permitted even respectable representation in our institutions of policy and learning.

If there were a deep mystical current flowing beneath the surface of Illuminism, it is certain that Weishaupt was not the Castalian spring. Perhaps the lilies of the Illuminati and the roses of the Rosicrucians were, by a miracle of nature, flowering upon the same stem. The old symbolism would suggest this, and it is not always wise to ignore ancient symbols. There is only one explanation that meets the obvious and natural requirements of the known facts. The Illuminati was part of an esoteric tradition which had descended from remote antiquity, and had appeared for a short time among the humanists of Ingolstadt. One of the blossoms was there, but the root was afar in better ground.

#### THE MUSIC MASTER

Nero, who practiced singing diligently, wore a plate of lead on his breast to develop his breathing. The results were loud, lusty, and off key.

## The Book of Abraham the Jew

AND SOME NOTES ON  
BIBLIOMANIA IN GENERAL.



IT IS customary to refer to those intensely addicted to the collecting of books, manuscripts, autographs, and literary remains in general, as bibliophiles, and if the ailment develops to the state of an obsession it is distinguished by the term bibliomania. We usually think of book collecting as a process of selecting substantial, well-bound volumes, and arranging them in neat rows on shelves provided by the architect who designed the living room. The books may or may not be read by their proud possessor, but a few choice tomes scattered about the house lend an appropriate atmosphere of culture.

One of our local citizens favored volumes the bindings of which matched his wallpaper. Another distinguished patron of the literary arts, purchasing several expensive sets in fine morocco bindings, discovered to his mortification that the books were too tall to fit the shelves, so he cut an inch off the bottom of each volume. Long-suffering book dealers who pay with mental anguish for the profits of their business have classified the various motivations which dominate their customers. And it is the experience of these dealers that only a small percentage of book buyers purchase expensive volumes primarily for their contents.

It is only the real bibliophile verging toward bibliomania, the collector with romance in his soul and adventure in his mind, who has discovered the deeper and more satisfying thrills that books can provide for those who explore the world of literature. To pursue a desired volume through a dozen families, several dealers, and two or three important auctions, and finally to acquire the precious tome at a fraction more than three times its value, is a thrill beyond the appreciation of those functional-minded folk who are completely satisfied with a forty-nine cent reprint.

Books are the peculiar tools of the scholar's craft, and each art and science has its literary landmarks and monuments. There are many editions of William Harvey's *Circulation of the Blood* and these vary in price according to the format and binding. But to the student of early medicine the first edition of this little volume is much more than a luxury. In some way one feels much closer to the old scientist and physician when in the presence of the original book with its discolored, cracked vellum binding and its dog-eared, browned pages. The scholar is inspired to greater effort and is rededicated to the service of learning by this holy relic of human effort.

There are several gloriously elusive volumes which I have been pursuing for a quarter of a century. There is little chance of my ever owing them, but it would be comforting at least to discover their present whereabouts, and if the gracious fates permit, to glance through their pages. Even the more reasonable probability of a photostatic facsimile would bring a measure of solace.

Consider for example a certain early gnostic manuscript in Greek which is called *Anthropos*. This priceless record of the Alexandrian gnosis is said to be lurking somewhere in the Vatican. It is mentioned almost casually by an occasional author long gathered to his fathers, but even the most careful search is of no avail; the book cannot be found. There is a rumor that it is sealed up in a secret room, and even the present librarians do not know the location of the vault. The result is a fascinating but frustrating state of affairs.

The lost libraries of Alexandria torment the bibliophile almost beyond endurance. The libraries were burned as a result of a naval battle in the harbor of Alexandria. The ship caught fire and a high wind carried the sparks and flames to the docks. There was no way of controlling the fire and a considerable part of the city, including the great literary collections, was destroyed. It is recorded, however, that prior to the destruction of the Bruchcum and Serapeum, the priestly librarians removed many of the more valuable records. Several hours elapsed after the docks caught fire before the flames reached the library buildings. During this interval a number of slaves attached to the library carried thousands of precious rolls and scrolls out of the city and buried them in the desert. The books have never been recovered, although extensive effort has been made to trace their whereabouts.

In the field of esoteric literature there is a famous manuscript which would rejoice the hearts of many advanced scholars. It is called *The Book of Abraham the Jew*, and a rather adequate description survives to torment the imagination. The description was written

in the year 1399 by "Nicholas Flamel, a notary abiding in Paris in the Street of the Notaries near unto the Chapel of St. James of the Bouchery." Flamel, born of poor but honest parents, was privileged to examine and record *The Book of Abraham the Jew* "by the grace of God, and the intercession of the Blessed Saints in Paradise of both sexes, and principally of St. James of Gallicia." It is probable that further intercession of the members of the Church Triumphant will be necessary to the rediscovery of this elusive volume.

Nicholas, the notary, says that in 1357, for the modest sum of two florins, a gilded book very old and large fell into his hands. "It was not a paper nor a parchment as other books be, but was made only of delicate rinds (as it seemed to me) of tender young trees. The cover of it was of brass, well bound, all engraven with letters or strange figures; and for my part I think they might well be Greek characters or some such like ancient language... As for that which was within it, the leaves of bark or rind were engraven, and with admirable diligence written with a point of iron, in fair and neat Latin letters colored. It contained thrice seven leaves, for so they counted in the tops of the leaves, and always every seventh leaf was without any writing, but instead thereof, upon the first seventh leaf there was painted a Virgin, and Serpents swallowing her up. In the second seventh, a cross where a Serpent was crucified; and in the last seventh there were painted Deserts, or Wildernesses, in the midst whereof ran many fair fountains, from whence there issued out a number of Serpents, which ran up and down, here and there. Upon the first of the leaves was written in great capital letters of gold, *Abraham the Jew, Prince, Priest, Levite, Astrologer, and Philosopher, to the Nation of the Jew, by the Wrath of God dispersed among the Gauls, sendeth Health.*"

According to Flamel the opening pages of the book were filled with great exhortations and curses with the word *Maranatha* frequently repeated. These curses were directed against any person



TITLE PAGE OF FIGURES D'ABRAHAM JUIF, FROM  
BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE, MS. FONDS FRANCAIS 14765

This title page is handwritten within an engraved border. Blank engravings to be used as title pages for manuscripts were much in vogue during the 17th century. The three large initials D. C. J. stand for the words Lord Jesus Christ. As can be seen from the title page, the manuscript covers a variety of alchemical, hermetic, medical, and numerical speculations. Unfortunately there is no indication as to the identity of the compiler or the place of writing.



PORTRAITS OF FLAMEL AND HIS WIFE AND  
HIEROGLYPHICAL FIGURE

From *Medicina Practica* compiled by William Salmon, London, 1692

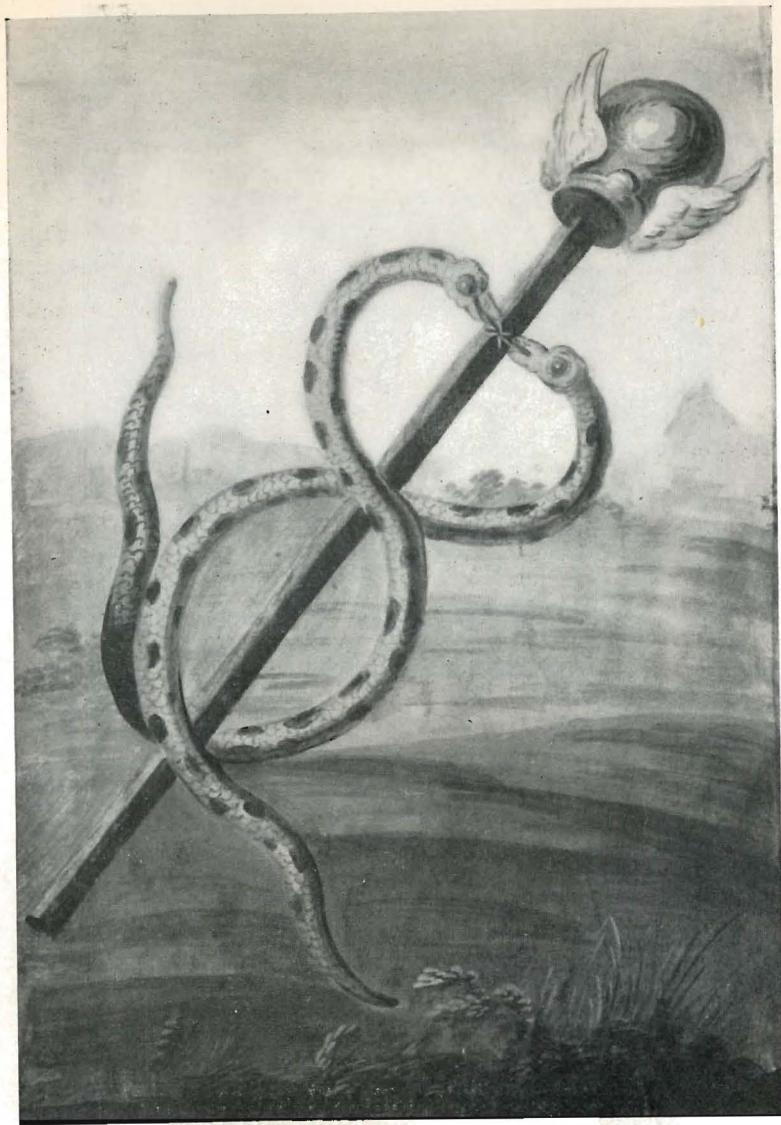
This engraving and the one on the following page are based upon the designs placed by Flammel in the arch of the Church of the Innocents. The quotations and chapter numbers refer to the sections of Flammel's book. The engravings have been colored by a contemporary hand. The Latin quotation attached to Flammel reads, "Man must come to the judgment of God," and Perrenelle adds, "That day will be terrible indeed." The lower figure represents the apostle Paul before whom kneels a man in clerical raiment, who says, "Blot out the evils which I have done." From the mouth of the angel emerges the words, "O. Eternal King."



HIEROGLYPHICAL FIGURES REPRESENTING THE  
OPERATIONS OF SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY

From *Medicina Practica* compiled by William Salmon, London, 1692.

The upper hieroglyph represents Christ bearing the orb, symbol of rulership over the world. Above, there are three angels and the words, "O Omnipotent Father" and, "O Good Jesus." In Flammel's writing the resurrection of Christ is used to represent the regeneration of man through the mysteries of alchemical art. The lower hieroglyph depicts the last judgment and the resurrection of the dead. Out of the earth rise three figures signifying the regeneration and resurrection of the body, the soul, and the spirit. Here the hermetic art is revealed in its aspect of wisdom. The inner light of truth transmutes the base life of man into a divine existence, thus accomplishing the philosophical resurrection.



ILLUMINATION APPEARING ON THE REVERSE OF LEAF 7 OF THE MANUSCRIPT, FIGURES D'ABRAHAM JUIF, FROM BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE, MS. FONDS FRANCAIS 14765

Flamel describes this figure as a caduceus—two serpents entwined around a golden rod. The complete symbol represents a combat between the fixed and volatile elements representing metals. According to a marginal note in the manuscript the knob of the caduceus is of iron and the wings of antimony. The astrological sign of Libra representing equilibrium appears at the junction of the knob and the shaft of the wand. This reproduction will give a fair idea of the artistry and style of this rare and curious document.

who should attempt to use the book unless he be learned and sanctified.

From manuscript versions we can gather a somewhat adequate summary of the terrible maledictions which Abraham loosed against the profane. Each curse was preceded by the word *Mayanatha*. The substance of the anathemas is as follow:

Maledictions upon those who do not keep the secret with reverence and piety, upon their cities and their countries, upon their children, their cattle, their herds, and their barns and houses. Maledictions upon those who do not preserve the secrets with the silence of Pythagoras and Harpocrates. Let them be ravished with pest and fever, heat and cold; let the seasons be infested with insects and all that can cause ravage and desolation to the world unto infinity. Maledictions against those who ridicule the spiritual sciences or treat the secret formulas lightly. Let the heavens be of bronze and the earth of iron, and let the Lord send dust instead of rain to any who do not approach this book with the wisdom of Moses. Let the profane be pestered with all the plagues of Egypt, and let his body become the food of the beasts and birds of the earth if he reveals to the heathens, their children, or their successors that which God in his mercy has intended only for sages and priests. Maledictions upon the curious; let them be struck with blindness and insanity. Let their children and their cattle be delivered to their enemies, and a strange people eat their food and profit by the labors of their hands. Maledictions upon those who ridicule or reject the writings of this book; let them be rejected and pursued wherever they go. Let their names be erased from the earth, and let them walk unceasingly without rest for their bodies or consolation for their hearts. Let them be seized with fear, and their souls be full of sorrow, and their eyes be full of death.

The secrets of Abraham the Jew are for those who meditate, who devote their lives to wisdom, and who approach the mystery with respect and fear. Maledictions upon all others. Let them

be crushed by a yoke of iron; let them become slaves of their enemies; let them suffer from hunger and thirst; let their bodies be unclothed, and let them be in need of all things which bring peace and happiness. Let people from far countries descend upon them like an eagle that in its flight leaves neither wheat, nor horses, nor wine, nor oil.

Then Abraham the Jew speaks of the benedictions and consolations which come to those who love God and dedicate themselves to the workings of the spirit. Let these righteous ones avoid all vice and idolatry, and let them pay exactly the tribute which is demanded by the Roman Emperors, and let them wait in patience and hope for the coming of the Messiah. For the secrets of *The Book of Abraham the Jew* will reveal to them the mysteries of the transmutation of the metals, and how they shall gain the means to pay the tribute demanded by the princes over the nations. In this book are instructions concerning the chemical vessels, the different degrees of heat, and how the substances in the vessels change their colors in the fire. Having learned the secret art and having taken the oaths of silence, the virtuous and the God-loving shall be filled with benediction and good things, and their paths shall be made easy, especially if they be priests or scholars.

After these opening remarks there were pages filled with formulas and a number of small symbols and devices, some of which Flamel describes with exasperating indefiniteness. Just when it seems possible that the good but aggravating notary is about to explain all the secrets of the fantastic book, he rounds off his account as follows: "I will not represent unto you that which was written in good and intelligible Latin on all the other leaves, for God would punish me, because I should commit a greater wickedness..."

Flamel's unfortunate mood of reticence leaves us upon the horns of a dilemma. Who was Abraham the Jew? When did he live? Why did he prepare this *Faire Book*? Only for the last of these questions is there any hint of an answer. It seems that after the



Diaspora (the scattering of Israel) the Jewish people became wanderers and took up their dwellings in unfriendly Gentile nations. Here they were subjected to heavy taxation and bought temporary security by contributing generously, if reluctantly, to the treasuries of avaricious princes. So heavy became their burden that one of their learned men, Abraham the Jew, an alchemist and a cabalist, perfected the means for the transmutation of base metals into gold. He gave the secret to his people in order that they might create vast stores of wealth with which to meet their taxes.

On the slender evidence derived from Flamel's account several efforts have been made to estimate the age of the original book. It must have been an extraordinary volume, for the materials used in its production were entirely inconsistent with European fashions. No conclusive evidence being available, it has been suggested by the conservative that the manuscript must have been at least one hundred and fifty years old at the time it fell into the keeping of Flamel. Probably it was even more ancient, and the romantically inclined like to think that it originated during the period of the pagan Roman Empire. This is doubtful, however, because of the reference to the dispersal of the Jews among the Gauls.

Some bibliophiles gain a modicum of consolation from the fact that Flamel himself suffered considerable torment in his efforts to understand the contents of the book. He did nothing day and night but ponder its symbols and experiment with its formulas. He had recently taken a wife by name Perrenelle, whom he loved as himself. Mistress Flamel, perceiving that her newly acquired husband seemed to be suffering from some secret sorrow, earnestly demanded the cause. Nicholas could keep the secret no longer, and showed her the book. She did not understand the meanings but was entranced with the cover, the illustrations, and the portraits. By a strange coincidence, word of the existence of the volume got about shortly after Perrenelle saw it, and a number

of intellectuals requested to see the manuscript. Flamel was afraid of losing his treasure, so he copied some pages which he showed to the curious, but would never let them have a sight of the original.

With the permission of Perrenelle, Flamel took a pilgrim's staff and habit and set out on a journey with the blessings of St. James of Galicia. He was resolved to discover someone who could interpret the formula for the transmutation of metals.

After many adventures Flamel discovered at Leon a physician, Jewish by birth but of the Christian faith, who was most skillful in the divine sciences. He called this hermetic adept the Master Canches. The moment the adept saw the copy that Flamel had made of the mysterious book he was "ravished with great astonishment and joy." Evidently he knew of the existence of the book, and was most desirous of learning of its whereabouts. The adept also condescended to interpret the meanings of the enigma, and it was from him that Flamel learned the process (except for one ingredient) of the great work. It was only after three years of prayer and meditation that the missing element was revealed. On Monday, the 17th of January, 1382, at high noon and in the presence of his wife, Flamel transmuted a half pound of mercury into an equal amount of silver, and on the 25th day of the following April, at five o'clock in the evening, with the assistance of Perrenelle he performed a second transmutation, achieving on this occasion pure gold.

Late in the year 1413, after the death of his wife, Flamel gives an account of the uses to which he put the large amounts of gold that he created by alchemy. He used none of the money for himself, but dedicated it to the service of widows and orphans. He created fourteen hospitals in the city of Paris, built three chapels, enlarged or restored seven churches, and repaired their yards. He also carried on extensive charities in Boulogne, which modesty prevented him from disclosing.

Then, that his formulas might not be entirely lost, but appropriately concealed from the profane, he caused the symbolic figures to be painted and modeled in relief in the fourth arch of the churchyard of the Innocents on the side which opened into St. Dennis Street. From these figures the pious might learn not only the mystery of the purification of the metals, but the spiritual mystery of the regeneration of the human soul. Unfortunately, Flamel failed to leave any hint behind him as to the final disposition which he made of the mysterious *Book of Abraham the Jew*.

In 1937 I visited the square of the Innocents in Paris. The church is gone and the open space is now a little park. The keeper told me that when planting flower beds he occasionally found bones from the old graveyard. Some stones from the original church are preserved, among them a part of the epitaph of Flamel, but nothing resembling the alchemical symbols has been recovered. This is not unusual, as the medium was fragile, and the figures probably were obliterated by the ravages of time even before the church was demolished. Early editions of Flamel's writings include engravings supposedly based upon figures in the arches of the old church.

If this were the only record that we have of *The Book of Abraham the Jew* we might be inclined to regard the whole account as a fable or invention, but the elusive volume made at least one other public appearance. Robert H. Fryar, writing in 1865, notes: "One thing which seems to prove the reality of this story beyond dispute is that this very *Book of Abraham the Jew*, with the annotations of 'Flamel', who wrote from the instructions which he had received from this physician, was actually in the hands of Cardinal Richelieu, as Borel was told by the Count de Cabrines who saw and examined it."

Robert Fryar was himself an experienced bibliophile who had carried on extensive research in the literature of the hermetic arts. His work *Alchemy and the Alchemists* published in New York in 1865, contains many valuable hints

about the books and authors in this fascinating field.

Intrigued by Fryar's references I made an effort to locate the Richelieu library. There is no record that the collection was ever broken up or sold. Discreet questioning brought some interesting facts to light. It appears that the entire library is now stored in the basement of the Arsenale, a famous old building in Paris. Here it has remained uncatalogued (most of the great wooden cases have never been opened) since the departure from this world of His Eminence the Duke. It is possible that the *Faire Booke* rests far from the light of day, awaiting those better times when the French nation will turn its attention from politics long enough to catalogue one of its great national collections.

It is not unreasonable to assume that at a time prior to the boxing of the Richelieu collection *The Book of Abraham the Jew* passed through several hands. There is a persistent rumor that exact copies of the work do exist—but where? Two world wars have so unsettled the life of European nations that research in this direction is virtually impossible. A gentleman in Marseilles, who prefers that his identity remain unknown, has a large collection of esoteric manuscripts, the location of which he courteously declines to disclose. It is reported that he has a transcript of the elusive manuscript, but he is not interested in permitting his treasure to be viewed. There is a rumor that the French transcendentalist Eliphas Levi took the time to reproduce the work of Abraham in full color and excellent artistry. We cannot learn, however, where the good abbe secured his information or what happened to his precious facsimile. Prior to the revolution in Russia a copy of the manuscript was reported in St. Petersburg, and one of the German princes, deceased some fifty years, is believed to have possessed a version of the text. So the stories go. Facts and fancies mingle in hopeless confusion. When the hints are traced to their sources the sought for document cannot be produced.

While in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris it occurred to me that this huge

collection might contain some version of *The Book of Abraham the Jew*. Unfortunately, the manuscript collection of this great library is not adequately catalogued. Such indexing as does exist dwindles to nothing about a third of the way through the alphabet, so it was fortunate that our author's name was Abraham.

There is also a dismal difficulty in the circumstance that there is no lighting system in the huge rooms containing the library stacks. To find anything the attendants must search for the desired items with pocket flashlights. The thrifty librarians are not anxious to waste their precious batteries hunting obscure and seldom required tomes. But by the judicious use of the national currency it was possible to stimulate one of the custodians into an exploring frame of mind. This gentleman succeeded in locating two manuscripts with the desired title. He brought these forth triumphantly, blowing the dust of ages from their tops. One was a large and handsome work of the middle 17th century. It was magnificently illustrated with miniature paintings and symbols, and extended to several hundred pages in large quarto.

It seemed desirable to have the entire manuscript photostated. This presented innumerable and almost insurmountable difficulties. When the apologies, regrets, and negative advice subsided a little it was discovered that a small portable photostat machine was available, operated as a private industry by a charming lady. It appears that she was seldom called upon for more than one or two prints at a time, but the vast undertaking we proposed was a challenge to the honor of the French nation.

As there were no artificial lights available in the library the machine had to be operated in front of a window. The weather was not propitious, and the work required several weeks. The results were legible, but rather amateurish. The record is valuable, however, and our copy is the only one ever made of the great manuscript.

The smaller work which the librarian produced proved to be comparatively un-

important. It was merely extracts from books already in print, with some curious numerological designs by its 18th century compiler.

A sale at Sotheby's, London's great auction gallery of books and art, offered a manuscript copy of *The Book of Abraham the Jew*, late 16th or early 17th century bound in vellum with clasps. This we also acquired, but not with a great deal of optimism. It was a neat little pocket-size volume written in a fine old French scholarly hand.

Later, at a Paris book dealer's, a modern transcript in longhand bearing the much desired title put in an appearance, and it is now in our library. This transcript was made by one of the followers of Eliphaz Levi, the 19th century transcendentalist previously mentioned. It includes a number of true pen and inks reproductions of the ancient figures, but is a distinct failure from an artistic standpoint.

Having gathered these sundry fragments it was necessary next to make a critical analysis of their contents. At the end of the investigation certain facts were apparent. The manuscript in the Bibliotheque Nationale, though of real importance to the student, does not contain the text of *The Book of Abraham the Jew*. It is built around Flamel's descriptions, and contains little more than an effort to restore such parts of the original as are sufficiently described by Flamel. With this text and the drawings as a springboard, the unnamed scribe launches into an elaborate discussion of chemical formulas, cabala, and numerology. In the course of this writing he includes many other early alchemical texts and their illustrations.

The small vellum-bound book from Sotheby's follows the same pattern, but is not illustrated. It is an effort to explain Flamel's description, but the author, also unnamed, had never seen the elusive original.

The 19th-century French transcript by Levi's student is nothing more than an almost verbatim copy of the opening section of the large manuscript in the Bibliotheque Nationale. The sum result of this considerable effort was precisely

nothing. The research netted a number of important by-products, but the principal end was not attained.

In view of the difficulties, and in the presence of elaborate literature covering the same field, why is *The Book of Abraham the Jew* sufficiently important in modern times to justify the energy expended in so complicated a quest? In the first place, it would appear that this manuscript actually contained a working formula for the transmutation of metals. Although hundreds of books have been written on the subject, nearly all of them were prepared by those seeking the esoteric secrets rather than by those who had actually attained the art. While there is much legendry about the hermetic adepts, few of them are known to have accomplished the great work. There can be little doubt that Flamel did transmute mercury into pure gold without the aid of the elaborate scientific equipment by which the experiment could be duplicated today. The text that he used to accomplish this feat would be an invaluable record in the history of the natural sciences.

Second, Flamel distinctly tells us that contained within the same formula is the secret of human regeneration through art, and the method of the perfection of the universal medicine. Evidently, then, we are concerned with a work of the highest significance.

Third, from the account given the symbolism in which the formulas were concealed must have been far less complex than is usual with writings of this kind. Nicholas Flamel admitted that he had comparatively little knowledge of esoteric arts, yet with the aid of the Master Canches he was able to discover the working key to the symbolism. Here is proof of the existence of a formula of demonstrated worth. Such circumstances cannot be passed over lightly, and *The Book of Abraham the Jew* is probably one of the most valuable manuscripts in the world.

Then, last but not least is the adventure of seeking that which appears hopelessly lost. Such problems as this cause the bibliophile to develop an acute case of bibliomania. The quest becomes

an obsession. Life will never be a satisfactory state of existence until the lost is found.

How many citizens of the world realize the profound effect that a practical and inexpensive guide to gold making would produce in the economic system of our time. There are still statutes in the legal code of a number of countries pronouncing the making of artificial gold illegal. Those convicted of transmuting metals are subject to heavy fine and imprisonment. The wealth of the world is still calculated largely on the basis of the gold reserve. If gold lost value, or could be produced economically in large quantities, it would destroy our entire monetary system. Furthermore, these formulas would prevent any other metal or gem from being substituted, for all precious substances in nature can be created artificially if we are to believe the doctrine of alchemy. Perhaps this consideration has influenced the fate of our mysterious book.

Modern historians, however, are inclined to be skeptical about Flamel's alchemical accomplishments. Their skepticism is not based upon any intense research, but upon the assumption that the transmutation of metals on a profitable basis is not possible. As it is evident that Nicholas, the notary, became a man of means, various explanations are advanced to account for his excessive fortune. It has been suggested that his wealth was derived from his profession. He was a scrivener, a trade which included writing letters for the illiterate nobility, engrossing inventories, accounting, and bookkeeping. Unless he possessed the modern ingenuity to falsify his ledgers there is nothing to indicate that his means of livelihood was lucrative. The ability to read and write enjoyed but slight esteem in 14th-century France. His status was on the level of a cobbler or any other artisan.

It has also been advanced that Flamel could have increased his purse by money-lending or shrewd investments, or that he had some profitable business on the side. All this, however, is pure conjecture. There is no hint anywhere among

the records of his life to account for his wealth by business acumen.

Although some of the books contributed to Flamel are undoubtedly spurious, fragments in the actual autograph of this alchemist are available. Some of these autographs are chemical formulas, and seem to sustain his skill in the alchemical sciences.

Arthur Edward Waite in his *Lives of Alchemical Philosophers* further complicates the story of Flamel with a curious account. He tells that prior to securing *The Book of Abraham the Jew*, Flamel was privileged to enjoy a strange vision. A being of the spirit world, by name Bath-Kol, appeared to him in the guise of an angel, bearing in his hand a strange book bound in brass, written upon bark, and graven with an iron pen. "Flamel!" cried the radiant apparition. "Behold this book of which thou understandest nothing; to many others but thyself it would remain forever unintelligible, but one day thou shalt discern in its pages what none but thyself will see." In his vision

Flamel eagerly stretched out his hand to take the precious gift, but the angel and the book disappeared in a tide of light. We can well imagine the joy of the scrivener when years later the book he had seen in his vision came into his possession.

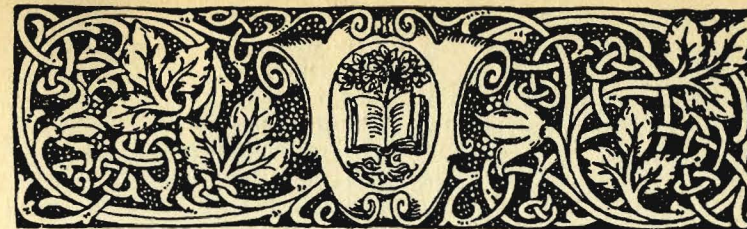
The story of this strange book may serve to introduce to the popular mind the drama of book collecting. There is far more to the assembling of a great library or the accumulation of basic reference collections than a subscription to the Book-of-the-Month Club. The true bibliophile passes many happy years gathering his treasures and attempting to complete the material relating to some specific field in which he has decided to specialize. Somewhere along the line it is almost inevitable that he will become interested in some elusive item which will require much industry to attain. The spirit of the collector grows strong within him and he must find this book or all his labors will have been in vain. He has developed bibliomania, that strange and incurable malady peculiar to scholars.

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A Chinese editor enclosed a rejection slip when returning contributions, which read as follows:

"We have read your manuscript with infinite delight. Never before have we reveled in such a masterpiece. If we printed it, the authorities would take it for a model and henceforth would never permit anything inferior to it. As it would be impossible to find its equal within 10,000 years, we are compelled, though shaken with sorrow, to return your divine manuscript, and for so doing we beg 10,000 pardons."

From *Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph* some 15 years ago.



## In Reply

### A Department of Questions and Answers

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM: *I should like to believe in reincarnation but I cannot understand it. There are so many questions which remain unanswered, and with all my studying I find that I know absolutely nothing. The arguments in favor of reincarnation seem sound, but....*

It must be understood that all abstract problems relating to the eternal and invisible life of man belong to the spheres of religion and philosophy. This means that the answer must satisfy the reasoning powers of the human mind and the capacity of the human heart for belief or faith. That which is beyond the physical experience cannot be demonstrated in the terms of physical sciences. It is possible, however, to arrive at satisfactory conclusions about things not materially provable. We all hold such conclusions on one subject or another. With this brief preamble we shall attempt to answer your specific inquiries. The answers are not our own, nor are they invented merely to satisfy your doubts. They have arisen from the common uncertainties of men at various times and in different places. These solutions have finally been incorporated into the body of the doctrine of rebirth

as it has been taught in those religious and philosophical systems which have embraced the concept.

QUESTION: *We are told that the soul occupies a body for a period of time in order to gain a particular experience. If the soul knows enough to select that body and that environment in anticipation of a particular experience, does it not seem that it is already in possession of the essence of that experience, and that it should not have to await the time to be embodied for such learning?*

ANSWER: The solution to this uncertainty can be found by the use of a simple analogy drawn from our daily ways of living. A man desirous of studying art makes a long and difficult journey to Paris to become a student in a famous school of painting or sculpture. The mere fact that he has the taste and discrimina-

tion to select a school suitable to his requirements does not make it unnecessary for him to attend the school. He is seeking a particular experience, and this experience is to be gained only by the actual performance of the action required to perfect that experience. The ego seeking incarnation may select the environment suitable to the lesson which it desires to learn, but this in no way infers that the power of selection is equivalent to the performance of the action selected. Theory is transformed into practice by subjecting oneself to the rules governing the sphere of practice. A boy of twenty has considerable *theoretical knowledge* of living but little *actual knowledge*. Only life itself can perfect his knowledge of life. A young bride knows the theory of marriage but is entirely unskilled in practice; only experience itself can reveal the potentials of the situation and transform them into potencies. A musical theorist may have an advanced conception of music, and even the critical power to recognize superior or inferior artistry in others, and still be without the ability to perform. Nature is never satisfied with theoretical knowledge, and it is the natural instinct of the soul to move from theory to practice in order to gain wisdom.

*QUESTION: Madame Blavatsky tells us that the soul has no interest in most of the foolishness of the personality, and simply looks in the opposite direction until we "wake up" to our follies. Why does not the soul take a definite responsibility for the acts of the personality and set it aright before it gets into trouble through ignorance? I am a parent, and if my child runs into the street and is killed by traffic it is not he who is responsible for the tragedy, for he knows no better. I, the personality, must suffer and sacrifice, and the soul, which will go off with the gain, has had no interest and less sympathy in the interim which provided that gain. In other words, I do not understand how the soul can just sit in the "crow's nest of the ship of life" without caring where or how the ship is going.*

*ANSWER:* These doubts would be valid if it were true that the soul and the personality were two separate and distinct creatures, but no system teaching rebirth implies that such is the case. The personality is the extension of the soul downward into the sphere of experience, but obviously all the powers of the soul are not used in any single experience or even in one incarnation.

A man sitting at his desk is confronted by an important business decision. He makes use of the faculties which relate to that decision. These faculties are not all of the man, but rather a specialization within the collective consciousness of that man. When he goes home he brings into play an entirely different group of faculties concerned with family, culture, and recreation. The same is true in the problem of incarnation. The soul is the collective containing within itself the sum and substance of many incarnations. When it projects a personality it does so in order to perfect a factual experience in some particular pattern of living. If the soul were already perfect in that pattern it would not project such a personality. Each personality is born of the soul necessity. Therefore the reasonable conclusion is that the soul cannot protect the personality, for its own knowledge in this particular is deficient.

Let us imagine that the soul, though perfected in the knowledge of medicine, recognizes its deficiency in the mathematical sciences. Desiring this knowledge, it chooses to be born under circumstances likely to lead to a mathematical career. It focuses into the new personality all that it knows about the desired science, but this is not sufficient; therefore the personality must acquire mathematical certainties by experience.

The analogy of the parent and the child is not pertinent, because in this case the parent (the spirit), and the child (the personality) are one; any disaster that comes to the child (the personality) interferes with the program of the soul to acquire knowledge. Such disasters are karmic, that is, they refer

to an extradimensional part of experience dealing with moral action. To learn mathematics is one experience of the personality to be solved by study. To learn right and wrong is a large experience of the soul, extending over the entire cycle of lives and administered by karma. It is also a mistake to assume that the personality suffers apart from the soul, for all experiences of the personality are registered by the soul itself. It is the soul that suffers remorse and sorrow, pleasure and pain. The body is a chemical structure subject only to the laws governing integration, function, and disintegration.

Try to see this in another way. Let us use again the example of the business man. While he is sitting in his office a considerable part of his personality is latent. The latent parts include his knowledge of golf, his interest in politics, his regard for his children, the model airplane he is building, his proficiency in trout fishing, and his participation in the affairs of his club, his lodge, and his church. For eight hours a day he sells wattle bark and copra which he imports from Australia and the Dutch East Indies, but it would be quite false to estimate him merely on his skill in trade and marketing. The collective man with wide interests may be compared with the soul. The business man, indivisible from the rest except theoretically, is the personality. Yet this personality must stand or fall upon its particular knowledge of particular things in so far as business is concerned. If he buys or sells unwisely his larger personality can offer little help. His interest in art, or music, or his love of trout fishing, cannot rush to his assistance if his business is unsound. He actually knows much more than he can use in trading, but this wider knowledge may not help him in barter and exchange.

It is true that the success or failure of the personality is of secondary importance to the soul, which learns and grows in either case. Also the soul has a larger perspective on life, and in an emergency it does attempt to exercise its spiritual conviction. Thus it often

happens that failure in business promotes spiritual growth, and the individual finally realizes that his misfortune was indeed a blessing in disguise.

Let us try to distill a little wisdom by rearranging the parent and child analogy. We all know what happens to a child whose parents attempt to save him from all the experiences of living by endless admonitions and instructions. If we do our child's thinking for him he will reward us by becoming mediocre, and in the end resentful and rebellious. A parent cannot prevent a child from having his own experiences without weakening and virtually destroying the child. We may be helpful within certain reasonable bounds. We may give the child the benefit of our experiences in so far as we are able. But the child, like the human personality, demands experiences of his own, and must transmute the theories which he gains from us into practice which he gains from living. Even when the personality does not realize its identity with its own soul and insists upon its own way of life, it learns its lessons and fulfills its destiny. Only growth and experience can bring about the true internal realization of the identity of the personality and its source. Such realization is essential wisdom.

*QUESTION: If the personality which gets itself into mischief has no survival, and the soul leaves it behind, why and where are the misdeeds saved up for its return? In other words, if the soul is not implicated in the sin, why does it have to return to suffer in retribution, and why should an entirely new personality have to pay for the sins of another and different one? Only the soul goes and comes with any record of experience, does it not? And if so it must, of necessity, have some sin in it.*

*ANSWER:* It appears to me that there are too many ifs and conclusions drawn from doubts. This is an example of the innate perfidy of logic. Let us try to reduce the number of ifs, and in this way clear the intellectual atmosphere. Certainly the personality does

not survive, but the reason for its existence is eternal. The personality gathering experience, which is its proper labor, transfers its findings to enrich the collective soul, and here the deeds and misdeeds have an imperishable survival. Then what is sin? Philosophically, sin is inadequacy, and as such is common to us all. How can a personality, which is an extension of soul, be more sufficient in any particular than its own source? Sin is not badness; it is lack, and this shortage in turn results in such mistakes as inevitably accompany various inabilities. A child is not bad because it falls short of its own maturity, a condition which can be corrected in due time. Apples are not bad because they are smaller than pumpkins. In fact apples are not bad because they are sour. We call them bad because we do not like them, and herein lies much wisdom on a controversial issue.

St. Paul said, "I die daily," by which he implied that sleep was a little death which frames each day of man's life. Suppose we have had company in to dinner. In the kitchen there is a mountainous stack of dishes, but because of the late hour we decide to leave them until morning, and we retire to that repose which knits up the ragged edge of care. In the morning we rise strong with new hopes and aspirations, only to be confronted by that stack of dishes which burdens the new day with the consequences of previous procrastination. Is there any injustice here? Should the gods have washed the dishes in the night, and would they as an answer to even the most ardent prayer? If the housewife who rose in the morning were not the one who had left the dishes the night before there might be justification for questioning providence. Remember, the new personality that is born into the world in the cycle of incarnation is no more separate from the personalities which have preceded it than the housewife who put off her dishwashing. The only trouble is that we do not see the relationship.

The soul grows through its personalities. It is the soul and not the person who left the dishes, but it may have to build a new body to wash them. The personality is not suffering for the sins of its soul; rather, the soul is suffering for its own imperfections through the instrument that it has created. We can never straighten this matter out while we think of the personality as distinct and separate, and destined to a miserable existence in order to accomplish the whims of its parents. The person is a localized area of consciousness within the soul. It has no life or identity apart from the soul. To accuse the personality of wrong-functioning would be equivalent to kicking a washing machine because we forgot to put in the soap. To blame the outer personality for our own inner forgetfulness would be equivalent to blaming the washing machine for not reminding us to put in the soap.

Personalities are like windows through which we look out into the world in search of knowledge. The windows are not to blame if we do not see.

Here the dilemma is due to the fact that memory of previous lives is not carried from one personality directly to another. The memory of each life is recorded only in the substance of the soul. This knowledge is used in the molding of new personalities. In this way the soul builds ever more noble mansions through which to perfect its experiences. It can build no better than it knows, and it can know only what it has experienced. Therefore at this stage of evolution a soul is incapable of fashioning a perfect personality.

You might well ask why each personality does not manifest a large fragment of the soul's potentials. This is because too great a diversification leads to but slight achievement in any particular. One problem is more than most of us can bear. If all of the soul's unfinished business were to be projected into manifestation in a single personality the conflict would be unendurable. The personality would be disintegrated.

*QUESTION: Exactly what is the soul? If the body is nothing but a vehicle, why is it of any interest to the personality to contact the soul? While the soul can be aware of the personality, is it also aware of itself or must that come through the spirit? Something else bothers me. In one instance we learn that we must develop the soul or awaken it from its long sleep; on the other hand we are told that the soul chooses its body and environment to gain experience, thus indicating that the soul is not asleep in the first place. Which is right?*

*ANSWER: Esoterically, the soul is the overself, that is, the collective self composed of the principles of thought, emotion, vitality and form. It is the person, the permanent personality. It is the source of each personality which it projects from itself for the purpose of its own fulfillment. The soul is the actually growing self, and it accomplishes its own end through a sequence of personalities. The personalities do not grow, but each is superior to the preceding one because each has contributed to the soul power which will design the next personality.*

In order to understand the relationship between the soul and its personality we can create an analogy between these spiritual processes and the growth of a tree. The family apple tree is one organism consisting of roots, trunk, and branches. One life circulates through all these parts, and the whole tree is nourished by the life of the earth in which it grows. Every winter the tree appears to die, but we know that the following spring it will be reborn and send out new green leaves and shoots. The life of the tree is fulfilled in the blossoms and the fruit. In somewhat the same way the life of the soul is fulfilled in the personalities which are the blossoms and the fruit. It would be quite untrue to assume that the life in the bud and flower is in any way different from the life of the tree. It is merely a specialized manifestation of that life, nor would we have any right to blame the tree for the fact that the

blossoms fade and the ripe fruit finally falls. The processes of nature are ordained by an all-wise providence, and beyond its dictates there is no recourse.

You ask why it is of any interest for the personality to establish a conscious contact with its collective overself? You must realize that the consciousness of the personality is part of the consciousness of the soul and not a separate energy seeking to understand something separate and different from itself. By the same system of reasoning it is not necessary for the employee to inform himself about the structure and functioning of the corporation which has employed him, but if he does take such an interest he is more likely to be promoted to a better position and probably will be more efficient in his present work. It is the soul in the person that urges growth, and this growth is a motion toward self-awareness. When this self-awareness has been established in the personality the whole life pattern becomes more efficient. Such unfoldment would, for example, resolve such doubts as exist in the mind of the present questioner. The personality relieved from the pressure of doubt and uncertainty is freed from these artificial hazards, and its resources can be applied completely to the primary purposes of learning, for which the personality was originally fashioned.

Plato taught that when the soul extended itself downward and formed a personality, this extended part of the consciousness was obscured by the material element, becoming as it were intoxicated or drugged by the mixture of its own nature with the material element. Thus the body became a sepulcher or prison for certain energies of the soul. The resurrection of the soul resulted from the purification of the body and the organization of its confused functions. The disciplines of this regeneration are always known to the soul, but in each body this knowledge must be applied to the particular complex of material circumstances in which the personality has been incarnated.

Self-awareness is a property of the soul, and hence it is capable of reaffirm-

ing that self-awareness through each of its personalities. It must be understood that it is not the whole of the soul that sleeps within the body or personality; it is only the ray or extension of the soul which is involved in that particular incarnation. It is therefore this ray or fragment which must be released or awakened into conscious manifestation. The oversoul, like the God of Israel "neither slumbers nor sleeps" and anciently was represented without eyelids as a symbol of its eternal watchfulness. Sleep is the result of the descent of consciousness into a negative or inferior state, and therefore can be applied to the rays or extensions flowing into matter, and never to the soul per se. The sleeping soul which must be awakened refers to the soul power locked within a particular personality.

It may be useful at this point to remind the questioner that not every book on the subject of rebirth is reliable. Various authors have burdened the reading public with a variety of opinions, many of which are immature. Discrimination must be used in the selection of texts, or confusion is inevitable.

*QUESTION: If all information about the soul and reincarnation comes from the same source, why is there such a difference of opinion on the different phases and aspects of the problem?*

*ANSWER:* The information does not come from the same source any more than various writers on politics, sociology, economics, and religion, write from the same conviction or perspective. There will be differences of opinion as long as human beings function on various levels of consciousness. It is only after the power of the soul has been released completely from the entanglement of matter that it can see all things clearly. Until then, as St. Paul pointed out, we must see all things as through a glass darkly. Here again we can borrow a simile from daily life. The judgment of the small child is not as perfect as that of the adult for the reasons that the child's thinking faculties are not mature, the mind has not been

disciplined, there is insufficient experience, and the need for completeness has not been recognized. The great German orientalist Max Müller once said, "There has never been a false religion, unless a child be a false man." This is our problem. Different opinions do not necessarily represent error; rather they reveal immaturity. Immaturity in a doctrine is revealed by lack of philosophical contents. The lower we go in the scale of opinion the less we find of law and the more we find of accident. Conversely, as we ascend to the levels of human thinking the less there is of accident and the more there is of law and purposed pattern. Ancient Eskimos committed suicide so that they could be reborn into the families of young couples whom they particularly admired. Here the belief in reincarnation is present, but the philosophic concept of method, means, and ends is deficient. Among the more civilized races there is a diversity of doctrines relating to rebirth. Some hold that we are reborn on other planets; others, like certain Hindu sects, insist that if we die on the wrong side of the Ganges River we reincarnate in the bodies of donkeys. Certain Tibetans insist that by turning a prayer wheel and reciting certain magical formulas we may wipe out the karma of a thousand lives and advance our spiritual cause one hundred incarnations. Not long ago one group in the United States issued the spiritual ultimatum that failure to join this sect would set the soul back ten incarnations, while membership entitled the lucky joiner to complete his entire evolutionary cycle in the present life.

There is no use trying to reconcile such a confusion of opinions. A little serious thinking and a fair background in the esoteric philosophy will clear the mind from such immature notions. The great exponents of reincarnation were Gautama Buddha in the East, and Plato of Athens in the West. The legitimate disciples of these great masters formulated and perpetuated the essential tenets of the doctrine. Those who are to acquaint themselves with the concepts and precepts of rebirth should have re-

course to such authorities. We are careful in our selection of a doctor because our lives may depend upon his skill. We are thoughtful when choosing a lawyer or a banker because our fortunes are in his hands. We must be at least equally intelligent and discriminating

when deciding upon our religion or philosophy, for our whole well-being is at stake. Lacking other philosophical resources, we may be guided by the experience of ages and cling unto that which has proved itself to be good and sufficient by the test of time.

WRITTEN SPECIALLY FOR HORIZON

*Suggested reading:* REINCARNATION: THE CYCLE OF NECESSITY; PURPOSEFUL LIVING - LECTURES ON ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY; SELF-UNFOLDMENT.



#### LITTLE-KNOWN CULTS OF CHRISTENDOM

A number of curious religious sects which have risen, flourished, and faded among Christian nations during the last six centuries have been grouped together under the general term "convulsionists." Outstanding among these strange cults were the ranters, the jumpers, and the dancers. One group recognized these degrees of spiritual possession, which they described in all seriousness as "the rolls," "the jerks" and "the barks."

In the year 1374 an epidemic of religious dancing broke out in the region of the Lower Rhine, and spread with astonishing rapidity throughout Germany, Holland, and parts of France. Thousands of men, women, and children, danced about the countryside and along the streets of towns and cities. So complete was the frenzy that the dancers were unable to stop until they collapsed from exhaustion. They screamed and howled and chanted verses to St. John, whom they regarded as their patron. The Church, believing these fanatics to be possessed by the devil, combated the mania by public exorcism.

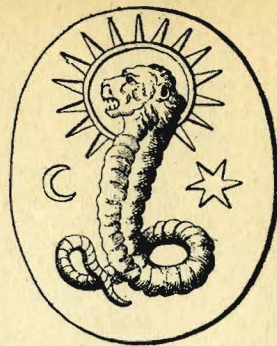
Later, in the 15th century the dance frenzy broke out again. This time the clergy formed the dancers into large groups and sent them to the Church of St. Vitus at Rotstein. Here prayers were said for their recovery. It was for this reason that the nervous disorder, chorea, characterized by spasmodic twitchings, came to be known as St. Vitus's dance.

#### A NEW AND PRACTICAL USE FOR TELESCOPES

It is a well-known fact that looking through a telescope the reverse way causes the object seen to appear much smaller than in reality. When the natives of Indo-China discovered this fact they focused the glass on their relatives to give the appearance that these had departed to considerable distance.

See *Temples and Elephants* by Karl Bock — 1883

# Gnosticism: *The Key to Esoteric Christianity*



IN THE first century of the Christian era the intellectual world was extending its inquiries along the lines set down by the teachings of Plato and Aristotle. Plato had set up the doctrine of causes. His philosophy was devoted to those larger and general truths which may be defined collectively as universals. Through him the conception of an organized universe was introduced to Mediterranean civilization. This organization originated in archetypes, that is, grand patterns in causes. These patterns formed by the terms and elements of a divine geometry enclosed material life within a network of cosmic energies.

Aristotle, reacting dramatically to the Platonic challenge, was endowed by nature with an organization of faculties which resented the domination of intangibles. He did not deny the Platonic scheme of things and held that Plato's vision was unassailable, not necessarily because it was true but because the elements involved were beyond the attack of intellectual criticism. Aristotle loved to argue, but argument about intangibles could not be conclusive. He could not win his argument on Plato's grounds.

Seeking a more substantial footing Aristotle emphasized the significance of tangibles. Here was a sphere of obvious facts. There was room for argument in matters of implication, but the facts themselves were incontrovertible. Thus he found security in the contemplation of the knowable. He set up an organization in nature by reducing the facts and their reasonable extensions into

categories. He challenged Plato to come down to earth and meet him on the level of things known.

There is no indication that Plato accepted the challenge. Although the men were in close association there never was a complete meeting of the minds, and as a consequence subsequent generations inherited a legacy of unfinished business. Universals were defined, particulars were organized and classified, but the interval between universals and particulars became a more and more important consideration.

It was this interval between invisible causes and visible effects that burdened the intellectual world during the 1st century A. D. The human mind engaged in the systematic process of building bridges to link cause to effect and effect to cause. The two extremes were in themselves irreconcilable, at least mentally. But in nature itself they were reconciled. There must be an explanation to fit the facts. This was the broad challenge in the world of thought, and it resulted in the creation of a school of intellectuals who became the leaders of a revolutionary discovery in the sphere of mind. This discovery produced Gnosticism, and the group supporting the new solution to the pressing dilemma was known as the Gnostics.

Gnosticism is defined as emanationism, or a philosophy of emanations. If two qualities cannot meet in substance they can be brought together only by extension. Universals cannot become particulars and particulars cannot be-

come universals, but universals exist according to degrees and particulars exist according to conditions.

For example, the ancients recognized four elements ascending from the most solid, which was earth, to the most dense which was air. The ascending order of the elements caused the highest to be the least material. That which is least material is most like that which is spiritual; thus matter exists in an ascending scale of conditions, qualifications, modifications, and rarefactions of itself.

Spirit, which is the common substance of universals, likewise exists according to states. Spirit per se, that is, in its own nature, is unknowable. But from spirit proceeds things spiritual according to a descending order. Intellect is an intangible pertaining to the order of spirit, yet to a degree it has formal dimension and proportion and is subject to definition. Energy, or force as it was known in old times, is likewise an extension of spirit, but this extension is subject to greater limitations than intellect because it is definable. All definition defines natures according to their limitations. Axiomatically, definition is limitation.

A descending order of spiritual qualities, less spiritual as they depart from their own substance and cause, is therefore acceptable by the mind. Conversely, an ascending order of things material, less material as they depart from their substance and source, matter, is also appreciable to the reason. What could be more reasonable therefore, than to assume that the two opposites can meet on a common ground?

Of course emanationism assumes the existence of two coeternal realities, one spiritual and the other material. This Aristotle would allow, for he regarded matter as immortal, without beginning or end. He also accepted the eternity of spirit. The existence of two eternal principles endeared Aristotle to the Churchmen because they found in his doctrine the comfort they sought for their own belief in the eternity of good and evil and the endless warfare between God and the Devil.

A number of modern scientists also are inclined to favor Aristotle's philosophical anthropomorphism. Whether or not spirit exists belongs to the sphere of uncertainties, but the eternity of matter is a comforting thought for those seeking something permanent in an impermanent universe.

Interesting speculations can result from such questions as, "Is spirit the highest degree of matter?" Or, "Is matter the lowest degree of spirit?" This brings complications however. Are spirit and matter qualities of one essence differing only in degree, or are they two utterly irreconcilable opposites for which no common denominator exists? If the two extremes are equally inevitable and indestructible, which is the superior? Has either any need for the other? Is the action of spirit upon matter a kind of cosmic incident or accident, and can matter modify spirit? The Scholastics struggled with these issues for centuries, and the results, though stimulating to the intellectual faculties, were far from solution of any practical problem.

Plato held that matter was an extension of spirit—that part of universal being most remote from the spiritual quality. He used the analogy of light and darkness. Light is a principle, but darkness is not a principle; it is merely the absence of light. The Aristotelians, not to be outdone, suggested the possibility that darkness could be a principle and that light could equally well be regarded as the absence of darkness. Light was incidental; darkness was inevitable. Light could temporarily dispel darkness, but all light must ultimately fail, and in the failure of light the eternity of darkness was revealed.

The vital element of precedence was also involved. Did light precede darkness or did darkness precede light? That which precedes must inevitably include that which succeeds it. Did darkness contain the potential of light or did light contain the potential of darkness? Most systems infer that darkness preceded light and is therefore more ancient, more universal, and more real. Suns are foci of light set up in darkness, but in quantity darkness al-

ways exceeds light because light is always surrounded by an immeasurable area composed of the absence of light.

Is absence then greater than presence? Presence always exists in a field consisting of the absence of itself. One condition is not definable without the other. They are coeternal and codependent, with absence always in excess of presence.

It is like the problem of food and appetite. Hunger is the absence of food. Food is the solution of hunger. Food is real and definable. Hunger has no dimension or appearance. Which then, is the reality? Food will remove hunger, but only for the time being. No matter how much food there may be hunger remains, and it is necessary to miss only a few meals to reveal its eternal presence.

If light is food and darkness is hunger, which is the more real? Food is a temporary solution to an eternal problem. All this is very confusing.

If darkness is equivalent to space, then light may be equivalent to time. This again presents a variety of complications. Can time exist without its space equivalent, eternity? Is eternity the emptiness of time or the fullness of time? Is it all or nothing? If it is all time, then eternity or space is superior to time. If eternity is the privation of time, then time is the reality and eternity is merely an illusion of the mind. There is an illusion here somewhere, but which of these abstractions is the stronger depends upon which school you belong to.

The early Christian concept of God further complicated the already confused picture. Most pagan systems of religious philosophy conceived of the supreme spiritual power as identical with the substance and nature of space. Thus the space dimension was regarded as complete fullness. To our physical perceptions space is emptiness properly described as nothing. To the pagans this nothing was simply *no thing*. It was not emptiness but the abstraction of forms. It was universal life unconditioned, unmanifested, undifferentiated,

and in its own essential state undefinable.

The early Christian Church regarded Deity as outside of the plan of creation. God was a person, separate from the world which he had formed. This divinity ruled the universe from some extrauniversal throne. God exercised despotism over matter, molding it into a variety of forms. Each of these forms was ensouled by a separate life principle which descended to it from the nature of Deity. Thus to the pagans God was a power emerging through the processes of spiritual and material generation. But to the Christians he was a separate and alien force controlling the creational processes by an absolute tyranny of the divine will.

The Gnostics belonged among the pagan groups inasmuch as they believed the universe to be the body of God through which the spiritual power manifested as a constant impulse toward unfoldment and growth. At the same time the Gnostics attempted an explanation of Christian mystical philosophy according to a basically pagan tradition. In this way the Gnostic cult succeeded in offending both the pagans and the Christians. Each felt that its viewpoint was compromised.

Gnosticism was the great heresy of the ante-Nicene period of church history. The fathers of primitive Christianity, having elected themselves the sole custodians of salvation, exercised this prerogative to stamp out all traces of Christianity as a philosophical code. They particularly resented the Gnostics because these essentially pagan thinkers insisted upon pointing out the non-Christian sources and elements which had contributed to the rise of the Christian sect.

The early bishops, saints, and martyrs, such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Epiphanius, Tertullian, and Theodoret, divided their activities between the somewhat diversified tasks of preaching on the one hand brotherly love and a gospel of charity and piety, and on the other hand formulating vicious and slanderous attacks upon the members of all dissenting creeds. No pious ante-

Nicene Father had proved his zeal, and incidentally his bigotry, until he had prepared an elaborate treatise against heresies, and pitched a sanctified pebble at some heresiarch.

All good Churchmen sought to demonstrate that pagans in general and Gnostics in particular were promulgators of hateful and misleading doctrines. It was intimated and in some cases actually affirmed that a perverse spirit (the faithful old Devil) had raised up teachers of false doctrines in an effort to compromise the infallible revelations of the apostles and their legitimate descendents. Thus the learned Fathers, who incidentally seemed better informed on heresies than orthodoxies, refuted all the doctrines of the heretics with one grand gesture.

It may be seen, therefore, that the Gnostics occupied an extremely precarious position. They were reconcilers of extreme differences, and the way of the peacemaker is usually quite as hard as that of the transgressor. Gnosticism was despised by the Church because it sought to interpret Christian mysticism in terms of the metaphysical systems of the Greeks, Egyptians, and Chaldeans. At the same time it was openly opposed by contemporary pagan philosophers, particularly certain Neoplatonists, because it appeared to accept, at least in part, the unphilosophic and illogical tenets forced upon an unsuspecting world by the Christian enthusiasts. Attacked from both sides, and gradually crushed by the sheer weight of numbers, Gnosticism finally passed into limbo after a desperate struggle for existence over a period of several centuries.

Strange to relate, Gnosticism is indebted to its enemies for the survival of certain of its teachings. Practically all the information available on the subject is preserved in the writings of those excited and irritable ante-Nicene Fathers who went into elaborate details concerning the substance of the heresies they condemned. Although the Gnostics have vanished from the earth, the analogies which they established between Christian and pagan doctrines have proved

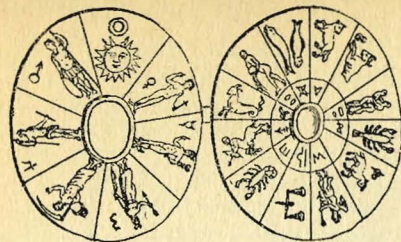
invaluable to students of comparative religion.

Among the names that stand out in the chronicles of Gnosticism, three are outstanding: Simon Magus, Basilides and Valentinus. They must have been men of exceptional brilliance, for they were singled out by the Church Fathers as the objects of particular and continued persecution. Simon Magus, the Syrian Gnostic, was subjected to an especially spiteful and unchristian tirade of abuse. His character was torn to shreds, and he was held up to public scorn, not only as a sorcerer but as a horrible example of the depth of spiritual, moral, and physical depravity into which an individual can descend. Basilides, the Egyptian Gnostic, and Valentinus, his successor, were both men of such exceptional personal integrity that even the careful combings of the clergy were not able to bring to light anything that could be interpreted as depreciatory. It was evident, therefore, that these philosophers were heresiarchs of the most dangerous kind. They were the more deadly because they concealed their diabolical perversities behind an appearance of virtue and integrity. If a pagan had the appearance of virtue it was because the Devil conjured up an illusion in the hope of thus undermining the omnipotence of the Church.

If any group which shared in the Christian mystery possessed the esoteric secrets of the early Church it was the Gnostics. This order preserved to the end the high ethical and rational standards which confer honor upon a teaching. The Church therefore attacked Gnosticism vigorously and relentlessly, recognizing these mystical philosophers as being the most formidable adversaries to the temporal power of Christian theology.

In summing up the doctrine of Gnosticism it is not possible to consider the numerous divisions which took place within the sect, nor the more intricate elements of its systems. From a simple cult Gnosticism evolved into an elaborate and complex philosophy uniting within its own structure the essential factor of several great religions. The





GNOSTIC ASTROLOGICAL SIGNET

central idea of Gnosticism was the ascent of the soul through successive stages of being. This doctrine probably originated in the astrology of Babylon with its doctrine of a series of heavens each under the rulership of a planetary god. The soul must ascend through these heavens and their gates by means of magical passwords delivered to the guardians of the doors. This viewpoint is reminiscent of the Egyptian ritual of the dead.

The ladder of the worlds upon which souls ascend and descend is described in the Babylonian myth of Tammuz and Ishtar. It appears also in the Poimandres of Hermes Trismegistus where seven planetary governors sit upon the seven concentric circles of the world through which souls ascend and descend. Here likewise is the symbolism of Jacob's ladder, the nine royal arches of Enoch, and the seven heavens of the Revelation of St. John. The commentaries upon *Mohammed's Night Journey to Heaven* describes how the Prophet of Islam, after climbing a ladder of golden cords hanging above the Temple of Jerusalem, passed through seven gates at each of which stood one of the patriarchs of the Old Testament.

There is much in Gnosticism to intrigue the orientalist. Bardesanes, the last of the Gnostics, admitted himself to have been influenced by Buddhist metaphysics. This is particularly evident in that part of the teaching of the cult in which Christ is described as descending through the seven worlds on his way to physical incarnation. Like the Buddha he ensouls a body on each of these seven planes, thus literally becoming all thing unto all men. The

ultimate condition of consciousness to which Gnosticism aspires is also reminiscent of Buddhist doctrine. The soul is finally absorbed into an abstract state perfectly analogous to nirvana, so that the end of existence is the condition of not-being.

Valentinus, the Gnostic, in his vision of the order of creation, wrote: "I behold all things suspended in air by spirit, and I perceive all things wafted by spirit; the flesh I see suspended from soul, but the soul shining out from air, and air depends upon aether, and fruits produced from Bythos (profundity), and the foetus born from the womb." This is Gnostic emanationism, the birth of all natures from their own superiors, and creation itself emerging from its own cause, the absolute or the profundity.

In the simplest arrangement of the Gnostic concept of the godhead we find first the universal Logos, "He who stood, stands, and will stand." By nature and substance unknowable he is the incorruptible form who projects from himself an image, and this image ordains all things. From his own eternal and imperishable nature That Which Abides emits three hypostases which Simon Magus called *Incorruptible Form*, *The Great Thought*, and *The Universal Mind*.

It is interesting here to note that as in many esoteric systems thought precedes mind, or as the ancients said, "The thought conceives the thinker."

Among the later Gnostics the godhead is represented by three potencies in this manner:

Anthropos (the man)

Anthropos, son of Anthropos  
(the man, son of the man)

Ialdabaoth (the son of chaos)

Ialdabaoth, who corresponds to Zeus in Orphic and Platonic metaphysics, is called the Demiurge or the Lord of the World. The Gnostics believed that it was this Demiurge to whom Jesus referred when he spoke of the prince of this world who had nothing in common with him. The Demiurge was

the personification of matter, the monad of the material sphere, the seed of the world within which were locked the patterns of all generated things. Ialdabaoth gave birth out of himself to six sons, who together with their father became the seven planetary spirits. These were called the seven archons (governors) and correspond with the guardians of the world described by Hermes. Their names in order according to Origen are as follows:

Ialdabaoth (Saturn)  
Iao (Jupiter)  
Sabaoth (Mars)  
Adonaïos (the sun)  
Astaphaios (Venus)  
Ailoiios (Mercury)  
Oraios (the moon)

Here Ialdabaoth becomes the outer boundary of the Solar System, the orbit of Saturn within which the other planets exist as embryos in a descending order of powers. Thus we understand the Greek fable of Saturn devouring his own children, for the ancients believed that planetary substance was finally drawn into the rings of Saturn from which it was finally scattered into space.

In the hermetic allegory the seven guardians of the world,—the builders, or Elohim of the Jews—were simply manifesters of divine purpose, in themselves neither good nor bad. According to the Gnostics, however, Ialdabaoth and his six sons were proud and opposing spirits who, like Lucifer and his rebels, sought to establish a kingdom in the abyss which should prevail against the kingdom of God. Hence we find Ialdabaoth crying out triumphantly, "There are no other gods before me!" when in reality he is the least part of the triune godhead and beyond him extends the spheres of the Father and the Son.

In his rare and valuable text *The Gnostics and their Remains*, C. W. King sums up the Gnostic genesis. His remarks are in substance as follows:

Sophia Achamoth, the generative wisdom of the world was lured into the abyss by beholding her reflection in the

deep. Through union with the darkness she gave birth to a son—Ialdabaoth, the child of chaos and the egg. Sophia Achamoth being herself of a spiritual nature suffered horribly from her contact with matter, and after an extraordinary struggle she escaped out of the muddy chaos which had threatened to swallow her up. Although unacquainted with the mystery of the pleroma—that all-including space which was the abode of her mother the heavenly Sophia, or divine wisdom—Sophia Achamoth reached the middle distance between the above and below. There she succeeded in shaking off the material elements which had clung like mud to her spiritual nature. After cleansing her being she built a strong barrier between the world of intelligences or spirits which are above and the world of ignorance and matter which stretched out below.

Left to his own contrivances Ialdabaoth, the son of chaos, became the creator of the physical part of the world; that part in which sin temporarily prevailed because the light of virtue was swallowed up in darkness. In the process of creation Ialdabaoth followed the example of the Great Deity who engendered the spiritual spheres. He produced out of his own being six planetary spirits which he called his sons. The spirits were all fashioned in his own image and were reflections of each other, becoming progressively darker as they receded from their father.

Here we have the Platonic theory of proximities in which it is described that those beings which are closest to the source of life partake most of the source, but to the degree that they retire from the source they partake of the absence of the source until at last the outer extremity of the reflections is mingled in the substance of the abyss.

Ialdabaoth and his six sons inhabit seven regions disposed like a ladder. This ladder had its beginning under the middle space (the region of their mother Sophia Achamoth) and its end rests upon our earth, which is the seventh region. When the earth is referred to as the seventh sphere it does not mean the physical globe, but signifies rather

the region of the earth composed of ether.

Ialdabaoth, as may be inferred from his origin, was not a pure spirit, for while he inherited from his mother (generating wisdom) instinct and cunning as well as an intuitive realization of the universal immensity, he also received from his father (matter) the qualities of ambition and pride, and these dominated his composition. With a sphere of plastic substances at his command Ialdabaoth severed himself from his mother and her sphere of intelligence, determining to create a world according to his own desires in which he should dwell as lord and master.

With the aid of his own sons, the six spirits of the planets, the son of chaos created man, intending that the new creature should reflect the fullness of the Demiurgic powers. This man should acknowledge matter to be his lord and should never seek beyond the material sphere for truth or light. But Ialdabaoth failed utterly in his work. His man was a monster, a vast soulless creature which crawled about through the ooze of the lower elements bearing witness to the chaos that conceived it. The six sons captured this monster and brought the awful creature into the presence of their father, declaring that he must animate it and give it a soul if it were to live.

Ialdabaoth was not a sufficiently exalted spirit and he could not create life; all he could do was to make forms. In his extremity the Demiurge bestowed upon the new creature the ray of divine light which he himself had inherited from his mother Sophia Achamoth. It is thus that man gained the power of generative wisdom. This new man sharing the light with his own creator now beheld himself as a god and refused to recognize Ialdabaoth as his master. Thus Ialdabaoth was punished for his pride and self-sufficiency by being forced to sacrifice his own kingship in favor of a man he had fashioned.

Sophia Achamoth now bestowed her favor on mankind even at the expense of her own son. Humanity which now contained her light followed the impulse

of that light and began to collect of itself and into itself, and divide light from the darkness of matter. By virtue of this spiritual industry mankind gradually transformed its own appearance until it no longer resembled its creator Ialdabaoth but took on the visage and manner of the Supreme Being—Anthropos the primal man—whose nature was of the substance of light and whose disposition was of the substance of truth.

When Ialdabaoth beheld his creation greater than himself his anger blazed forth with jealous rage. His looks inspired by his passions were reflected downward into the great abyss as upon the polished surface of a mirror. This reflection apparently became inspired with life, for all bodies are but ensouled shadows, and from the abyss arose Satan in the form of a serpent, the embodiment of envy and cunning.

Realizing that man's power lay in the protection of his mother, Ialdabaoth determined to detach man from his spiritual guardian, and for this reason created about him a labyrinth of snares and delusions. In each sphere of the world grew a tree of knowledge, but Ialdabaoth forbade man to eat of its fruit lest all the mysteries of the superior worlds be revealed to him and the rulership of the son of chaos come to an untimely end. Sophia Achamoth, determined to protect the man who contained her own soul, sent her genius Ophis in the form of a serpent to induce man to transgress the selfish and unjust commands of Ialdabaoth. Man, having eaten of the fruit of the tree, suddenly became capable of comprehending the mysteries of creation.

Ialdabaoth revenged himself by punishing this first pair (Adam and Eve) for eating the heavenly fruit. He imprisoned man and woman in a dungeon of matter, building around their spirits the physical bodies of chaotic elements wherein the human being is still enthralled. But Sophia Achamoth still protected mankind. She established between her celestial region and relapsed mankind a current of divine light, and kept supplying him constantly with a spiritual illumination through his own

heart. Thus an internal light continually protected him even though his outer nature wandered in the darkness.

The battle continued, Sophia Achamoth ever striving to protect and Ialdabaoth ever determined to destroy. At last, sorely afflicted by the evils which had befallen her human grandchildren, Sophia Achamoth was afraid that darkness would prevail against her. Ascending to the feet of her celestial mother (the heavenly Sophia which is the wisdom of God) she besought the all-knowing to prevail upon the Unknown Depth (which is the Everlasting Father) to send down into the underworld the Christos (who was the son of the union of the Father of Fathers and Heavenly Wisdom). Ialdabaoth and his six sons of matter were weaving a curious web by which they were gradually but inevitably shutting out the divine wisdom of the gods to the end that mankind should perish in darkness. The most difficult part in the salvation of man lay in discovering the method by which the Christos could enter into the physical world. This method must be within the law of creation, for the gods cannot depart from their own ways. To build bodies was not within the province of the higher gods. Therefore Ialdabaoth himself had to be coaxed into creating, without knowing the end, a body to receive the Soter. Sophia Achamoth appealed to the pride of the Demiurge and finally prevailed upon Ialdabaoth to prove his powers by creating a good and just man by the name of Jesus. When this had been accomplished the Soter Christos enveloped himself in a cloak of invisibility and descended through the spheres of the seven archons. In each of the arches he assumed a body appropriate to the substances of the sphere, in this way concealing his true nature from the genii or guardians of the gates. In each world he called upon the sparks of light to come out of the darkness and join him. Having united all the light of the worlds in his own nature, the Christos descended into the man Jesus at the baptism. This was the moment of the Age of the Great Miracle.

Ialdabaoth, having discovered that the Soter had descended incognito to thwart his purposes, stirred up the people against Jesus, and using all the forces of materiality at his command he succeeded in destroying the body by which the Christos was functioning in the material sphere. But before the Soter departed from the earth he implanted in the souls of just men an understanding of the great mysteries and opened forever the gate between the lower and higher universes.

Theodoret thus completes the story: "Thence, ascending into the middle space he (Christ) sits on the right hand of Ialdabaoth, but unperceived by him, and there collects all the souls which shall have been purified by the knowledge of Christ. When he has collected all the spiritual light that exists in matter, out of Ialdabaoth's empire, the redemption will be accomplished and the world will be destroyed. Such is the meaning of the reabsorption of all the spiritual light into the pleroma or fullness, whence it originally descended."

Gnostic Christianity conceived of salvation without benefit of clergy. Christ, the Soter, was the high priest who by his descent destroyed forever the old order of the world. Religion became a matter of internal adjustment. Forms and rituals by which primitive peoples had propitiated Ialdabaoth were regarded as valueless under the dispensation of the Christos. The rule of fear and darkness was gone. The rule of love and light had come. It appears, however, that the Church regarded this new arrangement as economically unsound. The Gnostics were destroyed lest their philosophy render useless the temporal power of the Christian Church.

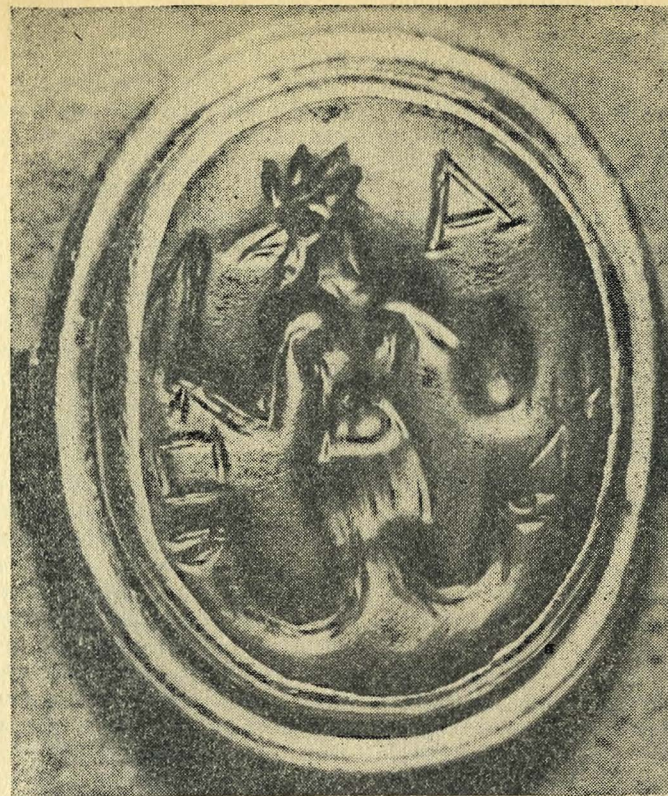
It was Basilides who claimed to have been a disciple of one of the twelve apostles who formulated the strange concept of Deity which carried the name Abraxas. In the ancient system of numerology the number equivalent to Abraxas is 365. Therefore, this divinity represents the 365 aeons or great spiritual cycles which together make up the nature of the Supreme Father. The natural physical symbol for the source

of spiritual light is the visible sun, the source of physical light. Therefore Abraxas is a sun god. The deity itself is a composite creature with the head of a rooster, the body of a human being, and with legs ending in serpents. This Gnostic pantheos represents the supreme principle expressing five attributes or emanations. The head of the rooster signifies Phronesis, foresight or vigilance. The two arms bearing the whip and shield are Dynamis and Sophia, power and wisdom. The two serpents forming the legs are Nous and Logos, wisdom and understanding, by which the figure is supported. The human body is a mystical intimation that all these powers shall be revealed or perfected in man.

Although the early Church did everything possible to exterminate the Gnostics, cupidity played a part in the survival of some holy relics. The Gnostic hierophants identified themselves by their signets or jewels of recognizance. These signets were usually intaglios, plain on one side and with the figure of Abraxas or the lion face of the sun on the other. The stones were set with the plain surface on the outside to make identification of the wearer more difficult. The gems were frequently engraved with Greek letters around the central design. These letters represented magic words, or the name of God. The more commonly used stones were carnelian, crystal, bloodstone, and emerald matrix. The Church Fathers had no mind to destroy valuable property, so the rings were saved and also some other inscribed gems containing prayers or fragments of Gnostic philosophy and magic. The abraxoids, stones bearing the figure of Abraxas, are exceedingly rare, but we are able to reproduce with this article a fine example from the collection of our Society. There are small collections of these gems in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the Library of the Vatican at Rome. Gnostic intaglios date from the 1st and 2nd centuries of the Christian era. The abraxoids originated in Northern Egypt, and the strongest seat of the Egyptian Gnosis was the library city of Alexandria.

The Gnostics were only one of several groups which attempted to reconcile pagan and Christian doctrines during the first five centuries. These groups insisted that there was nothing essentially new in the Christian dispensation. The Syrian cult was merely a reformation of long existing institutions; a new interpretation of doctrines sanctified by the veneration of countless nations and peoples of the past. In fact, even the Christians themselves did not realize that they were the custodians of a unique revelation until the growing power of the Church forced this conclusion upon them.

Early in this article we discussed the subject of emanations by which irreconcilable opposites appear to mingle in the middle distances between extremes. The Gnostic cult itself represented an effort to attain this condition of moderation by searching out the Christian elements in pagan philosophy and the pagan elements in Christian philosophy. The Gnostics sought to bind the two great dispensations of their time into a unified group dedicated to the perpetuation and dissemination of spiritual wisdom. Gnosticism was a temperate zone between frigid paganism and torrid churchianity, but at that particular time neither the pagans nor the Christians had a mind for temperance. The two great institutions realized that they were locked in a battle to the death. Christianity was certainly the aggressor, and there is very little evidence that paganism was essentially intolerant. After all, there were a hundred pagan institutions of spiritual and intellectual culture. These were not necessarily in mutual agreement, but they had dwelt together in comparative peace for thousands of years. The Romans summed up the situation rather well: The citizen may worship at any shrine or temple that pleases his fancy. He may accept the cults of Egypt, favor the Magian religion of Persia, or pay homage to the Greek divinities. He may worship in all temples or in none, but regardless of the definitions of his faith he must pay his taxes.



THE GREAT SIGNET OF THE GNOSIS  
(ENLARGED THREE TIMES THE ORIGINAL SIZE)

Gnostic intaglios bearing the form of Abraxas are called variously abraxoids, abraxaster gems and abraxas gems. According to Dr. J. Bellermann, the Egyptian Gnostics of the first three centuries held the figure of Abraxas in high esteem. They used it to symbolize both teacher and teaching as the subject and object of their transcendental researches and mystical speculations. The signets were tokens and pass-symbols among the initiates of the fraternity, by which they recognized each other and gained admission to their assemblies. The abraxoid was also an amulet against evil, and a talisman of power. It further served the practical purpose of a seal which could be affixed to documents.

Most abraxoids are crudely carved, for the art belongs to the debased Egyptian school of Alexandria. The cutting appears to consist of a variety of notches and was done with a small, coarse wheel. The materials were selected for their magical properties, and included jasper, calcedony, fibrous hematite, and other substances of no great value. Fine abraxoids in crystal originated outside of the sect itself, and were used by astrologers and magicians. Many gnostic gems bear figures of Greek or Egyptian divinities and magical inscriptions. The form bearing only the rooster-headed deity is the most rare, and only a few examples are known to be in private collections.

Perhaps the pagans were temperate with a slight tendency toward the chilly side. Their religions were scientific, philosophic, and aesthetic. They discussed God reasonably rather than impulsively, and they approached the problem of living as a serious business to be undertaken scientifically.

There is also the much discussed subject of pagan morals. In the long perspective of the ages there appears to be very little essential difference between ancient and modern delinquency. The old Greeks and Romans and their Egyptian and Chaldean cousins were pious in their pronouncements and somewhat inadequate in the personal application of their impersonal convictions. As one writer expressed it: "It is a little difficult to distinguish clearly between Christian and pagan vice. All men, in all times, under all conditions, and in all places have found it difficult to be virtuous in the presence of intensive temptation."

It has been suggested that Christianity was a spontaneous emergence of personal nobility; a powerful revulsion against the indescribable and utterly detestable private and public corruption of the pagan world. It seems to me that there is a hint of bias in this perspective. While the early Church was gathering its strength for mighty works, paganism also was producing examples of high-mindedness and fineness of character equal to anything that the Christians could advance by way of comparison.

From the period 500 B. C. to 500 A. D. civilization received its priceless legacy of religious foundations, philosophical doctrines, scientific institutions, artistic and literary monuments, and its enduring codes of laws, statutes, and regulations of human conduct. From medicine to astronomy, from architecture to poetry, from agriculture to ethics, human talents and abilities were being wisely directed toward what Lord Bacon describes as "reasonable ends". During this period the modern concept of democracy unfolded, universal suffrage was advocated by the Roman Empire, and universal legitimacy was decreed.

A Roman lady of the 2nd century had more legal standing than a modern woman living in the State of New York. Politicians have always been a seedy lot, but Roman law was essentially sound and was enforced with a reasonable degree of efficiency.

Most of the progress attained in the thousand years aforementioned was accomplished by pagan men and women. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, was a pagan. So likewise was Ptolemy, the father of geography. The multiplication table was given to us by a pagan, and the first Christian hymn was pagan music with new words. In the four centuries directly preceding the Christian era the pagan world produced nearly six hundred immortal leaders of human thought, human industry, and human achievement. Without these men modern civilization would not exist. How many outstanding leaders of equal or approximate ability were produced in the first four centuries of a Christian dominated Mediterranean civilization? We leave the reader to ponder this issue and discover if he can any such array of intellect outside of a circle of theological controversialists whose contributions were completely sterile.

It is a little difficult to imagine that men of the caliber of Plato, Euclid, Hippocrates, Cicero, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius could have been the products of a religious or moral condition as corrupt as the Christian Fathers would have us believe. If like begets like, greatness must arise from greatness. The wisdom of the individual reveals the essential wisdom of his time and place. The contemporaries of Cato the Elder may not all have shared the largeness of his mind, but the materials necessary to create that largeness must have been available and readily accessible to such as were by nature inclined to largeness. Even in our own times all men do not take advantage of the intellectual and spiritual opportunities which civilization offers, but it would be unkind and unfair to deny the existence of truth and wisdom.

We have no intention of belittling the essential principles of the Christian dis-

pensation but we are inclined to agree with Mohammed that the ante-Nicene Church Fathers went to work systematically to organize a theological system so narrow and so ridden with intolerances that Jesus himself could not have been a member of his own church. Had Jesus been born again in 350 A. D. he would have been pronounced a heretic and probably crucified a second time for merely repeating the words attributed to him in the Gospels.

Many enlightened pagan regarded the teachings of Jesus with the highest veneration. They saw in him one of their own kind, a noble and heroic man who had dedicated his life to the restatement of those noble principles and truths which are indispensable to the perfection of human character. Very few pagans ever attacked the teachings of Jesus, but they did oppose the organization of those teachings into a sect obviously dedicated to political anarchy. From the beginning the Christian Church was resolved to overthrow the pagan world and establish itself as both the spiritual and temporal autocrat of civilization. This brought the two systems to an impasse. The struggle was no longer one for survival but for complete and solitary domination.

Groups like the Gnostics attempted solution through reconciliation. There was room in the world for more than one religion, and spiritual institutions professing identical purposes should be able to co-operate without ulterior motive. The pagan and Christian institutions should acknowledge their mutual interdependence and derive inspiration from each other.

Intellectual controversies have little effect upon the natural processes of life. It is impossible to conceive of a Christian or a pagan oak tree or a Christian or a pagan sunset. Men of all faiths are born, live their lives, useful or useless according to temperament, and having fulfilled their span depart from the theater of this world in spite of belief or unbelief. The garden of the pagan farmer flourishes with proper care, and the garden of the Christian farmer is also green if he uses the same industry.

Both gardens fail by neglect. The rain falls upon the just and the unjust, and belief or unbelief adds nothing to the stature of the man or the contents of his barns. The Christian stomach-ache is just as painful as pagan dyspepsia, and the prayers of the infidels are answered or unanswered exactly the same as the prayers of the most orthodox bigot. Why then should we become so concerned about *what* we believe. The richness to ourselves lies in the fact *that* we believe. Our personal acceptance is the reality of something supreme and beautiful, noble and wise. It is necessary to our personal security. The Buddhist finds peace in the shrines of his faith. The Shinto is reassured inwardly by a pilgrimage to a sacred mountain. The Dervish finds God by dance and song. Each in his own way enjoys the benefit of spiritual consolation. There is no evidence in nature as to which faith has preferment. Religious controversies are peculiar to the human intellectual equipment. Animals have no interest in theology but obey the laws of their kind, deriving instruction from experience.

Religion is necessary to man, but competitive theologies are neither necessary nor desirable. Religious prejudice, religious intolerance, and religious fanaticism are psychoses. They are irrational fixations which unbalance the reason, and if uncorrected may lead to incurable mental disease.

There is a great deal of difference between a philosophical system and a theological system. Most philosophers are by nature fitted for abstract thinking. Their primary concern is to discover the universal plan as it operates through the symbolism of creation. They have no desire to stamp this plan with the signet of any creed, but through their contemplation they discover the grandeur of the world. This grandeur itself becomes their spiritual code. They are satisfied to accept the motion of universal principle moving according to absolute and unchanging law. Their definition of virtue is derived through the observation of the operation of law upon the substances of nature. Philos-

ophers may differ among themselves, but their differences do not prevent them from mingling as human beings bound together by a common realization of mental inadequacy and a redeeming sense of humor. Their attitudes can be estimated by the adaptation to their requirements of a familiar saying: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

Theological systems are especially deficient in a sense of humor. In fact, with most of them happiness itself is a mild form of heresy. Religions approach the wonders of creation emotionally rather than mentally. Instead of accepting the world as it is the theologian is forever trying to inform the world in the terms of what he feels the world should be. Philosophers and scientists are working toward conclusions, but most religious leaders are working from conclusions.

Possibly the difficulty is that emotions are intensely personal. Emotional reflexes arise from our own reactions to the things that have happened to us. Our personal experiences become the measuring stick by which we attempt to acclimate universals. If we have suffered, suffering is the universal plan. If we have been unfairly treated, there is no justice in the world. By investing the divine powers with personalities like our own we create a pantheon of nervous, excitable, erratic, inconsistent, uncomfortable, frustrated, neurotic, and inhibited divinities who run the world with the same lack of ability with which we administer our own affairs.

The philosopher Pythagoras defined Deity as an infinite being whose soul was formed of the substance of truth and whose body was formed of the substance of light. Such a definition arises from a deep, gentle contemplation of the beautiful and the good.

How different is this conception of Deity, which is great enough to sustain all life impersonally and impartially, from the God concept of theology. One brilliant theologian declared that the earth was divided into thirty parts. The races and nations inhabiting twenty-seven of these parts were doomed to

eternal perdition because they did not belong to his church. Such a statement is so obviously unreasonable that it has little favor in our more liberal times. The concepts of God in theology have been worked over considerably in the last century, but a number of absurd misconceptions still linger on to plague the private citizen and frustrate the United Nations' program. While the majority of moderns are inclined to allow various races to worship as they please, this emotion arises from indifference rather than an enlightened liberalism. We have not yet reached the degree of mature mentation by which we may perceive as a fact that religious systems are simply human efforts to interpret a divine mystery. It is the mystery and not the interpretation that is real. If we are a normal, healthy, growing people our interpretations must and should grow and change. We are not heretics because we change our minds. We are not untrue to God because we discard old forms of belief. The end of religion is the internal knowledge of the divine power. This knowledge brings with it a greater measure of veneration and love and a firmer desire to live according to the beauty of the divine plan. Names and sects and creeds are important only while the nature of truth itself is unattained. When we understand the principle we become tolerant of that variety of forms which men have built in the name of the Nameless.

The Gnostics sought to find the esoteric tradition of the mystery schools in the Christian revelation. They told the story, amplified it, enriched its emblems and figures, and accepted the Christian Christ as a form of the Eternal Hero of the World. To them Christ was Dionysus, Osiris, Ashur, Adonis, and even Buddha. Being a philosophical sect, they were seeking the universals of the new faith. They had no interest in an ecclesiastical system, for they realized that no man can be saved by addicting himself to a theology. The value lay in the soul experience. If Christianity could bestow a new dimension upon the internal conviction of

realities, then Christianity was important. This importance deserved the respect and admiration of all thoughtful and sincere men. The new sect was valuable for those things in it which were not new. As an innovation it was worthless. It must justify its existence by proving that it participated in the esoteric tradition of the ages.

All the philosophical schools made use of the symbolism of a soter or high priest of the inner mystery of salvation. It was evident that in the Christian sect Christ was this soter. It was a philosophic belief that the universe was created by the wisdom of God. This wisdom was revealed through the magnificent framework of laws which maintain the order of the cosmos. In the Gnostic system wisdom was the second Logos which came forth out of the eternal will which is the first Logos. Will emanates wisdom, and wisdom in turn engenders action or the active principle. Action is the third Logos called the Holy Ghost, represented by a dove beating the air with its wings. The word ghost is from *geist* and in its original form this term signified a breath, or a motion of air. Our word *gust* as applied to an agitation of the atmosphere comes from the same root. The Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is the mover of the substance of the material creation. Thus we have a basic trinity of will, wisdom and activity.

In the Gnostic philosophy special emphasis is placed upon the principle of wisdom, which is regarded as the Universal Saviour and the mediator between cause and effect. The nature of wisdom itself is a profound mystery implying far more than our present definition of the word. The wisdom principle is a compound consisting of two qualities bound together by an internal sympathy. It is the first extension of unity toward diversity, and at the same time it is the least degree of that diversity.

It is a mistake to regard wisdom in the terms of the Gnosis as originating from intellect or in itself intellectual. Wisdom is not of the order of thinking; it is of the order of knowing. Knowl-

edge is possible only through the establishment of an intense sympathy between the thing knowing and the thing known. The subject and the object must be bound into an intimate compound by an experienced consciousness. Wisdom, therefore, is a kind of artificial unity made possible by the power of the will. Like the philosophers' stone described by the alchemists as the man-made diamond, wisdom is a synthetic essential substance perfected by art.

The knowledge aspect of wisdom is philosophy; it is the power to perceive the divine nature, the divine will, and the divine purpose in all structures, substances, and processes of nature. True philosophy is an experience of consciousness toward the discovery of truth.

The love aspect of wisdom, the Sophia of the Gnosis, is natural religion or faith. Wisdom is experienced as an emotional impact. The universal realities are felt and estimated in terms of the feelings which they stimulate within the personality. The wisdom-love apperceptive power, if exercised as the instrument to attain the state of knowing, results in the perfect experience of God and nature.

As is usual with philosophical groups, the Gnostics were individualists and opposed to any intense program of organization. The sect consisted of numerous small groups each dominated by one or more intellectuals with strong personal convictions. Gnosticism was many schools enclosed within a loose program of integration with few restrictions upon the convictions and tastes of the members. Circles of gnostic speculation sprang up in most of the countries bordering upon the Mediterranean. Each of these circles contributed original speculation to the larger pattern of Gnostic thought. These groups of original thinkers were influenced by the religious and philosophic systems which flourished in their environment. The Gnosis was a purpose rather than a cult. It was searching for itself in all structures of ideas which appeared strange or different.

For lack of organization the Gnostics presented no united front, and lacked

the machinery to rally their forces against any common enemy. At that time the rising Christian Church was the enemy of all pagan movements. It had the advantage of recognizing the importance—from a temporal standpoint at least—of building a solid, internal mechanism. The isolated communities were drawn together under unified ecclesiastic authority. As a result of this premeditated program the Church was in a position to impose its will, by force if necessary, upon the scattered and unorganized pagan schools.

Gnosticism spread by a process of free growth. It unfolded like a plant, extending according to impulse and with no formalized concepts. It was, therefore, extremely liberal and by constitution nonmilitant. It suffered from the uncertainties natural to extreme liberalism. Its speculations lost definition, and the principal stream of its thought was adulterated by fantasy. Among the learned, liberalism led to progress, but among those less skilled in thinking it led to a variety of extreme opinions.

The Gnostics have been held responsible for the rapid development of the temporal authority of the Christian Church. The ante-Nicene Fathers united their resources to stamp out Gnosticism. Had they failed the Church would itself have ceased so far as political authority was concerned. The early bishops learned the important lesson that a religion must be organized in order to survive as a temporal institution. They learned their lessons so well that organization has been a primary consideration from their time to the present day.

It may be reasonably asked if the Church had any real justification for its program of exterminating the Gnostics. From a broad impersonal viewpoint the action of the Fathers cannot be condoned, but according to their own convictions and beliefs their actions are quite understandable. The Gnostics accepted the Christian concepts of Christ into their own system, and interpreted the Christian mystery by means of their elaborate system of alien mythology. Their Christology took on the splendor

of Asiatic legendry and was involved in elaborate metaphysical speculation. The Church Fathers felt that their own most priceless possession, the Christ concept, literally had been stolen from them by heathen philosophers. Worse than this—if anything could be worse—their Christ was being so interpreted as to be used against the very Church which was created to advance his cause. Such a state of affairs was intolerable and called for heroic measures.

The Gnostics further embarrassed the Christian community by rejecting most of the Old Testament, questioning the inspiration of the apostles, denying the infallibility of the clergy, and selecting only St. Paul as a trustworthy authority. These critics had the brazen effrontery to select at pleasure from the storehouse of Christian lore. That which they accepted immediately lost its Christian complexion, reducing the Church to a minor sect among the pagans.

The devotees of Christianity were outraged and forgot their own differences long enough to meet this challenge with every means available. Numerically overwhelmed and outorganized, the Gnostics gradually faded from view to survive only as elements in later systems of thought.

It is not easy to estimate the true proportions of a philosophy which survives principally in the writings of its opponents. We may be certain that no effort was made to present Gnosticism attractively in the writings of the Church Fathers. Furthermore, the Gnostics lost the confidence of the pagan historians because they incorporated certain elements of Christian symbolism into their own system. They were bitterly attacked by the Greek and Egyptian Platonists, and were left without any informed apologists. Even the fragments which have descended to this time have to some degree been corrupted by unsympathetic editors and translators.

No outline of Gnosticism would be complete without a consideration of Marcion, and the Marcionite Churches. Marcion, who lived in the 2nd century A. D., is believed to have been a wealthy shop owner of Sinop who was converted

from Paganism and became an influential leader in the early Christian Church. He traveled considerably and reached Rome about 140 A. D. He was an original thinker and attempted to institute what he regarded as essential reforms in Christian theology. Although he contributed generously to the funds of the Church, his ideas were rejected with such firmness and, as he regarded it, intolerance that he drifted toward Syrian Gnosticism. His determination to reconvert the Christian Church to what he held to be the pure gospel never wavered, and he went so far as to create a church of his own which for a time threatened the survival of the Roman Communion.

Marcion was one of the first to recognize the basic inconsistency between the teachings of the Old and New Testaments. He criticized the Fathers for imposing the Mosaic disposition upon the moral and ethical teachings of the Messianic ministry. If the two books—the Old and New Testaments—had equal or even approximate sanctity there could be but one answer and that was, there were two Gods. The God of the Old Testament Marcion called the just God, and the divine person of the New Testament he called the good God. The just God was a God of wrath and vengeance sitting in judgement over the world. This God demanded an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and only the blind, unquestioning, and complete obedience of his creation satisfied this universal autocrat.

The good God, who was superior to the just God and dwelt beyond the sphere of retribution, was a God of love and benevolence. He demanded from his creatures gentleness of spirit, friendship, brotherhood and the forgiveness of sin. It was this good God who was the Father of Jesus Christ. In fact Christ was regarded as an incarnation or manifestation of the infinite love and wisdom of the good God. He had come to this world to free it from the despotism of unbending law and establish it in a sphere of grace.

In the doctrines of Marcion the apostle Paul was regarded as the only immedi-

ate follower of Christ who had sensed the mystery of the two Gods. The evident mysticism of Paul's views fitted admirably into this gnostic pattern. Unfortunately, Marcions' doctrine broke down when analyzed by the instruments of philosophy. It was difficult to rationalize a universal plan administered by two Gods motivated by contrary purposes. The human soul, for example, was created by the just God and redeemed by the good God. This presented numerous complications. It required that man attain an end contrary to the purposes for which he was created, and inconsistent with his sphere of life and experience. It also presented an extraordinary conflict in the delicate issue of redemption.

If we assume that those who accepted the doctrine of Marcion came ultimately to union with the good God, what was the fate of the objectors and dissenters and unbelievers? If a virtuous man chose to remain true to the just God what was his ultimate state or reward? Did each of the deities preside over an Elysium and reward his believers? If so, there were two heavens. Such a contention in itself was doctrinally absurd. It is impossible to build a faith that will gain any numerical strength without assuming that the unbeliever is destined to ultimate misfortune. The Marcionite Churches held for the most part that those who followed after the just God found no favor even in the eyes of their selected Divinity, who rewarded them for their devotion only with perdition.

It is customary to blame Marcion for having promulgated a fantastic theology, but in simple truth the fault lay not with him but with the early Church Fathers. His mistake was that he took their twofold scripture and came to the only possible conclusion: the two testaments were different and inconsistent; each taught a different concept of God. If both were inspired and infallible, then there must be two Gods. The contradictions still exist, but theology has glossed them over and the modern believer has made no effort to examine impartially the substance of the conflict. The God who hardened Pharaoh's

heart is still hard to reconcile with the God of love described in the Paulian Epistles. Marcion himself appears to have been a good and kindly man, sincerely desirous of taking the doctrine of vengeance out of the Christian dispensation. His communities attracted many gentle, kindly souls, and as time went on they sought to heal the rift in the divine nature. In the end the Marcionites reduced the just God to a secondary state, making him a servant and an instrument of the principle of good. It is important to note that the earliest inscription found upon a Christian place of worship (320 A. D.) was over the doorway of a Marcionite meeting place.

The Gnostics continued for awhile to influence Christian thought largely through the followers of Marcion. Traces of the sect are to be found as late as the 10th century A. D., and the questions which Marcion pondered were revived in the years of the Protestant Reformation. Even today the principles of justice and mercy are usually in conflict, in practice if not in theory.

The principal surviving text of the Gnostics is the *Pistis Sophia* which has been ascribed, probably without much justification, to Valentinus, who also lived in the 2nd century. Like Marcion

he finally broke away from the Christian Church. Certainly the *Pistis Sophia* unfolds his system and should be attributed to Valentinian Gnosticism. The Coptic manuscript of the *Pistis Sophia*, known as the *Askeu Codex*, is in the British Museum and has been assigned to the 4th century; it is possible, however, that it is somewhat later. That the manuscript presents important commentary material on early Christian belief cannot be questioned. There is also considerable probability that it preserves legends and reports widely circulated during the 4th and 5th centuries. The text would indicate that an advanced degree of metaphysical speculation flourished in the Christian communities. A considerable part of the manuscript is concerned with esoteric instruction given to Mary Magdalene by Jesus himself.

Gnosticism is a powerful link between the elaborate philosophical system of Asia and the mysticism of Syria and Egypt. As such it offers a vast amount of material to students of comparative religion and esoteric philosophy. It also supplies many missing elements of the Christian story, and implies the existence of a well-formulated esoteric tradition under the surface of early Christian theology.



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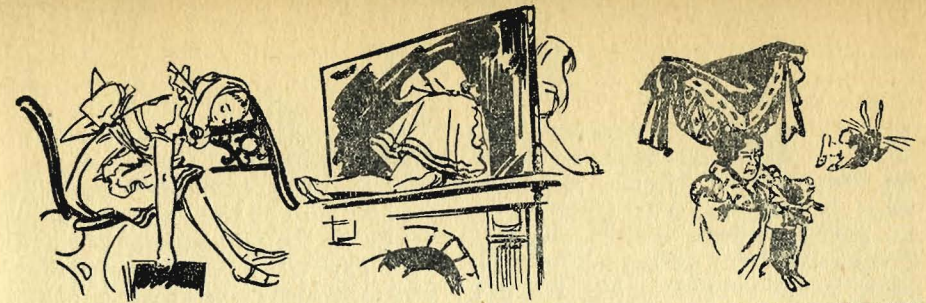
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## Curiouser & Curiouser

A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

### When the Devil Went to Work for God

There are a number of accounts of the Devil performing unusual feats in architecture and metalworking. In his spare time the Prince of Evil built bridges, castles, towers, and even palaces. For example, the bridge of Saint-Cloud near Paris was entirely constructed by the Devil in person. There is now an electric railway running across it, and little do the commuters realize the origin of the bridge. The Devil accomplished this architectural wonder with the understanding that the soul of the first creature who crossed the bridge should belong to him. The inhabitants of Saint-Cloud were resourceful, however, and hit upon a pleasant strategy. They sent a black cat across the bridge as soon as it was finished, and the Devil had to be satisfied with this meager payment.

Probably the finest job the Devil ever did was to cast the iron doors for the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris. In this case Satan was certainly working for the glory of God. The doors themselves were extraordinary examples of ironwork, and the greatest experts who examined them were of the opinion that not a mortal man in Europe had the skill to fashion such doors. Each one of the panels was 22 feet in height and 13 feet wide, and it was impossible

to discover any sign or trace of brazing or welding. Each door was covered with a delicate design which was part of the original casting. It was truly a gigantic undertaking, and even the Devil himself would not have been equal to the task had he not been able to use the fires of hell as his forge.

Some may be inclined to doubt that Satan cast the iron door of Notre Dame, but these scoffers should bear in mind that the Devil signed his work with several small images of himself, with horns on his forehead which were cast with the rest of the design upon the surface of the iron.

The details of this extraordinary circumstance are worth repeating. A wandering ironworker asked to be admitted to the degree of master workman in his guild. To prove his ability he was set the task of casting the great cathedral doors. He labored for many months with every means available, but the work was beyond his skill, and no one could offer any help. At last when it seemed that the poor ironworker would never be able to accomplish his task, a demon appeared to him. This evil spirit told the ironworker quite frankly that no human being could cast the doors, but that he, the Devil, would be glad to do the work in exchange for the

poor ironworker's immortal soul. So it was agreed, and a pact was signed as usual with human blood.

The front of the cathedral has three doorways. The Devil did a fine job on the doors for the right and left doorways; in fact, the great castings were finished and polished down in one day. Unfortunately the method of their delivery at the cathedral is not recorded. But the Devil got into trouble with the central door. He tried again and again, but the castings were never satisfactory. At last the poor Devil went back to the ironworker and admitted the task to be impossible. The reason was simple. It was through this center door that the holy sacrament was carried during the

great processions, and the work of the Devil could not endure the vibrations of the holy ritual.

The Devil was frantic because he greatly desired the soul of the ironworker, but in this case he could not keep his part of the contract. At last he tore up the pact, and the soul of the ironworker was saved, the cathedral got part of its doors, the Devil was discomfited, and the ironworker was admitted into the degree of master workman in his guild.

In 1860 the Devil's doors were removed, possibly because of the unpleasant story in connection with them. But excellent photographs exist showing the magnificence of the workmanship.

(For description and a photograph of the original doors see: Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy by Grillot De Bivry.)

## Curiosities of Philately

The postage stamps of the various nations of the world are ornamented with designs and symbols, many of which are of interest to students of philosophy and comparative religion. Modern stamps are a picture gallery of miniature engravings and drawings of artistic and historical significance.

Some years ago an advertisement appeared offering American citizens an opportunity to secure a beautifully engraved portrait of George Washington for the ridiculously low price of ten cents. Those ordering received by return mail a two-cent postage stamp of the United States.



THE SERBIAN COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE OF 1904

After the assassination of King Alexander of Serbia these stamps were issued to commemorate the coronation of King Peter. The engraver must have belonged to the opposing political party, for he concealed the face of the dead king in the design. The face is outlined with India ink for the convenience of the reader.

Occasionally stamps have been used to further the purposes of secret political groups. The ingenuity necessary to conceal some state secret in the small area of a stamp offers an intriguing field of research for the type of mind that likes to probe into the unusual.

Two classic examples of stamp ciphers are of general interest to those who realize the numerous secret tides which flow beneath the surface of world affairs.

On the 11th of June, 1903, King Alexander and Queen Draga of Serbia were assassinated in a cruel and savage manner by a faction led by Peter Karageorgevich. The whole nasty affair was typical of Balkan politics, and needless to say the incident itself climaxed a considerable period of internal intrigue and unrest.

With a slight show of diplomatic machinery Peter proclaimed himself king, and most of the foreign powers accepted the situation rather than contribute to further complications in the Balkans. Great Britain held out for two years, but finally decided that discretion was the better part of valor.

In 1904 the Serbian government issued a set of stamps, several of which consisted of a central design composed of the overlapping profiles of King Peter I and Peter Karageorgevich. It is reported that the stamps were designed

some time before the assassination of King Alexander.

These little bits of paper do not appear to contain anything exceptional and are not among the masterpieces of philatelic art, but somewhere along the line the original designs must have fallen into the hands of some artist or engraver whose loyalty remained with the murdered king. The secret is revealed by inverting the stamp. When this is done the two faces blend together to form the death mask of the assassinated King Alexander. The accompanying figures show how neatly this bit of propaganda was accomplished. The mouths of the two kings become the eyes of the dead man. The chin shadows become his eyebrows. We have intensified the drawing somewhat so that the secret portrait is more apparent.

\* \* \*

The closing years of the Austrian Republic were complicated by the rising power of the German superstate under the leadership of Adolph Hitler. It was part of Hitler's scheme to absorb the Austrian people into the structure of his great German Reich.

The last postage stamps issued by the Independent Republic of Austria were the Christmas issue of 1937. Like most Austrian stamps the designs are beautifully engraved, but the long shadow of



THE LAST POSTAGE STAMPS OF INDEPENDENT AUSTRIA PRIOR TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR

These stamps were so cleverly designed that a caricature of the face of Adolph Hitler was concealed in the large central rose. In the accompanying figure the caricature has been intensified with India ink so that it can be more quickly seen.



coming events is carefully concealed in the composition. There are two stamps alike in design but differing in color and denomination. The central motif is a rose in a slender vase. On each side is a panel containing the signs of the zodiac. The archer (Sagittarius) is aiming his arrow toward the flower as though to indicate that it merits special attention. Again the secret is revealed by inverting the stamp. When this is done the rose turns into the face of Hitler. The features are evidently a caricature far from flattering. The Fuehrer is presented to our wondering gaze with his familiar mustache, the hair down over one eye, and the ears of a donkey. It is reported that the stamp was brought to Hitler's attention and he rewarded the ingenious artist by sentencing him to a concentration camp for an indefinite period.

\* \* \*

In passing we might also note a stamp which, though without cryptic significance, assumes political proportions. In 1936 Austria issued a large and impressive postage stamp to commemorate the second anniversary of the assassination of Engelbert Dollfuss. The design consists principally of a handsome and sympathetic portrait of the murdered statesman. A considerable number of these stamps reached the United States, to find their places in the collections of American philatelists. When it was first issued the stamp could be purchased for about two dollars. Then gradually during the years of the Second World War this little piece of paper became increasingly scarce. It disappeared slowly but surely from the stamp tray with a corresponding increase in price. Today this portrait of Dollfuss will cost a collector in the neighborhood of seventy-five dollars. The stamps at any price are being systematically bought up and retired from circulation.

The Germans are a very thorough people, and have long been addicted to stamp collecting. Their huge and complete catalog of the stamps of the world, published by Michel, contains reproductions of practically every stamp except

this one with the face of Chancellor Dollfuss.

After a time the secret came out. The stamps of Dollfuss which had been sent to the United States and Great Britain represented the greater part of the supply that had not been confiscated and destroyed by the German Gestapo. These industrious gentlemen wished to obliterate all record and memory of the unpleasant incident in which they had played a prominent part.

Austrian patriots were forbidden, under a heavy penalty, to possess even a picture of Dollfuss. By underground means the Dollfuss stamps were being purchased by the Austrians and smuggled back into Austria. These tiny pieces of paper were easily concealed, and if one were discovered nothing could be proved against the owner, for after all it was a legal postage stamp of his own country. There is no doubt that these stamps were a considerable force in binding together the hearts of the Austrian people in their resistance against Germany. They were an ever-present reminder of the tragedy which led to the enslavement of their country.



DR. ENGLEBERT DOLLFUSS

On July 25, 1934 Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss was murdered in his room in the chancellery, Vienna, as part of the Nazi program aimed toward the absorption of Austria into the Greater German State. In 1936 the Austrian post office department issued a beautiful stamp to commemorate the second anniversary of the Chancellor's death.

## The Writings of Paracelsus

A. J. HOWIE

What do we have in the Library of the Philosophical Research Society on Paracelsus?

The full name is Philippus Aureolus Paracelsus, originally Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim. Because he was born in Switzerland he has been called Helvetius Eremita; and in other places he has been known as Germanus, Suevus, and Arpinus. He seems to have assumed the name of Paracelsus to signify that his knowledge and teachings were beyond those of Celsus. He was born in 1493, just after the discovery of the Americas, in a small village a short distance from Zurich.

We have the following biographical works:

*The Life of Philippus Theophrastus, Bombast of Hohenheim known by the name of Paracelsus and the substance of his teachings concerning cosmology, anthropology, pneumatology, magic and sorcery, medicine, alchemy and astrology, philosophy and theosophy extracted and translated from his rare and extensive works and from some unpublished manuscripts.* By Franz Hartmann, M. D. George Redway, London, 1887.

This is a very sincere and readable volume that contains many stimulating and thought-provoking quotations. However, Hartmann was an ardent theosophist and took every opportunity to point up parallels with Eastern teachings and to claim Asiatic origins and vocabulary equivalents. This obvious bias



PARACELUS

From a 16th-Century pen and ink drawing

is unfortunate. Also, the quotations have a tendency to become a portion of Hartmann's text so that it is difficult to know just when one is reading a translation of Paracelsian text, a paraphrased quotation, or an interpretation of the translator.

In addition to the biography and digest of Paracelsian philosophy, there is a brief outline of the early editions, mention of the spurious works attributed to Paracelsus, a list of the writings contained in the *Opera* "ordered, revised, and published" at Cologne in 1589-90 by John Huser, the names of early dictionaries of Paracelsian terms, a glossary, an index, and an appendix of several papers interpreting some late 19th century beliefs in the light of Paracelsus.

*The Life of Paracelsus Theophrastus von Hohenheim, 1493-1541.* Illustrations and index. By Anna M. Stoddart. David McKay, Philadelphia, 1911.

*Theophrastus Paracelsus, mediaeval alchemist.* By W. P. Swainson. William Rider & Son, Ltd., London, 1919.

(The foregoing work is contained also in *Three Famous Alchemists* published

by The Occult Book Society, London, 1947.

*Lives of Alchemical Philosophers* with a critical catalogue of books in occult chemistry and a selection of the most celebrated treatises on the theory and practice of the hermetic art. Anonymous. Lackington, Allen & Co., London, 1815. *Paracelsus*, pp. 50-53.

*Lives of Alchemystical Philosophers* based on materials collected in 1815 and supplemented by recent researches, with a philosophical demonstration of the true principles of the *magnum opus*, or great work of alchemical reconstruction, and some account of the spiritual chemistry . . . . to which is added a bibliography of alchemy and hermetic philosophy. By Arthur Edward Waite. George Redway, London, 1888. *Paracelsus*, pp. 137-140.

*Lives of the Necromancers*. An account of the most eminent persons in successive ages who have claimed for themselves, or to whom has been imputed by others, the exercise of magical power. By William Godwin. Frederick J. Mason, London, 1834. *Paracelsus*, pp. 359-401.

Check the references in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *An Encyclopedia of Occultism* by Lewis Spence, *An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic . . . . Philosophy*, etc. by Manly Palmer Hall, *Psychologie und Alchemie* by C. G. Jung, Zurich, 1944 (German text). In his forthcoming Volume 2 of *Journey in Truth* Mr. Hall is devoting one chapter to Paracelsus.

The bulk of the writings of Paracelsus was dictated to various disciples. A few of these works were published during his lifetime—*De Gradibus et Compositionibus Receptorum et Naturalium*, Basel, 1526, and his *Chirurgia Magna*, Ulm, 1536. The rest became public after his death, but all of it in a most confused state and with little or no editorial supervision. The result has been that many spurious works were circulated on the strength of the authorship of Paracelsus.

The Archbishop, Prince Ernst of Cologne, became interested in the Paracelsian writings, and sponsored a critical examination of the published writings and the collection of autographs of Paracelsus and original manuscripts of his disciples by John Huser. He organized the material and revised and published the *Opera* at Cologne in a general edition during the years 1589 and 1590. Hartmann's biography gives a table of contents of this edition with a translation of the titles.

We have the 1616 edition of the Huser collection, *Opera, bucher und schriften / so viel deren zur hand gebracht: und vor wenig jahren / mit und aufs ihren glaubwürdigen engener handgeschriebenen Originalien collacioniert vergliechen / verbessert*. Strassburg, 1616. 2 vols.

The medical works are contained in *Chirurgische Bucher und Schrifften / detz Edelen . . . . jetzt auff's New autz den Originalen / und Theophrasti engen handschriften / so viel desselben zubekomen gewesen / auff's trewlicht und uleiffigst wider an tag geben: Auch am mehrer richtigkeit und Ordnung wissen / allen Leib und Wundarten / wie auch canniglichen / zu hohen Nutz und Verstandt in vier unterschiedliche Theil / deren Begriff und Ordnung nach den Vorreden zufinden / verfasst: Sambe einem Appendice etlicher nutzlicher Tractat / und volkommenen Register*. Strassburg, 1618.

We have the following translations into English:

*Nine Books of the Nature of Things*, of the Generation, Growthes, Conservations, Life, Death, Renewing, Transmutation, Separation, Signatures of Natural things. Also a *Chymicall Dictionary* explaining hard places and words met withall in the writings of Paracelsus and other obscure authors, all of which were faithfully translated out of the Latin into the English tongue by J. F. M. D. Richard Cotes, London, 1650. (Contained in *A New Light of Alchymie* by Micheel Sandivogius.)

*Discovering the Wonderfull Mysteries of the creation* by Paracelsus: Being His

Philosophy to the Athenians. Made English by H. Pinnell, for the increase of learning and true knowledge. London, 1657. Frontispiece of Paracelsus. (Contained in *Philosophy Reformed & Improved in Four Profound Tractates*. I. Discovering the Great and Deep Mysteries of Nature by that Learned Chymist & Physitian Osw: Crollius.)

*The Nature Spirits according to Paracelsus* by Manly Palmer Hall, Philosophical Research Society Lecture Booklet No. 6, Los Angeles, 1939. (A brief commentary by Mr. Hall with the first published English translation of the *Book of Nymphs, Sylphs, Pygmies, and Salamanders, and Kindred Beings* translated out of the Strassburg, 1616, edition of Paracelsus.

*Medicina Diastatica or Sympatheticall MUMIE*: Containing many mysterious and hidden Secrets in Philosophy and Physick. By the construction, extraction, transplantation, and application of Microcosmical & Spiritual MUMIE. Teaching the Magneticall cure of Diseases at Distance. Abstracted from the works of Dr. Theophr. Paracelsus: By the labour and industry of Andrea Tentzelius, Phil. & Med. Translation out of the Latin by Ferdinando Parkhurst. London, 1653.

An interesting Latin text is the *Prognosticatio* attributed to Paracelsus and written for Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria in 1536. There are 32 emblematical plates each accompanied by an oracular verse. We also have an undated 19th century manuscript translation of the foregoing into French paralleling a photographic reproduction of the figures and Latin text.

The *Lexicon Chymicum* of Gulielmo Johnson has been reproduced in the *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa* compiled by Jo. Jacobi Mangeti and published at Geneva in 1702 (pp. 217-291). According to Hartmann this is a dictionary of Paracelsian terms compiled by Martin Ruland and published at Prague in 1612. Johnson published it under his own name at London in 1660, and it is in this form that it was incorporated into the *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa*.

The same *Bibliotheca* contains *Congeries Paracelsicae Chemiae de Transmutationibus Metallorum*. (Libri III, pp. 423-462.)

We have a manuscript of translations into French of various alchemical writings. The volume bears the name of Cagliostro and it is believed to have been part of his library. This contains the *Science des Talismans* ou magie naturelle et cabalistique. Extraite du petit Albert Edition de lion en 1768, qui moi paru fort bon . . . . Talismans de Paracelse. (pp. 607-670)

In English we have eighteen volumes of manuscript from the library of Dr. Sigismund Bacstrom. Many of these papers are Dr. Bacstrom's own translations dated in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Those of Paracelsian interest are the following:

- Vol. 6. Extracts from Paracelsus.
- Vol. 7. Notes by Bacstrom on a passage by Paracelsus.
- Vol. 9. A treatise concerning the *Tincture of Antimony* communicated to his friend Theodore in 1536.
- Vol. 10. *On the Sphaera Saturni* by which ☉ is vitrified into a tinging glass by means of ♂ From an ancient ms. *Sal Alembrot or Aqua Mercurii*. Written in old German verse in the exact style of that author, and seems to be genuine. These verses are found in an old, very scarce collection of processes called *Theophrusti Paracelsi magni Philosophi, excellentissimi, utriusque medicinae Doctoris Manuale . . . .* Baslea, 1582.

In the *Aureum Vellus oder Guldin Schatz und Kunst-Kammer* of Salomon Trismosin, Hamburg, 1708, Tractatus II is titled *Furnembste Chymische Schrifften / Tincturen und Procesz / so bisshero in keinem Truct noch nie gesehen. Dann zum andern / desz auch Edlen unnd furtressenlichen Philosophi Bar-*

*tholomei Korndorffers Schriften / so vil deren an jetzo beyhanden gewesen / und sich zusammen der Ordnung halber gefugt / auss den Originalien in ein Volumen gebracht.* (pp. 89-128) There is a frontispiece in this section of Paracelsus. The contents are as follows:

*Das guldin Flusz Theophrasti Paracelsi / ist ein Gespräch von der Alchimey / da der Theophrastus den Christophilum (das ist / den Goltmacher / oder der gern vil Golt haben wolt) alter Sachen underrichtet.*

*Elixier und Tinctura Theophrasti. Curiert Lepram, Podagram / Hydropisin / Schlag / und allerley zufallende kranchkheyten.*

*Tincturae Paracelsicae. Die Arth zu seyen den Samen in die Erd. Das ist der Process auss Theophrasti handschrift verteutsch.*

*Augmentum mit dem Mercurio Saturni / Johannis Trithemii Abbts in Sponheim / so Doctori Paracelso zukommen / und auss seiner eygenn handschrift abgeschrieben worden.*

*Testamentum Theophrasti Paracelsi, darinn wirdt die Transmutatio agezeygt / der sieben Metall / wie die selben in Solem verwandelt werden sollen.*

*Epitaph of Paracelsus showing his coat of arms.*

The most interesting item we have saved for the last. We have a unique manuscript of Paracelsian interest. It is undated, written on very heavy paper, and bound in leather with a simple label on the backbone *Geheimes Manuscript* (Secret Manuscript). The title page is inscribed with a large black cross with the word *Iesus* written as an acrostic on the upright and crossarm. The initials N. R. I. appear at the three top ends. About the cross is written in Latin, *In the cross I am a sphere. From it comes true wisdom.* At the bottom of the page is the inscription *After the cross, light; after the clouds jubilation will rise.* There is a frontispiece pen-and-ink sketch of Salomon Trismosin by G. Zencker and in the body of the text a similar portrait of Paracelsus by the same artist. There are two other sketches, one heightened with water



SALOMON TRISMOSIN

The Hermetic Adept

From an Original 16th-Century Drawing

colors, unsigned and apparently by another artist—one a symbolical emblem of an alchemical process and the other portraying a test with a magic mirror in connection with the text.

The manuscript is composed of copies of correspondence to Paracelsus from Salomon Trismosin, Trithemius, Isaac of Holland, his father, and other fragments giving alchemical processes and formulas. We have translated the first letter written in German:

A letter (also the process, written by Salomon Trismosin from Lusin to you young Hohenheimer that you may become great in the secret art. I hear, and have learned upon inquiry, that you Phillip work with many arts and experiment with imperfect metals. You find therein nothing you know what to do with and therefore send for counsel from me so that you may read again the nature of the unknown things. I have seen through you, and your constellation tells me that you are predestined to the secret art. You must become great in your fortune. I have taught and instructed you in my school with the sweet sentences of the learned philosophers that you might know about the Red Lion, that which you have not

understood with your intellect. You let slip the pearls and you grasp that which is uncertain. You must seek the right road like our ancient forefathers. I am very pleased with you as a young mountaineer who extracts the Sun from the Rain, i. e. from *minera*. Because you enjoy it, she will become submissive to you and she will become mixed with Lion Blood in your work. Your mane is reversed from that of your parents to the advancement of your fortune. Your chastity will enable you to acquire much secret art, your desires will be fulfilled in your middle age. You have been to me the most beloved disciple of my school, therefore will I reveal to you what otherwise I keep secret at your beginning. Be secretive and silent like a fool that cannot speak, otherwise you will be held captive by great kings. I want you to have in your youth a solid

basis for your work in the world. Seek now your experiment with gentle fire so that the Tincture will succeed for you. Be careful that the blooming with its colors will not disintegrate in its operation. You must be wise for the control of the fire. Your understanding will teach you and you will become skilled. I can not teach you, neither can any man in this world, how to place your hand so that the Lion will show himself in his good rays. You must experience it. Seek a devout man whom you can trust who has essayed the secret Work to its end. Humble yourself before him. He will point out with his fingers the great treasure with its colors. I am old and weary. I have consummated the Work for another time. I will now rest. Amen! Given from the village of Lusin, April 18, 1515, to Phillip von Hohenheim, now and for future use by my beloved former pupil.



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