

Chapter 9

Major Aids to Spiritual Advancement

IN a vague and nebulous way, because those in our educational institutions advocate them, there is a general impression that in some manner society is benefited by certain kinds of music, literature, dramatic art, nature interests and social affairs. And with an uncertainty that leads to recurrent controversy as to which is better and which worse, it is likewise felt that some music is degrading, that the published works of some writers are corroding, that even some poetry is not fit for the public eye, that the movies must be censored, the stage made subject to police regulations, and certain social contacts, such as the so-called night-life in our cities, should be discouraged or even prohibited by legislation. But the man in the street commonly has no means of gauging either the value or the menace of any of these things. Consequently, because it is his work to encourage all those things beneficial to society, and to discourage all those which detract from human progress, the spiritual alchemist should furnish a yardstick by which all such things can correctly be measured.

The arts, various interests and social contacts have a value in that they contribute either to length of life or to its breadth. Most of them, in addition to furnishing variety of experiences, increase the range of information. But in addition to the facts they furnish, and of more importance to man's progress, they each also appeal to the emotions and tend to make desires of a certain type habitual. The desires thus cultivated through repeated stimulation may be coarse, brutal, degrading, selfish and directed to the gratification of the individual at the expense of the welfare of others. And in so much as this is true the production or interest is a detriment to the individual and the race, for it tends to restrict and limit life in its most important dimension. On the other hand, the desires so aroused and habitually indulged may be those seeking refinement, aspiration to higher accomplishment, those associated with noble intent and the zealous determination to make whatever sacrifice of purely selfish aims is necessary for the welfare of others and general human advancement. To the extent such desires are encouraged to become man's companions the contacts stimulating them are beneficial to the individual and the race; for they increase the dominant vibratory rate and give life height as well as length and breadth through lifting it to a higher spiritual level.

Man's actions are directed by his desires, and he desires and is attracted toward that which gives him pleasure. That he may have desires that spur him to actions that give him the experiences that enrich his life he should be

encouraged to enjoy life to the utmost. But at the same time he should recognize that the most enjoyment is not to be had through those things which degrade and make gross.

One who has experienced merely the pleasures of the animal appetites has missed intense enjoyment. A dog, no doubt, enjoys his food; but the enjoyment is of a very inferior nature to that experienced by a cultured man with his favorite music. The pleasures of the drunkard, of those who dissipate, and of others who gain something for themselves through the oppression of those less vigorous, are not in the same class, but much inferior in quality to the enjoyments of those who have trained their minds and nervous systems to higher appreciations.

The more refined the organism and the more trained in its appreciations the more enjoyment it is capable of experiencing. Refined enjoyments, through making the proper desires habitual, lend themselves to the advancement of the individual and the progress of the race. In addition to their utility in directing the behavior into channels beneficial to the race, they are experiences which in themselves give breadth and height to the life of the individual undergoing them.

We should not think of seeking enjoyment as materialistic. If we conduct ourselves wisely, when we pass to the next life we there also will seek enjoyments; for in that realm as well as in this one they afford a means of directing the energies into channels that are best. If sorrow and privation come, here or hereafter, let us meet them bravely and gain spiritual values from them all through the methods of spiritual alchemy. But let us not seek misery. On the contrary, let us seek the highest enjoyments, which come only from those things which call out the tenderest and most exalted desires in behalf of others, and the flaming zeal for high accomplishment.

Music

Of these enjoyments, and one capable of considerable quality cultivation by almost everyone, is that obtained from music. Music is good for us, or bad for us, in proportion to the elevation or degradation of the impulses which it arouses.

It has a language all its own by which it communicates to us any possible emotional state or combination. It speaks rather definitely, but not in words. Through rhythm, melody and harmony it may arouse longing, wistfulness, despair, elation, joy, happiness, sorrow, passion, lust, frenzy, hatred, greed, envy, revenge, or any other emotion of which the soul is capable. Its vibratory rates reach the astral form through the consciousness without the medium of definite images, and set up changes in the astral body much as do images of the most powerful intensity. The feelings engendered thus are such as might be aroused by any set of thoughts or by any kind of objective experiences. And because they do thus awaken such feelings, the behavior consequent upon them is that which might equally result from intense thought or objective experience. Thus does music have a power to direct our conduct.

But a peculiar thing about music, and one that should cause us to avoid hasty judgment as to which kinds are good and which kinds are bad, is that at first hearing a type to which we are not accustomed is usually most unattractive.

Melody, undoubtedly, is the creative energy in musical production. But what constitutes melody is very difficult to define. Certain notes that when first heard seem quite unrelated sounds, when heard repeatedly come to be considered melody of exceptional beauty and power. The later developments

of what was originally known as jazz, much of it, aside from its syncopation, is denounced by many as harsh and discordant. How are we to judge?

It would seem that musical productions, to prove their worth, must undergo a period of presentation. It may be that great treasures of music are sometimes discarded because the audience cannot educate itself to their true worth. It may be that Wagner's composition of late life which was discarded, although he held it to be his greatest, is better than his earlier productions. But in the long run music stands or falls through the appreciation of its public. And so far in musical history only those works have endured as great which men have come to recognize as built on melodies of power and beauty.

The music of the West has been erected on the diatonic scale of thirteen equal-value semi-tones to the octave. The East deals with smaller intervals; implying ears more delicately adjusted. Certain music from the Orient, of singularly haunting charm, makes use of intervals in which our semi-tones are divided into four parts. But these smaller divisions, giving greater freedom of melody, are sadly handicapped in another essential; they offer an obstacle to harmony. Such small intervals when they enter into a harmonic structure sound to us as though something were desperately wrong.

Because, as already mentioned, something new sounds incomprehensible or even diabolical at first, is no criterion as to its real beauty. But if on subsequent renderings it continues to sound horrible, we may be sure that people will not accept it. Some there are who have tried to use quarter tones in modern composition, and some others have attempted to found schools not on harmony, but on frankly unresolved dissonance. But these rackets, called music by their creators, have so violently distressed the nerves of their listeners who have been grounded in the traditional concepts of harmony, that they have not gained an appreciable footing.

At the same time, their originators are to be commended. Because good music has been produced only by conforming to certain rules is no indication that other and better methods may not yet be discovered. It may be that a hundred new forms will be brought to light and experimented with before something really better than we now have comes to light. But if, in the long run as the result of all this experimenting, something of real value is added to musical expression, the work of these inventors in the realm of sound will have been well worth while.

Yet so long as these new forms tend to disrupt, through their violent and prolonged clashes, the nervous poise of those hearing them, we cannot consider their effects for the better. Life depends upon harmony; and discord tends toward dissolution. Discords entering human consciousness as alleged music, through the sympathetic response of the finer body tends to arouse discords in the astral form, and these, in turn, attract misfortune in the external environment. The material success of the individual, as well as his poise and happiness, depends upon his inner harmonies.

I presume in the later adaptations of what was originally called jazz we have something that will add somewhat to the richness of musical expression. From the weird cries and crude force of its syncopations one might think such music came from the jungle. But as a matter of research, those who have sought to trace it do not find it there, but conclude that its intense, ceaseless movement is the interpretation, in musical language, of the hurry, strife and industrialization of American life. The inexhaustible rhythms and its blue notes bear the label, "Made in America."

It is really not a new music, but a new language through which old music

is presented. It has been shown, for instance, that "Yes, We Have No Bananas," is note for note and in exact rhythm Handel's magnificent "Hallelujah" chorus in its opening, and that in its second part it appropriates "I Dwelt in Marble Halls," from Balfe's "Bohemian Girl" "Avalon" had to pay damages in court to Puccini as being taken from the tenor aria in the last act of "Tosca"; and many others have been shown to be but classical compositions that have been given this new dress. So while jazz and its derivatives may contribute something permanent in the way of expression, up to the present moment those using it have created almost nothing.

Without emotion life is a very thin rind. Yet music, in these days of radio, is an easy means of giving it greater depth. The most complex form that has yet evolved, and that requires greatest training fully to appreciate, is the symphony orchestra. The interweaving of contrapuntal threads, the richness and variety of tone and coloring, and the interrelation of rhythms give it a liberty that nowhere else can find expression. In fact, its creations are limited not by its technical requirements, but by the receptivity and discriminatory powers of the human ear.

Like almost anything else really worth while in life, the ability to appreciate good music, and thus through it elevate the emotions to sublime heights, requires training and effort. Being in its presence, listening to it, and endeavoring to feel its meaning, is an avenue to this training. And he who can enter completely into the enjoyment of a symphony orchestra always feels well repaid in pleasure alone for whatever effort such appreciation has cost.

Most people, however, find the symphony too heavy except for an occasional addition to the musical diet. But on the screen and stage and over the radio a wide variety of really good music is now easily available; and it is a healthy sign, just at the moment this is being written, to find the public demanding less and less of the so-called "swing", and more and more of what are considered to be better productions. Grand opera, vocal solo work, and instrumental recitals seem to be gaining new life. These types of music are mostly good in that they stimulate a desire for unselfish work, pity for those in misfortune, and such other feelings as are not antagonistic to race welfare.

Some of the derivatives of jazz, on the contrary, in their wild shrieks and maudlin whinings give rise to the impulse to abandon all self-control; to such lack of restraint and dignity as may be commonly witnessed only in those drunk. To shout and laugh and have a hilarious time is a detriment to no one; but to be drunk with wine or with emotion to an extent that neglects any thought of the effect of actions on oneself or on others is certainly most detrimental. And there are other forms of undesirable music that stimulate lust and base desires; forms that invite man to selfish gratification at the cost of pain to others, or that degrade and lower him to thoughts and feelings that are coarse and brutal.

Such music as expresses, and therefore stimulates, hate, blood lust, frenzy, fury, rage, licentiousness, self-abandonment and other anti-social emotions should be shunned by those aspiring to spirituality. Consequently, the cosmic alchemist uses such influence as he has to create a popular demand for the types of music that lift the soul of man above these sordid emotions, any one of which lowers the dominant vibratory rate and hence the spirituality.

Drama and Fiction

With a radio in nearly every home, and twenty million people in this country attending the movies every day, where music also commonly is heard, music must have a profound influence upon the spiritual trend of our people. And

as their emotions are so repeatedly played upon by the heroes and villains of screen, stage and radio, the drama also must be given a place of importance in determining the popular emotional trend.

With these so numerous avenues of entertainment at hand that require almost no effort to enjoy, it is impossible to determine to what extent the realm of literature is being also used for relaxation and entertainment and is consequently influencing the general emotional level. But as publishers still report a high sale of novels, and the newsstands are prospering from their sale of magazines, we may conclude that the printed page, while not having so unrivaled an influence as it once had, is still of arresting importance.

Through music and dancing the emotions are played upon directly in such a way as to stimulate aspirations and desires and perhaps suggest images and events that take place in time. In sculpture and painting some great moment, or conception, or feeling, or the outcome of something that has taken place in time, is fixed and made permanent. But fiction, whether presented in print as a story, or over the radio or on the screen or stage as a play, presents the images of actors or the sound of their voices together with events rather than merely suggesting them as music does; and it has a greater freedom than sculpture and painting in that it presents them during the passage of time. It thus much more closely resembles the experience of actual life.

The play and the story are very much the same thing except that each is presented in a medium that has its own technical restrictions. In the printed page, for instance, the author by means of words must be able to persuade his reader to see the images of people doing certain things amid certain surroundings. Not only must he be skillful to convey just the images he wishes to his reader; but at best it places more burden of work upon the reader to imagine the various people, settings and actions described than it does actually to see them as presented to him from stage or screen, or to hear them talk to the accompaniment of suggestive sound effects.

On the other hand, a stage or screen presentation is greatly limited as to the number of scenes and the amount of detail that can be given, because the whole action of the story must be compressed within a few hours at most. And an even greater restriction to the stage or screen play is that no analysis of the motives is possible during the interchanges; and no explanation as to the bearing of a scene just witnessed in relation to the main plot can be made. In radio presentations explanations can be made of thoughts, motives, or anything else that otherwise is not clear, after the manner of the printed story; but it is even more limited than stage or screen in the amount of time into which the whole must be compressed. Thus there is time only for the briefest of explanations. Yet the author of a story commonly goes thoroughly into the thoughts of at least his main character, and is careful after each scene to explain just what bearing it has on the development of the plot as a whole.

Other than these natural restrictions imposed on each form of presentation, the story and the play are handled in much the same manner, and their effect upon the public is not diverse enough to call for entirely separate discussion.

Other than the forms mentioned, the realm of literature holds serious books that are non-fiction in character. In the magazines are to be found articles, and on the screen are presented travelogues and educational themes that frankly and openly are informative in character. In so far as the information they present is reliable they are to be encouraged; because man cannot acquire too much information. But even such serious material often is so artis-

tically clothed and beautifully handled as to lend it a grace and charm that results in emotional pleasure. And in so much as it does this, through calling up delightful images and pleasantly stimulating the imagination, these works by means of the emotional impressions they engender, add a richness to life that may become a spiritual asset. In addition to their power of intellectual instruction they educate to finer feelings as well.

Novels differ from short stories—and both are often given screen and radio presentation—in that the novel commonly goes into the enterprises of various characters, while the short story, to be typical, is concerned with the attempt of some central character to accomplish something, or at some critical point to make an important decision. The serial is a long short story with the installments ending in a suggestion that something menacing and sinister is about to happen. In the novelette two groups are commonly involved, often contending for the same prize. And it is usually handled by the cut and flash method in which the thoughts and actions of each group are alternately presented. The novelette, as well as the novel, affords room to show the development of character.

But whether a story is unified by the effort of one character to accomplish something or to make a decision of importance, or whether, as in most novels the minute details that contribute to the development of character amid certain surroundings are set forth, editors, reflecting the demands of the public, are more and more exacting in that all descriptions of places and typical conditions shall be accurate. If the story is laid in New York, the author must be familiar with, and picture to the reader, New York as it actually exists. If the plot takes the hero into South American jungles, the author must be able to give the reader an authentic conception of just such a jungle. Even the swift-action pulp magazines, in which the characters are permitted to do quite miraculous things, have a present-day requirement that descriptions of places shall be true to fact. And thus, the reading of almost any current fiction has commendable informative value.

We must not overlook, however, that the reading of fiction and the movie and radio habit sometimes become a vice. While absorbed in them we escape from the world of reality. We live in an imaginary world in which the duties and cares of external life are, for the time being, forgotten and neglected. The living in fantasy removes us, while it lasts, from the harsh contacts of daily existence, and thus affords our jaded nerves the opportunity for a more harmonious adjustment. As a temporary surcease from the impacts of external environment, therefore, such recreation is highly beneficial; for it conduces to higher efficiency in the real work of life.

But if, instead of using such avenues merely as temporary relief from conditions that have become too hard, the individual permits himself to form the habit of fleeing from reality in order permanently to avoid its harshness, he is on a road that is of benefit neither to himself nor to society.

To make a success of life on any plane it is essential that the problems of that plane be courageously faced and the energies concentrated upon them. Consequently, to persist in living in an imaginary world such as is created by movies and the radio and books of fiction, to the neglect of the practical, though more harsh, affairs of life, is to hinder adaptation to the real environment and thus encourage and hasten dissolution.

One can narcotize oneself into inability to cope with the real problems of life in many ways. I have known people so to saturate themselves with nicotine from cigarettes that it became too much effort to meet the common responsibilities of providing a livelihood. I have known others to get so much

satisfaction from their radio that they worked as little as possible and spent day after day for weeks, in which they could have accomplished something worth while, merely dreamily listening to it. And so it is with the fiction of the printed page or on the screen; if substituted for the effort that should be used in accomplishment it destroys initiative and is decidedly pernicious. Yet as a relaxation that permits greater effort later toward accomplishing something really worth while, it may prove of high value; particularly when it is selected with a view to the higher culture of the emotional nature.

I have already spoken of the swift-action stories of the pulp magazines; and how the things that the chief characters do in these stories are often quite impossible and at other times highly improbable. Here in the interest of imaginative pleasure the mind is called upon to visualize situations that a little analysis would cause it completely to reject. Yet if the mind accustoms itself to accept without question these unplausible feats, it is cultivating a habit of uncritical acceptance that probably will be carried over into the more practical affairs of life.

When some bizarre creature—a mouse, a cat, a rabbit or a dog—in an animated screen cartoon leaps from mountain peak to mountain peak, rides a whale across the ocean, and clubs some farmer into insensibility, this may be very entertaining; but unless the critical faculties at once assert themselves in a protest at the impossibility of such behavior, in a day or two one may find oneself listening with growing conviction to another fairy story told by a real estate agent who is determined to get one's name on the dotted line.

If we do not carefully discriminate in all our fiction between what is plausible and what is not, it also becomes increasingly difficult for us to discern the subtle fictions that tend to pass for truth in our daily papers and magazines. Most periodicals that are not devoted entirely to fiction desire to exert a political influence in a given direction. Often they owe their very existence to the power they possess to create public sentiment favorable to some financial clique. But if we do not dull our powers of discernment by accepting unplausible fiction of other kinds, it usually is not too difficult to perceive just what ends such subversive propagandists seek, and to recognize the cunning manner in which each scrap of important news, each noteworthy current event, each factual article, and each story published is given ever so slight a twist to make it apparently prove their contention or suggest the advisability of that which most they favor.

For the most part, the fiction published in the slick-paper magazines has credibility in detail, is presented in a polished style, and contains considerable in the way of analysis of feeling, thought and motive; while the prime requisites of the pulp magazines are excitement and violent action.

Even in magazine reading, therefore, it will be seen that there is a difference in appeals to the emotional palate. Those less sensitive get no satisfactory taste unless there is constant physical clash, just as there are those who must cover their food with strong condiments in order to enjoy it. Their taste is so blunt that finer savors entirely escape their notice. And in reading, likewise, the subtle movements of the story, the delicate analyses of emotion, the humanness of the motives, and the portrayals of traits that should be recognized as possessed by their acquaintances, are missed by them. Yet by cultivating their tastes to an appreciation of these less obvious literary elements their enjoyment in reading would be greatly increased.

We are, and should be, anxious to learn as much as possible about life about the way people live in the different social strata, and about the conditions

that exist in parts of the world either physically or socially far removed One claim to our interest, therefore, is made by an author who presents to us something that is unusual.

It is even good for us to know, through stories and screen and radio portrayals, what the thoughts, feelings, outlook and circumstances are of those who choose the less desirable paths of life. And it is good for us to learn what there is to be known about certain diseases; but if we are wise we shall avoid either too much physical contact with, or too much thinking about, any disease. Diseases, both physical and social, have a way of spreading themselves through intimacy.

It is well to see one or two pictures of the wild night life of the city, to become informed on such conditions as they actually exist; but to steep oneself in stories dealing with it, or night after night to witness such carousels on the screen or hear them over the radio, breeds a familiarity that through its suggestive power tends to encourage an attitude of too great tolerance.

Also, we need to know the facts about gang warfare, about bootleggers, about smuggling rings bandits and robbers. Of course, in the interest of public morals these anti-social characters, after a long period of success, are made to come to a bad end. But with the magazines, the screen and the radio so constantly filled with characters who defy the law, and at least for a time lead a glorious life of excitement and opulence, such malefactors in actual life are beginning, more and more, to be taken for granted; and such conditions, more and more, are being accepted as less deplorable than formerly was thought.

This type of story, in which the chief actor is a villain, and finally meets just retribution, is the least desirable of them all. Of course he receives his final punishment. And it may be that his mal-treatment of less powerful figures in the story calls out a commendable pity for them. Such pity, arousing the desire to defend the weak and minister to those in distress, has much spiritual value. But in such a story as we are considering — which is typical of the gangland setting — the interest centers chiefly in an undesirable character. The emotional response, therefore, if the story is successful — aside from admiration for such unselfish tendencies as the gangster exhibits — is that of ardently hoping, wishing and desiring that he shall meet destruction. And while, in the interest of self-preservation or the preservation of others, destruction at times may be necessary, the emotions accompanying it, or the desire to injure another, or to see another meet punishment or suffer, are coarse, gross and disruptive.

As cosmic alchemists then, let us recognize that such stories as arouse the feeling of hate, anger, lust, resentment, desire for vengeance or the downfall and destruction of another, lower the dominant vibratory rate and detract from the spirituality, as do those also which too frequently bring people into intimate contact with the debasing side of life. I am not suggesting censorship; as censorship too frequently suppresses that which is most worth while in the interest of narrow conventions. But I am suggesting that the better class of stories should receive as much encouragement as possible.

Of course, even in the more desirable stories, there is often a villain that the reader or audience is called upon to hate. Because the progress of life throughout has been so dependent upon the successful repulse of invasion, it is very easy to arouse the emotion of hate. Politicians constantly make use of this tendency. They know if they can find some flaw in their opponent it will be very easy, through attacking this, to persuade others to join with them in throwing mud. And thus it is also that the writers of stories, realizing how

easy it is to get people excited by pointing out something to hate, quite commonly add to the interest of their presentation by portraying some character that everyone is keen to have destroyed.

In some of the very best stories none of the characters is either very good or very bad, but all are just human beings subject to the pressure of circumstances. In the better type of stories, even though there is a villain, the desire for frustration or destruction of anyone plays a very subordinate part. Instead, in the accomplishment story the desire aroused chiefly is that certain individuals shall gain a well-merited reward; and in the story of decision that such decisions as are made shall conform to a high and unselfish standard of conduct.

An author, to the extent he is a competent artist, perceives certain beauties, certain things of significance, certain glorious conceptions, that others, absorbed in their daily pursuits, miss. These he points out to us, and gives to what was commonplace a new allure and an enhanced emotional association. When we have read of a certain place, or of a certain type of person as portrayed by a skilled writer, and then in the course of time we visit the place, or some other place that suggests it, or when we see someone who resembles the type thus encountered in fiction, there is an added charm and a pleasant thrill that we should have missed but for our reading.

For lack of space I cannot discuss in detail the ecstatic pleasures to be gleaned from poetry, or even from the better class of fiction. But if the emotions thus stimulated are expansive, tending to move away from self-centeredness; if they increase the desire to benefit others, to rise above the sordid and spread the spiritual wings, so to speak; if the feelings and desires thus cultivated are elevating and noble; we may be sure that the life has not only been broadened, but that it also has been heightened through the increase of the dominant vibratory rate. Through literature, through stage and screen, and through the radio it is possible to make more habitual those emotional states which increase the spirituality. The cosmic alchemist, consequently, encourages such vibratory rate lifting productions.

Through social contacts also there is opportunity to raise the vibratory rates. Of course, when the tide of conversation turns to gossip, when envy is engendered because another has more wealth or prestige or receives more favors, the results derived from social gatherings are detrimental. After all, it is so much easier to tear down—and in the process lower the dominant vibratory rate—than to build. It is so much easier to criticize those who receive unusual notice than it is to do something constructive. Inwardly dissatisfied with themselves, there are those who find little good in anyone; and because their temperament runs thus they criticize the government no matter what it does, find fault with their families on little or no pretext, and always can think of something derogatory to say about those who are looked upon as having attained some measure of success.

Yet to listen sympathetically to such expressions of envy, to become intrigued by the reputed misdeeds of others, or habitually to scan with interest such gossip as appears in the daily papers, is to cultivate emotions that are coarsening in nature and lower the spirituality.

Nevertheless, social gatherings in which there is a pleasant exchange of ideas afford opportunity for elevating emotional culture. It is true that the mere exchange of commonplaces gives rise to few emotional responses. But conversation may take place on almost any vibratory level, and when the

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discussion has to do with something worth while the impact of thought upon thought awakens new realizations. Viewed from many angles, and with additional information contributed first by one and then by another, there comes to be a clearer comprehension of the subject. This broadens the life. But also often in association with such a satisfactory intellectual exchange there is a peculiar and high emotional Hush that has a keen though subtle flavor. Even the silent company of those with whom there is complete sympathy and understanding holds an element of fine enjoyment. And thus our various social contacts, if chosen with discrimination, may be made to yield intense pleasures that lift the emotional level and therefore contribute to the spirituality.

Nature Communion

Yet above all other external contacts for refining the body, thoughts and feelings, and stimulating the most spiritual emotions, to one who can develop such an appreciation, is the intimate association with Nature out-of-doors. Sunrise on the desert, or sunset seen from some majestic mountain peak, gives to the Nature lover an unspeakable joy. That intimate friendship with flowers, with birds, with the little rodents that can be coaxed to eat from one's hand, is an avenue by which the ecstatic rapture of cosmic consciousness may rapidly be attained. Yet it is appalling how many people know almost nothing of the lives of creatures other than men.

I have deliberately curtailed to a minimum the space here devoted to this subject, because it is one about which I realize I am apt to be over enthusiastic. In addition to my occult pursuits, in the section where I reside I also am recognized as a naturalist. As an avocation, in addition to lecturing and giving radio talks on wild life, over a period of seventeen years I led one or two field trips each month for clubs and societies interested in Nature study; a program interrupted by the approach of World War II. I know the birds both by sight and song, can call the trees and plants by their first names, and when we walk afield have at least a speaking acquaintance with such lower orders of life as we meet. At ebb tide the creatures that crowd the tide pools are my acquaintances. And even as I learn the habits and receive the confidences of my human companions, so also I like to know the habits and problems of my non-human friends of field, of forest, of seashore, and of the mountain. But if this were merely an intellectual pursuit it would do no more than add breadth to my life. Yet, incomprehensible as it no doubt appears to many of those who have accompanied me on these jaunts into the desert, into the mountains, along the streams, or by the seashore, I feel, and enter into a sympathetic relationship with, the lives of the creatures thus contacted.

This avenue of giving both breadth and height to the life I must discuss from the personal standpoint, because it is an avenue less widely recognized than those previously mentioned. Yet it is the avenue which, as I followed the streams, made intimate friends of the trees, talked to the birds, and entered into the very soul and consciousness of all the denizens of the wild, as a boy led me into the paths of occultism. True friendship is rich in vibratory-raising emotions. It engenders the desire to benefit all and to harm none. An understanding is established. And this understanding friendship with creatures and plants in their native state that came to me as I walked through woods and field as a boy brought me to whatever insight I have of Nature's forces and occult laws.

Because of the personal bias I should be sure to exhibit were I to discuss more extensively the value of actual contacts with Nature out-of-doors, I shall not express fully my enthusiasm for it. After all, what the artist attempts to

present to the attention of others is something pleasing, inspiring, or notable that he has discovered. And the Nature lover, while finding pleasure in the works of the artist, gets even greater joy in making interesting discoveries and reveling in them at first hand.

Each flower has a message for the Nature lover. The birds, the bees, the katydids and crickets, each are conscious entities with which he communes. The lightning and the storm and the waving tree tops exalt him as manifestations of power, the rugged mountain peaks offer him a friendly challenge, and the warm rains of summer enfold him in a soft embrace. Feeling thus, no ignoble or sordid thought can reach his mind, his soul is elevated to the highest, he enters into true cosmic consciousness, and reaps a rich reward of spiritual treasure.

The mind of one person is not insulated from the minds of other persons or from the minds of other life-forms by some impervious wall. No more than the individual thought-cells and thought structures within the soul are walled off from each other. Each has a separate organization, and therefore a separate identity; but each also is capable of exchanges with others through the principle of resonance and the Law of Association.

While your mind contains innumerable thought-cell structures, each under the Law of Association capable of communicating its state of consciousness to any others, all are, or should be under the guidance of the over-all authority which is you. The organism as a whole has a purpose. And all the various factors which enter into the organism should, irrespective of their individual desires, cooperate in realizing the objectives you have set for yourself.

Thus also should we, to the best of our intelligence and ability, cooperate with other souls in assisting to realize the purpose of the over-all cosmic authority which we speak of as Deity.

Each ego, or spirit, is a spark, or emanation from Deity, and has the potential of developing and exercising deific powers. And each soul is a cell of consciousness within the universal consciousness, capable of extending itself to partake of the thoughts and feelings not only of other souls and groups but in some measure, and on the vibratory level to which its aspirations raise it, of the all-pervading intelligence and power of Deity.

Before a prayer is offered there should be clearly formulated in the mind that the soul is one with the universe, that the spirit is an emanation of Deity, just what it is that the prayer is expected to accomplish, and why the all-pervading intelligence and power of Deity should grant the prayer.

A worthy prayer, one that can be expected to contact the all-pervading intelligence and power of Deity on a benevolent level, not only must not be to gain some unfair advantage or to injure some other person, but must have within it elements the realization of which will in some measure also aid in the realization of God's Great Plan.

A prayer should not only be linked up with the intention of cooperating in the divine scheme of things, but its purpose should be clear. One of the most effective means of raising the dominant vibratory rate and thus increasing the spirituality is through prayer and devotional exercises. If this is the purpose, it should be clearly formulated in the mind before the prayer is commenced, and the effort made during it, or during any devotional exercise employed for this purpose, to arouse strong emotions and lift them to as high a level as possible. A prayer of thanksgiving should express thanks.

Prayer and Devotional Exercises

A prayer for health should clearly state that health is desired. A prayer for character development should make this purpose unequivocal. All should be stated explicitly and with positiveness, and nothing in the prayer should be ambiguous.

Before the prayer is offered it is well for the devotee to contemplate his relation to the universe and to Deity.

The recognition that his spirit is an emanation from Deity will lend him a confidence and an inner power that otherwise he may fail to attain.

And the recognition that his soul is not some isolated unit, but is in rapport with the soul of the universe, and is cooperating with it for a common purpose—a grand purpose which in some small measure will be furthered by the realization of the purpose of the prayer—will aid in gaining for the realization of the prayer the cooperation of any inner-plane intelligences that may be contacted. And it will aid the devotee, through the Law of Association, to contact the all-pervading power and intelligence of Deity on which he relies to bring the prayer's fulfillment.

To get the relation clearly established it may be well for the devotee after withdrawing his consciousness from consideration of external things—withdrawing his consciousness to the inner-plane to the extent he has ability to do so—to repeat earnestly a few times: My Soul is one with the universe my Spirit an emanation from Deity."

When he feels this relationship has been firmly established in his consciousness, he is then ready to make more specific contact and appeal to Deity. If he is a Church of Light member he does this by starting his prayer thus: "O Thou Eternal Spirit, in Whom I Live, Move, Breathe and have my Being!" The mind should be lifted at this point in aspiration and devotion as high as possible. It is not thought, but the emotion which accompanies it, which is able to lift the soul to high basic vibratory levels and there contact the all-pervading intelligence and power of Deity.

This high level of feeling should be maintained throughout the offering of the selected prayer. The prayer may be offered either silently or audibly, but it should have earnestness, positiveness and emotional energy behind it. It may be offered only once, or it may be repeated as many times as desired. A good plan is to set aside several short intervals daily for employing the same prayer. Asking for too many things at one time, or changing the prayer from day to day to different purposes, divides the mental energies necessary to make proper contact and gain realization. And one prayer backed by earnest devotion and powerful aspirations is far more potent than giving mere lip service to some prayer daily for a year.

Even as the salutation to Deity with which the prayer begins will vary according to the religion in which the devotee believes, so the ending of the prayer also will be different. Instead of "Amen," those of The Religion of the Stars find it preferable, due to the operation of the Law of Association and because a more positive effect is acquired, to close the prayer with the affirmation, "So Shall It Be!"

Appendix

Study Questions**The Conquest Of War (Serial No. 164)**

1. How does cosmic alchemy differ from the other six branches of alchemy?
 2. Why does cosmic alchemy gain no support from materialism?
 3. Why do materialists want to keep people ignorant of astrology?
 4. Why do materialists want to keep people from trying to use extrasensory perception?
 5. Why does the cosmic alchemist desire that all the people in the world shall have opportunity for intellectual and spiritual progress?
- Why does the cosmic alchemist work for the following:
6. Freedom of worship for all the people of the world?
 7. Freedom from want for all the people of the world?
 8. Freedom of expression for all the people?
 9. Freedom from fear for all the people of the world?
10. Why must the cosmic alchemist keep well informed on what things are beneficial to the race?
 11. Illustrate how theories often should be tried out on a small scale before being adopted as the basis of great social, political and economic changes?
 12. Indicate how, with animals lower than man, ability to make war strengthens the race.
 13. Indicate how it was greatly to the advantage of primitive man to be a good fighter.
 14. Indicate how, under present conditions, war tends to the survival of the weak and defective.
 15. Why, for any marked advance of the most cultured, it is necessary that the masses be advanced?
 16. Why is human advancement dependent upon skilled specialists in all lines, as well as upon leaders?
 17. Indicate how the conservatism of humanity is comparable to the conservatism of migratory birds.
 18. Mention a few advantageous devices that were strenuously resisted at their introduction.
 19. Indicate how war tends to break down conservative tendencies.
 20. What brought to an end the glory and culture of the Greek city-states?
 21. Indicate why war between nations today would destroy their civilization even more quickly than was destroyed the culture of the Greek city-states?

22. How has modern business largely triumphed over cut-throat competition?
23. What kind of competition should be encouraged among individuals and among nations?
24. Through what kind of organization can we hope to attain freedom from war?
25. What should the cosmic alchemist do at the present time to assist in the conquest of war?

The Abolition Of Poverty (Serial No. 165)

1. Why cannot the cosmic alchemist ignore the economic conditions of others?
2. Indicate how, even in the lives of Jesus and Buddha, someone produced the physical sustenance necessary to enable them to do their work.
3. What relation is there between a leisure class and the development of Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome?
4. How does industrial advancement give greater opportunity for cultural progress?
5. In what way do numerous material things aid the development of intelligence and emotional appreciation?
6. Why is time and energy released by machines in the direction of true progress?
7. How much surplus energy did Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome have that made civilization possible?
8. What made possible the marked cultural advancement of the ancient Jews?
9. How much surplus energy was available in the U.S. according to the latest obtainable statistics?
10. How much surplus energy was available in the U.S. at the close of the Civil War?
11. What relation has production and distribution to freedom from want?
12. How can the birth-charts of individuals be employed to increase freedom from want?
13. Why is full employment essential to freedom from want?
14. Why is high buying power on the part of the masses essential to freedom from want?
15. Upon what does the buying power of the masses depend?
16. Why cannot the poverty of the many be cured by taking the wealth of the rich and dividing it among the poor?
17. Why is it advantageous to the wealthy individual, even from the most selfish standpoint, that there shall be no poverty?
18. To what extent are the maximum efforts of leaders of unusual quality necessary in abolishing poverty?
19. To what extent are the money incentive and the right of bequest necessary in the abolition of poverty?
20. To what extent should individuals be permitted to accumulate wealth?
21. How does a monopoly usually influence efficiency?
22. How, and by whom, are positions usually filled under government ownership?
23. How does active competition between rival firms benefit society?
24. Upon what should depend the extent to which government ownership should replace private enterprise?

25. For what three things in particular does the cosmic alchemist work in his effort to secure freedom from want for all people of the world?

Cosmic Politics (Serial No. 166)

1. Why do people often look with suspicion at politicians?
2. Only through what channel can important changes in the social structure beneficial to the people be brought about?
3. What does the best kind of government give the people?
4. How do groups in America often work to gain selfish advantages for themselves?
5. What opportunity must people have to be able to prevent the injustices of special privilege?
6. Why must people have access to as many facts as possible if self determination is to result beneficially to them?
7. Can the ability of the cleverest to influence and manage the less clever be abolished by law?
8. Illustrate how too democratic a system may prevent efficient functioning.
9. What kind of men are needed at the head of any enterprise?
10. How do large businesses pick the men for executive positions?
11. What requisites, under the present political methods, are required to gain a position of great responsibility?
12. What training should the holder of a public office have?
13. What form of government, with a competent man at its head, is most efficient?
14. Why are not dictatorships more popular?
15. What class of people through the past have most encouraged and supported the highest culture?
16. What is the only safeguard the people have against exploitation and oppression?
17. Why does a farm population usually resist socialism?
18. Why must monopolies be prevented by law?
19. How could government provide for full employment?
20. Why should there be full employment?
21. What is the big problem that confronts each political system?
22. What is the chief danger under the system of private enterprise?
23. What is the chief danger under a political systems of government ownership of resources and industry?
24. Why is any repressed minority group a potential source of disturbance and dissension?
25. For what political measures does the cosmic alchemist work?

Heredity And Environment (Serial No. 167)

1. What is the first principle of successful selective breeding?
2. What is the general influence on the offspring of mating of close relatives?
3. Why does humanity discourage the marriage of close relatives?
4. Why does the practical stock breeder mate close relatives?
5. Why is it unlikely that humanity will consent to such selective breeding as is necessary to eliminate defectives from the race?
6. What are chromosomes?
7. What are genes, and how are they related to hereditary characteristics?
8. How many genes are supplied by each parent for each inherited characteristic?

9. What value in nature has the doubling of genes?
10. What is the dominant gene, and what is a recessive gene?
Explain by the distribution of genes:
11. How children may be inferior to both parents
12. How a child may be like the superior parent.
13. How a child may be like the inferior parent.
14. How a child may be superior to both parents
15. How a child may be a genius.
16. In the human family, to what extent does like produce like?
17. Explain how in the human race the stock has been improved by covering up defects instead of eliminating them
18. Explain why the elimination of defectives through prohibiting defectives from bringing children into the world would require thousand of years.
19. Explain the mental method of bringing superior children into the world.
20. Explain the astrological method of bringing children into the world that are superior to their parents.
21. Explain the radiational method of improving the human stock.
22. What are sex-linked characteristics?
23. In what way, from the first moment of conception, does the male differ markedly from the female?
24. To what extent is it believed that environmental influences can be made to bring about any changes in an organism that can be brought about through changing the combination of genes, or through changing the substance of the genes?
25. Explain the environmental method of eliminating the criminal and the defective and for improving offspring

How To Be Spiritual (Serial No. 168)

1. In what ways does the idea of spirituality held by Western Cosmic Alchemists differ from the common Oriental conception of spirituality?
2. In what ways does the idea of spirituality held by Western Cosmic Alchemists differ from the conceptions of spirituality of orthodox Christianity?
3. What part do initiative, intelligence and effort play in the teachings of the Western School of Occultism?
4. What does the Western School teach regarding Deity?
5. Why is the term spirituality not applied to mere duration of life?
6. What is the measure of length of a man's life?
7. What is the measure of breadth of a man's life?
8. What is the measure of thickness or height of a man's life?
9. What is the criterion from the inner-plane effect of that which tends in the direction of spirituality?
10. Why are both length and breadth of life valuable?
11. How do people most add to their spirituality.
12. Explain the three effective ways of increasing the spirituality.
13. Why cannot intellectual processes in themselves contribute to spirituality.
14. How does real education add to the spirituality?
15. Is it unspiritual to use occultism to get what you want?
16. Why is it unusually dangerous to use occult forces to take advantage of others?
17. Why is it the duty of the cosmic alchemist to use occult knowledge, as well as more material means?

18. Should we acquire knowledge through books and the exchange of ideas with others, or should we rely entirely upon such knowledge as comes from within?
19. Is it unspiritual to charge for occult services rendered to others?
20. Truth cannot be purchased for a price; therefore, is it spiritual or is it unspiritual for publishers to ask a price for their books, and teachers to charge for teaching?
21. In what lies the danger in charging for psychic work?
22. Why do those who engage in psychic work often lose their powers when they become engrossed with the financial reward?
23. Explain how people may become bewildered by a medley of ideas that have no clearly defined meaning so that they're particularly open to accepting unplausible suggestions.
24. What is the effect on the individual of being callous to the misery of others?
25. Why is the welfare of every person on earth a matter of concern to any truly spiritual person?

The Spiritual Value Of Education (Serial No. 169)

1. What psychological process may be used to determine a child's traits of character?
2. Upon what depends the adequacy with which humanity can successfully solve the problems of life?
3. In addition to acquiring facts and ideas, what other type of mental development is highly beneficial?
4. What is the chief difficulty encountered in the daily training of directed thinking and induced emotion?
5. Explain one method of cultivating alertness to prevent undesirable thoughts from entering the mind.
6. Why does the cosmic alchemist encourage the quest for new information?
7. Why is knowledge of the conditions of the life after death valuable?
8. Should we discourage research on other planes, by those competent, because such exploration is beset with perils?
9. Upon what must any true science of the after life rest?
10. Is such information as is received from the inner plane spiritual?
11. Is the exercise of the psychic faculties and of occult powers spiritual?
12. Is it spiritual to leave the physical body and travel to far places in the astral body?
13. Are so-called miracles a sign of holiness?
14. When, then, and when is not, a Hindu yogi a spiritual man?
15. Is the accumulation of wealth unspiritual?
16. How much education should the spiritual individual attempt to gain?
17. Why is it valuable that the natural abilities of a child should be known early in its infancy?
18. What is the most important factor of education?
19. Give an example of the public, due to faulty habit-systems formed in school, failing to discriminate in reference to its office holders?
20. To what extent is an unconventional affair unspiritual?
21. To what extent is cheating the public through graft unspiritual?
22. Is it spiritual, by superior ability, to acquire and hoard resources that otherwise might be enjoyed by others?
23. Why should most popularly accepted ideas occasionally be reexamined?

24. What is the real reason the astronomers of today believe astrology to be an exploded science?
25. What is the real reason "the average man of today" places more and more confidence in astrology, in spite of the pronouncements of certain scientists?

How To Appraise Spiritual Values (Serial No. 170)

1. Upon what depends whether or not an activity results in spiritual gain to the individual?
2. What is the measure of any individual's greatness?
3. Why should not Napoleon and J. Gould be admired?
4. Why should the merits of those who do important constructive work be brought persistently to public notice?
5. How have the kodak, the movie and the auto benefited the world spiritually?
6. Why should there be a strong public sentiment developed against those who acquire great wealth without contributing anything beneficial to society?
7. To what extent do the personal habits of George Washington add to, or detract from his greatness?
8. Is it really important, as affecting his greatness, whether or not Lincoln had a split personality?
9. Is it really important whether or not Edison chewed tobacco?
10. What was the really important thing about Burbank's life?
11. Why should the tendency be discouraged to make those of actual worth appear perfect also in every minor respect?
12. To what extent do men perform their best work under similar circumstances?
13. Can legislation prevent the powerful from taking advantage of the weak?
14. To be spiritual is it sufficient to obey the laws of the land?
15. What must one do to be really spiritual?
16. Is it spiritual merely to refrain from certain actions?
17. If it is good to escape pain and attain enjoyment in the hereafter why is it not good to escape pain and enjoy oneself now?
18. In what ways do the sports contribute to spirituality?
19. When are sports that involve a contest unspiritual?
20. When are sports that involve a contest spiritual?
21. Why is gambling unspiritual?
22. Why is listlessness unspiritual?
23. Why is drunkenness unspiritual?
24. When should mental and spiritual education cease?
25. What is the test, in so far as the individual is concerned, whether a thing is spiritual or unspiritual?

Minor Aids To Spiritual Advancement (Serial No. 171)

1. In what manner do those who drudge too persistently, and do not take ample recreation, impoverish the race?
2. In what manner do those of financial means who spend their time exclusively seeking pleasures, impoverish the race?
3. Why cannot the real wealth of life be inherited or vicariously attained?
4. How does graciousness of manner contribute to spirituality?
5. In what way does the appearance of the dinner table contribute to or detract from the spirituality?

6. Of what spiritual advantage is it to possess tools of symmetrical design, and utensils that are attractive in appearance?
7. What is the spiritual influence of a squalid neighborhood, where the houses are run down, the yards in disorder, and everywhere there is dirt and grime?
8. What suggestion is made by an office building that is merely a big box in which are unattractive cells where people work?
9. Explain why banks are commonly designed to appear massive, immovable and as solid as the earth itself?
10. Is it spiritual to dress in so unattractive a manner that others feel the desire to shun one?
11. In what manner may too many material possessions detract from the spirituality?
12. Through what avenue do man's inner-plane and his outer-plane customarily influence him?
13. Chiefly due to what activity do events and conditions come into the individual life?
14. What are the three different phases of ourselves?
15. What things are embraced in our outer-plane environment?
16. What things are embraced in our inner-plane environment?
17. Does the inner plane environment or the outer-plane environment have more influence, on the average, over man's thoughts, feelings and actions?
18. Through what two avenues do his thought-cells bring events into man's life?
19. Upon what two factors depends what man's thought-cells are able to accomplish?
20. By what yardstick should spiritual values be measured?
21. What is the measure of an artist's skill?
22. What is the measure of an artist's greatness?
23. Why should new dances not be hastily condemned?
24. What works of art are beneficial, and what ones detrimental, to the individual?
25. Why should the cosmic alchemist encourage people to take an interest in art?

Major Aids To Spiritual Advancement (Serial No. 172)

1. Why are man's enjoyments so important to him spiritually?
2. What kind of pleasures yield the most enjoyment?
3. Is it likely that in the after life we shall seek and find enjoyment?
4. To what extent should we seek misery?
5. What kinds of music benefit us, and what kinds are bad for us?
6. Why should there be no great haste about pronouncing new music either good or bad?
7. What is the creative energy in musical production?
8. Why should such so-called music that disrupts the nervous system be discouraged?
9. To what extent can the ability to appreciate good music be cultivated?
10. Does music that gives rise to a feeling of self-abandonment to impulse and wild recklessness contribute to spirituality?
11. In what way does fiction have a greater freedom than painting or sculpture?

12. What is the advantage of the screen or stage over the printed story? 13. In what way does the printed story have greater freedom than the screen or stage?
14. In what ways may literature of the non-fiction type contribute to spirituality?
15. Under what circumstances may the reading of fiction and the movie habit become a vice?
16. What benefit and what detriment are commonly derived from reading the swift-action pulp magazines?
17. In what factors are the smooth-paper magazines superior as contributing to spirituality, to the swift-action pulp magazines?
18. What is the spiritual influence of constantly reading, or witnessing on the screen, stories of vice and crime?
19. Why is the type of story in which the chief actor is of villainous character least desirable, even though the villain meets his due punishment?
20. What type of stories, in general, should be avoided?
21. What type of stories yield the individual the most in spiritual values?
22. What is the general influence on spiritual advancement of gossip?
23. In what way may spiritual advancement be aided through nature communion?
24. What element relative to God's Great Plan must every worthy prayer contain?
25. Why, preceding prayer, is it advantageous to repeat earnestly a few times... "My soul is one with the universe and my spirit an emanation from Deity."?

Appendix

History of The Brotherhood of Light

To trace the origin of The Religion of the Stars, recourse must be made to tradition. Pseudo occultists and charlatans are only too ready to appropriate a name and use it to deceive the unwary. Hence a name and boasted lineage mean nothing in such matters. When genuine they rest upon secret tradition. And such documentary evidence as can be submitted for the genuine may easily be imitated by the spurious.

The only safe criterion of the genuineness of any esoteric teaching is the amount and accuracy of the information contained therein. The Brotherhood of Light lessons are now accessible to all. We welcome investigation with a view to proving their value. The lineage here given is not to claim infallibility or to prove authority, but to disclaim any originality in the ideas set forth beyond their method of presentation. Upon the *prima facie* evidence these lessons contain as expositors of THE RELIGION OF THE STARS, The Church of Light is well content to rest all its claims.

According to tradition, in the year 2,440 B.C., a group separated from the theocracy of Egypt, and through subsequent times, as a secret order, the name of which translated into English means The Brotherhood of Light, has been perpetuated, and has exerted a beneficial influence upon western civilization.

During only one period of Egyptian history did the teachings of The Religion of the Stars have a great influence on Egyptian civilization. This was during the reign of Akhenaten. This king was influenced by The Brotherhood of Light and broke completely with the corrupt priesthood of Amen. He moved to his City of the Horizon and spread stellar art and wisdom throughout Egypt. He died before the establishing of a new civilization could be completed; so the priests of Amen did the best they could to destroy his city and philosophy.

With the ascension of the Greek civilization, the influence of The Brotherhood of Light is seen in the astrology and mythology of Greece. Many of the Greek Mysteries take their basic rites from the ancient Egyptians.

The Greek philosophers, Thales, Pythagoras, Plato, Euxodus, and a score of others famed for learning that might be mentioned, received initiation directly at the hands of the Egyptian members of the fraternity.

At a later date this venerable order gave the impetus to learning in Alexandria, which made the city so justly famous. One of The Brotherhood of Light, the noble Hypatia, who, after the decline of the colleges in that city,

was the last to withstand the onslaughts of superstitious ignorance, and died endeavoring to spread the light of ancient wisdom.

It was The Brotherhood of Light that preserved the taper of learning from complete extinction during the dark ages, and that was responsible for kindling with it the fires of science and philosophy in Europe, even in the face of ruthless persecution.

The Brotherhood of Light not only has persisted as such on the innerplanes, but the line of succession has been kept alive, although at times it became exceedingly thin, also on the physical plane.

Much of our written history is lost in the mist of time. The thread of modern day existence on the physical plane picks up with the following.

M. Theon, for years, was the head of The Brotherhood of Light in Europe. The teachings came to America and were published in two books translated and edited by Emma Harding Britten, *Art Magic* and *Ghost Land*. The original edition of *Art Magic* bears this legend at the bottom of the title page, "Published by the author, at New York, America, 1876."

T.H. Burgoyne was the son of a physician in Scotland. He roamed the moors during his boyhood and became conversant with the birds and flowers. He was an amateur naturalist. He was also a natural seer. Through his seership he contacted The Brotherhood of Light on the innerplane, and later contacted M. Theon in person. Still later he came to America, where he taught and wrote on occult subjects. We find articles on the tarot, written by him, for instance, during 1887 and 1888, in *The Platonist*, published by Thomas M. Johnson at Osceola, Missouri. This was more than a dozen years before Genevieve Stebbins translated the work of P. Christian.

Captain Norman Astley, an officer in the British Army, had traveled extensively. In the performance of his duties he had lived in India and there had pursued occult studies. He also resided a short time in Australia. Later he returned to England to meet M. Theon, having previously contacted The Brotherhood of Light in his travels.

Astley was also a surveyor. Retired from the British Army he surveyed, among other places, what is now Carmel, California. It was such a beautiful region that when he married Genevieve Stebbins, a member of The Brotherhood of Light and a Delsarte teacher in New York, they decided to build their home in Carmel. That was in the 1860's.

As T.H. Burgoyne was a member of the same organization, it was natural he should pay them a visit. Captain and Mrs. Astley, who had contacted a number of earnest students suggested to Burgoyne that he write the basic Brotherhood of Light teachings as a series of lessons. This he agreed to do provided the students would enable him to live while he did this work. The Astleys made contact with students he knew and 12 were found who were willing to donate \$5 per month to this purpose.

Burgoyne lived in the home of the Astleys while he wrote *Light of Egypt*, Volume I. He wrote and issued as a manuscript lesson, which the 12 students were permitted to copy, one chapter each month. He had a white pony which would come at his whistle and follow him as if it were a dog. Each morning the weather was clement, he and his pony would leave the Astley domicile and go to a certain wild spot on Point Lobos to commune with the Monterey pines, to listen to the birds, to caress the flowers, and to hear the noisy surf boil into a little rocky cove above which in spring wild asters grew in profusion. Overlooking the charging and retreating waters, always sitting at the same spot, he wrote the whole of *Light of Egypt*, Volume I.

For reasons set forth in the preface to *Light of Egypt, Volume I*, it was later decided to publish these private lessons in book form. That this might be done it became necessary to finance the venture, and to have some kind of an organization which would resist the attacks it was anticipated would be made by those opposed to the purpose of the book.

Dr. Henry Wagner and Mrs. Belle M. Wagner (both with Jupiter in the tenth house of their birthcharts) agreed to finance the venture, and did so to the extent of \$100,000. And a branch of The Brotherhood of Light called the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, was formed for the express purpose of seeing to it that the *Light of Egypt* and its teachings should receive wide distribution.

The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor was governed in all its affairs by a council of three members consisting of a scribe, or secretary, an astrologer and a seer. Burgoyne was the original secretary. He passed to the next plane in March 1894, while residing in Humboldt County, California. Belle Wagner, Sun in Pisces, Aquarius rising and the Moon in the first house in Aquarius, was elected to take his place on the council. Minnie Higgins, Sun in Gemini, was the astrologer. Mrs. Anderson, Sun in Sagittarius, Moon in Cancer, Libra rising, was the seer. Meetings to decide issues were held on the second floor of Mrs. Anderson's large home in Denver, Colorado.

The bylaws of The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor made it impossible for any person under 21 years of age to join; made it impossible for a married person to join unless the spouse also joined, and made membership possible only after the individual's record had been thoroughly investigated.

Early in 1909 Minnie Higgins passed to the next plane, and in the spring of that year Elbert Benjamin was called to Denver and elected to take her place on the Council as the astrologer. At this meeting on the second floor of Mrs. Anderson's home, the other two members of the Council did their utmost, as the official minutes of the meeting show, to convince Elbert Benjamin that he should undertake the job of preparing a complete system of education that would enable a wide public to become conversant with The Religion of the Stars. But it was not until April of the following year that he consented to do this work.

Meanwhile he had contacted personally and through correspondence not only members of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, but members of The Brotherhood of Light who had remained aloof from the organization with headquarters at Denver. But it was chiefly by his becoming more closely associated with The Brotherhood of Light on the innerplane that he overcame his reluctance to take over so imposing a task.

In 1913 the three members of the Council of The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, after due deliberation, voted unanimously to close The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, and since then no members have been accepted.

During the period, 1914 to 1934 that The Brotherhood of Light lessons were being written, there was never any spirit other than that of helpfulness shown toward this work by any member of The Brotherhood of Light or by any person who had been a member of The Brotherhood of Luxor. And, in particular, Captain and Mrs. Astley were helpful. Elbert Benjamin visited them in their home on various occasions, and some of the extensive and encouraging correspondence he received from them helped him in this work.

In 1918 classes were first opened to the public. In order to carry out its objective of reestablishing The Religion of the Stars on earth, The Brotherhood of Light was incorporated as The Church of Light, on November 2,

1932, 9:55 a.m. PST at Los Angeles. The three founders of The Church of Light were Elbert Benjamine (C.C. Zain), who served as President until his demise November 18, 1951; Elizabeth Benjamine, who served as Secretary Treasurer until her passing in 1942; and Fred Skinner, who served as Vice President until his demise in 1940. From the 1920's through the 1940's much astrological research was carried on which has become standard reference for many astrologers.

Much of the history of The Church of Light in years between 1915 and 1951 involve the history of Mr. Benjamine's efforts. His mission on earth being completed through the writing, rewriting and printing of The Brotherhood of Light lessons, he felt that his physical form was worn beyond repair and that he could better serve the cause of Universal Welfare by leaving that body behind and moving to the next phase of his work in God's Great Plan.

In accordance with Mr. Benjamine's instructions, there was no public funeral, and his body was cremated. Because of his desire to be free from thoughts and emotions of grief so he might make a speedy adjustment in his new life, the announcement of his passing was withheld until the Response Day dinner in Los Angeles on December 18, 1951.

He left a priceless heritage in The Brotherhood of Light lessons, which must be preserved and passed on unchanged to succeeding generations.

The Light of Egypt is a consortium of advanced students and Hermiticians who seek to carry on the high traditions of the Brotherhood of Light by contributing our utmost to Universal Welfare without thought of personal gain or recompense.

It continues to work toward fulfilling these purpose by meeting the needs of a new world order with its progressive philosophy of soul development. As always there is a determination that each individual should have the opportunity to Contribute his or her Utmost to Universal Welfare to the end that all people may live with freedom from fear; freedom from want; freedom of speech; freedom of religion, and to be enlightened to the extent they wish by the soul uplifting teachings of The Religion of the Stars.

Appendix

Declaration of Principles

We are a Religious altruistic association. We consider all humanity as equal in the higher sense, and utilize our resources for the purpose of assisting each individual to fulfill their part in the Divine Plan. Our Hermetic Philosophy indicates that each soul is responsible for its spiritual progress; and our lessons provide the best information possible for the attainment of true spirituality and happiness on the physical plane and on each higher plane of progress.

There cannot be Two Orders of Truth in the Universe. Therefore, we deny that there is any antagonism between true Science and true Religion. We accept but one book as infallible in interpreting the Will of Deity. That is the Book of Nature. We worship but one Religion, which is also a Science: Nature's laws.

Students are under no obligation to accept our teachings. We encourage them to investigate all existing religious and occult organizations, and our course on *Evolution of Religion* gives details on how our philosophy relates to many of the religions of the world today.

We teach that the family and the marriage relationship are the most powerful aid in building the spiritual body. It is through the sacrifices of the parents for the children that they give up selfishness and then transfer that love to higher planes of work. Our course, *Ancient Masonry*, gives more detail about this process, as well as the course on Spiritual Alchemy and the one on *Occultism Applied to Daily Life*.

Our view of the reason for existence upon the earth is discussed in the book, *Astrological Signatures*, and the book *Organic Alchemy*. We know from tradition and scientific experiments that the soul and personality survive the transition called death and live on higher planes of existence. This is outlined in the book *The Next Life*. We also have lessons on healing and alchemy (psychology) both from the spiritual and physical plane.

Our philosophy is grounded in two basic studies: The Golden Key of Astrology and the Silver Key of the Sacred Tarot. Only with a thorough knowledge of these two keys may the sanctuary of Nature's Temple be opened. Astrology is the science of finding and utilizing the natural potentialities as indicated by the planetary chart of birth. It becomes a religion when it shows the individual how these natural tendencies can be utilized for the benefit of all humanity and furtherance of the purposes of Deity. This is why we are called The Religion of the Stars.

The *Sacred Tarot* is the pictorial form of the spiritual ideas of our world as viewed by the spiritual giants of the past and checked by subsequent illuminated ones as to accuracy. Initiates of all ages have added their contributions. It is the esoteric presentation of the Hermetic Philosophy, and provides each Neophyte with many sources of meditations and inspiration. Our courses on *The Sacred Tarot* and *Spiritual Astrology* give much insight on these two foundations of Knowledge.

The Religion of the Stars is dedicated to the unfoldment of the Universal Plan for this Aquarian Age. A Nine Point Plan provides the framework for this work. The Nine Point Plan is:

That everyone should have:

Freedom from Want
Freedom of Expression
Freedom from Fear
Freedom of Religion

That to obtain these in proper measure, people must have the freedom to become familiar with:

Facts of Astrology
Facts of Induced Emotion
Facts of Extrasensory Perception
Facts of Directed Thinking

And, that instead of working to take all that he can for himself, each must learn to find pleasure in

Contributing His or Her Utmost to Universal Welfare

The Brotherhood of Light teachings are presented in 21 courses covering 21 Branches of Occult Science. The courses have study questions in the back of each book for every lesson. If you request them, you will receive a final exam for each course. Upon passing the final exam, the Award Manuscript will be sent to you. These give information on the safest method of developing higher states of consciousness and other information of value to the neophyte.

Appendix

Home Study Program

About The Home Study Program...

The Brotherhood of Light lessons offer the safest and most reliable information concerning occult studies found anywhere! Many are interested in investigating the occult sciences but cannot find a suitable teacher or are unable to find a practical approach to such matters. To meet this challenge the Home Study Program was designed.

Much information about the outerplane environment can be had in public schools and universities. Of equal importance is knowledge of the innerplane. Since this information is not yet available in our public institutions, The Brotherhood of Light lessons are published.

With the dawning Aquarian Age, our planet is undergoing a new dispensation of knowledge. Manifestations of this knowledge are evident in the scientific and technological growth experienced since 1881. So that development may be along the most constructive channels, it is important that we work to align personal and community intention to the Will of Deity. It is the role of religion to facilitate this alignment.

The Religion of the Stars teaches that the most reliable evidence of God's intention is obtained by observing Nature. To do this requires not only effort, but the process of trial and error. Sometimes standing on the shoulders of those who precede us can be helpful. May we suggest that you will find The Brotherhood of Light lessons to be a reliable guide, as well as some of the most uplifting material you will ever encounter.

Who can enroll in the Home Study Program...

Anyone can study the 21 Courses by reading the material contained therein, and may submit examinations for correction. Upon receiving a passing grade, members will receive the "NotSold Manuscripts." They contain information which we believe to be safest and most reliable methods for psychic unfoldment.

While the reason for each person's study is highly personal, there can also be an organization goal. That is, to become a Hermetician. A Hermetician is a person who has passed final exams on all 21 Courses and thereby demonstrated physical knowledge of all branches of the Hermetic Sciences (Astrology, Alchemy and Magic). As a Hermetician one is eligible to participate more fully in the religious and educational aspects of the organization.

How does the program work...

Recognizing that each person begins his/her course of study with a particular area of interest we have structured the program so you may pass courses in any order you wish. We strongly encourage you to undertake the passing of examinations in sequence from Course 1 to 21.

You can request that we send you an a Course 1 (Laws of Occultism) examination.

After receiving a passing score (exams are open book) we will send you the "Not Sold Manuscript." This process is repeated until you reach the Hermetician level by passing exams for all 21 courses.

Appendix

Other Brotherhood of Light Courses

Other Brotherhood of Light Courses in the Alchemy Branch

Course 3, Spiritual Alchemy

Every person, as well as every object, has an astral body-but a truly 4, spiritual body is only built through living a spiritual life. The spiritual body is not attained vicariously; each must earn it for himself. Every event of life affords the opportunity for the creation of spiritual values, for building up the spiritual body. Making use of the opportunity requires the proper attitude toward the event. Spiritual Alchemy differs from material alchemy in that the metals used by the spiritual alchemist are the experiences of his life; in light of this, the "Seven Spiritual Metals" are explained so the reader may recognize his opportunities for spiritual growth. Also explained from the spiritual alchemist's standpoint: Transmutation, the Philosopher's Stone, the Great Work and the "Elixir of Life."

Course 9, Mental Alchemy

What we have within us, we attract from without. To change a diseased condition of the body, or an undesirable condition in any department of life, including the financial, the discord within the astral body must be transformed to a harmonious center. A condition of our environment is but an external manifestation of a condition within our astral body. As "Esoteric Psychology" explains, no power to influence is greater than our own thoughts; thus, by reconditioning our thinking, we can recondition our astral body. The author elucidates, in simple terms, the scientifically accepted methods of Free Association and Self-Psychoanalysis as ways to fill your own life and others with health, success and happiness.

Course 12-1, Natural Alchemy, Evolution of Life

Though many orthodox religions are at odds with scientific discoveries concerning the Creation and evolution, the Religion of the Stars has ample room to incorporate the observations of biology, archaeology, et al., being fundamentally based on observable, proven laws of Nature. For those unfamiliar with the scientific history of evolution, a highly interesting and readable account of each important evolutionary step is included with an explanation of the important part played by inner-plane (astrological) influence, ESP and psychokinesis in adaptation and natural selection.

Course 12-2, Natural Alchemy, Evolution of Religion

This second part of Natural Alchemy provides an account of the evolution of those ideas which constitute man's many religions and the processes by which both primitive and modern religions have developed. A very logical and enlightening, step-by-step portrayal of the evolution from simple Naturism to Hero Worship is the basis of "The Foundations of Religion." In this course will also be found information concerning all significant religions throughout history, including the Religion of the Stars; an excellent groundwork for further study. This book provides a comparative thesis of information on the present-day Stellar Religion and is invaluable for those who desire to disseminate today's Religion of the Stars.

Course 14, Occultism Applied

This book is a distillation of the most practical aspects of the Religion of the Stars. All that physical science can contribute, that psychology can aid, and everything of an occult nature that may be used to make your practical endeavors more successful are here explained. All the knowledge you can acquire, including occult knowledge and even the information contained in the Religion of the Stars, won't help you nor anyone else if you don't apply it. This course doesn't require that the reader already possess any occult knowledge; it is a straightforward, common sense approach to overcoming life's practical, day-to-day problems, based on the author's intimate knowledge of Natural Law.

Course 19, Organic Alchemy

The author, recognized as a naturalist, having led Nature-study field trips for nearly twenty years, is in a unique position to describe the laws of Nature by which all souls progress. Humans are not unique in that they are set apart from other intelligences, be they animal, vegetable or mineral. All souls progress by the same general process and each is being fitted for a higher function in more active realms through the operation of cosmic forces that direct its special training. This course amply illustrates these laws through examples of their action in lower realms of nature and their correspondence in Human affairs.

Course 21, Personal Alchemy

Personal Alchemy embraces the various changes which the devotee of the Religion of the Stars must make in his manner of living as he ascends in his effort to become an adept. Just what steps to take, and in what order, are set forth in this final course to assist the adherent in developing his own powers and possibilities in the quickest and most effective manner, to the end that he can be of greatest benefit to others. The last five Lessons of this course are often of special concern to healers, health-seekers and astrologers, being devoted to a most effective method of illness prevention: Stellar Dietetics.

**21 volume Brotherhood of Light series
on the occult sciences by C.C. Zain includes:
3 Branches of Study**

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Cs. 2	Astrological Signatures 1-5, 20, 21, 46 & 47
Cs. 7	Spiritual Astrology 71-83
Cs. 8	Horary Astrology 36, 86-92
Cs. 10	Natal Astrology 19, 103-117
Cs. 13	Mundane Astrology 141-150
Cs. 15	Weather Predicting 190-196
Cs. 16	Stellar Healing 197-208
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Cs. 3	Spiritual Alchemy 49-54
Cs. 9	Mental Alchemy 95-101
Cs. 12	Natural Alchemy 125-140
Cs. 14	Occultism Applied 151-162
Cs. 17	Cosmic Alchemy 164-172
Cs. 19	Organic Alchemy 209-215
Cs. 21	Personal Alchemy 216-225
Magic	
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Cs. 6	The Sacred Tarot 22-33, & 48
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