

Laws of Mediumship
Occult Data

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THE word occult means that which is hidden, and occultism is the study of hidden forces. Its subjects are not directly apprehended by the five senses upon which the physical scientist relies for all knowledge. The line of demarcation between that which is called occult is, therefore, constantly changing, for scientists every now and then invent a device by which some hitherto occult force is made directly perceptible to the physical senses, and it is then no longer considered occult. Not long since, for instance, the power of the lodestone was held to be occult. Indeed, so far as any knowledge of its nature is concerned, the physical scientists should include the force of gravitation in the occult category, for they admit it operates across immense space in which there is nothing that can be apprehended by the five senses, yet fail to explain by what hidden means the force is transmitted. The infra-red and the ultra-violet rays of light, also, were occult forces but a few years ago, and are so yet to the majority of people. All mental forces fall properly into this category, as is admitted in the case of hypnotism, exhibiting, as it does, the power of one mind over another. It is clear, then, that the common application of the word occult, since it depends upon the experience of the speaker; ½for what is hidden to one may be perceived by another; ½ is wholly arbitrary.

The word carries with it an air of mystery, it is true; but all forces are mysterious to those who have not studied them; and what is mysterious to the ignorant is obvious to the learned. In all nature, nothing can come permanently under this ban; for all mysteries may be solved. Thus the simplest conveniences of modern civilization are mysterious to the untutored savage. He is wont to attribute their power to some supernatural agency. But there is nothing supernatural; ½nothing, that is, not governed by natural laws. Above and below, all obey those by which they manifest; and while these laws are uncomprehended any phenomenon seems mysterious.

It was this uncomprehension that caused the terror of the Red Man, who, not understanding the natural laws underlying its geysers and boiling paint-pots, feared to enter the Yellowstone Park, while the white man, sure that its riddles could be solved, has made it his national playground. And just as the savage inclines to attribute such phenomena to some supernatural agency, or similarly to attribute the power of the burning-glass, and to regard photographs with reverence, so other men, more highly endowed, but not less ignorant in that special direction, can see in spiritual phenomena only Divine intervention and miracles.

Thus do all of us fear that which we do not understand; but with understanding comes courage, for with the dawning of the light of the mind we see how any hidden danger; ½if danger there be; ½may be circumvented. Knowledge reveals it either as a scare-crow or as a menace, the one to be ignored and the other avoided except as it can be made subservient to

the will of man. His only progression, here or hereafter, must be founded on knowledge. Only by its means can he subjugate his external environment and enjoy its opportunities. He who is ignorant of the laws of his physical body incurs illness. He who is ignorant of the laws governing acquisition remains in poverty. He who is ignorant of the social laws of his land is likely to be deprived of his liberty.

So it is also with things spiritual. Only through a knowledge of spiritual laws can man mold his spiritual environment and enjoy while yet on earth spiritual powers. Ignorant of the laws of his spiritual body, he incurs moral maladies that follow him beyond the tomb. Ignorant of the laws governing the acquisition of spiritual attributes, he misses the greatest treasures of this life, and passes to the life beyond in spiritual poverty. If, still ignorant, he goes to the new life with no knowledge of the laws and customs of the denizens of that realm, or if he contact them while he is still embodied, he may, in his unenlightened condition, be deprived of his liberty. Only through knowledge of himself, and of the powers and forces by which he is environed, can he expect to progress. And it is for this reason that the occultist applies himself to the acquisition of such knowledge.

Its acquisition, like everything else, depends much upon a proper beginning, and the occult student, starting out on his voyage in search of the Golden Fleece of spiritual truth, needs to take care that he sets sail from the right port and in the right direction. At the very beginning, then, of our bold enterprise, in which we purpose to carry the student safely across the muddy tide of metaphysics and land him securely on the bright shores of occult knowledge, we must indicate our port of debarkation and show it to be a true port.

No better starting point can be found for such a purpose, nor another nearly so strong and well-defended, as the fundamental assertion I AM. For, following our safe guide, Nature, we discover that the first glimmer of consciousness¹ that which foreshadows knowledge² is concerned with distinguishing the Me from the Not-me. Thus a sensation registers as something distinct from me but affecting me; and it matters not whether we accept the statement of the Cartesian school, "I think, therefore I am," or prefer the version of Eliphas Levi, the-learned French Magus, "I am, therefore I think," the fact remains that the assertion "I AM" is irrefutable. For by no quirk of speculation can we deny the existence of the thinker, who must postulate a being able to think before he can find ground on which to stand to make a denial. When he admits the existence of a being able to form an opinion, he has established himself as an entity; for, clearly, if there is no thinker, there can be no thought; and if there is no thought there can be no denial. Consequently, no one can deny his own existence; and from this undeniable premise any correct system of philosophy must start.

We may sum up the argument by saying that consciousness is a perception of relations. These relations may be subjective or objective, but to be conscious of them we must be able to compare them. Where there is no change, then, no relative conditions, there is no consciousness. Similarly, limited perceptions of relations mean limited consciousness, and greater perceptions of relative conditions bring greater consciousness. Evolution is thus observed to be in the direction of increased perceptions, that is, to be moving toward greater consciousness. Therefore, as evolution continues, consciousness expands; and as evolution advances toward infinity, the perceptions increase, until absolute consciousness is approached. In the same way, lower forms of life than man have perceptions of the narrower world in which they live, and these constitute the basis for their actions. But man has not only perception of his immediate environment, he can recall in memory many of these external perceptions and combine them in a new order. Such a complex mental grouping is called a concept. Concepts, in turn, combine into the larger group we call knowledge, which is thus seen to rest upon experience gained through perceptions, grouped in memory. Even though we gain the knowledge through books, it is nevertheless gained by experience, for to

read another's writing is an experience as truly as if one were to feel in himself the physical sensations of the writer. Such an experience is, of course, mental rather than physical; but it is still an experience. Reasoning, also, is an experience, arising from the comparison of relations held in memory. In very truth, we have no knowledge except that gained through experience, and that experience is a continually increasing consciousness of the relations of various perceptions and concepts.

The first form of this consciousness is decidedly limited. For, as a new-born babe, I possess scarcely more than the instinct inherent in all life to struggle for existence. To what extent these inherited instincts and tendencies depend upon previous experiences of the soul before birth in human form does not concern us now. Enough that I, together with all living beings, have an instinct to sustain existence. This instinct leads to actions that supply nourishment to the body, and these actions register impressions on the consciousness. At this time, I am unaware of more than a few primitive sensations, and my consciousness has a very limited scope. But limited as it is, there soon develops a dim perception of relations. Thus I become aware that the sensation I later call hunger is appeased by taking nourishment, and that certain actions on my part lead to this nourishment being furnished by my mother; and here I take my first step in positive knowledge. For I have discovered the relation existing between two sets of sensations.

All knowledge possible to me, here and hereafter, must rest upon a similar basis, for there is no knowledge that does not rest upon experience, and no experience apart from a perception of relations. In this typical case I find that a certain set of sensations is followed by another set of sensations. The same thing happens over and over again, until the connection is established in memory. Because of the repeated association of these two sets of sensations in my experience I conclude that the first set is always followed by the other set. This is Knowledge.

Growing from infancy to childhood, my perception of relations gains a wider scope. Day by day I add to the store of such experiences, and of others. Some objects have thus attracted my attention through the sense of sight, and I have discovered that things thus seen have come into my possession when reached for. So I reach for the object of my desire. Since my experience so far has been very limited, my knowledge is only partial and I reach for an object across the room with the same assurance as if it were near at hand. But I am unable to procure it, and this is another experience. Later I learn, by repetition of this experience, and comparison of it with similar experiences in which I have successfully gained possession of the coveted object, that some objects are close at hand and others are distant; and I correct my first impression that reaching brings an object within range of the sense of touch and a knowledge of the relation called distance enters my mind. This knowledge is emphasized and made important to me through the sensations of pleasure and pain. When learning to walk, for example, if I reach for a chair that is too far away, expecting it to support me, I fall and am hurt. But if I am correct in my estimate of distance I avoid the pain of falling and take pleasure in my achievement. Again, a lighted candle looks very pretty and inviting, and I desire to gain impressions of it through other senses than the sense of sight. I expect a pleasurable sensation to follow touching or tasting it, because it is pleasing to the eye. But in this instance my knowledge is imperfect, and the result is pain. Therefore, after touching! the lighted candle I revise my opinion of it, and decide that while it is pleasant to sight, it is painful to both touch and taste. And in later years I can form the generalization that acting upon imperfect knowledge often brings some painful result. This is Truth.

We now see that Truth is the conformity of cognition to reality. And while at this early age my limited experience causes me to form many erroneous conclusions from the impressions reaching me from the universe, a wider range of experience enables me to revise my early conclusions and approach more nearly the truth. Thus is growth in consciousness the

continued approximation of cognition to reality, casting away that which proves erroneous, and confirming that which proves consistent.

In later life, there are experiences of a mental nature by which the result of other persons' experiences are conveyed to me through speech and writing. Even a thought, however, is a movement in some substance, and implies a perception of relations. The process, therefore, of following the reasoning of another is an experience as truly as is physical action. And I find that through mental effort I can draw conclusions regarding the probable result of a certain course of action. I myself have never had the experience derived from such actions in my own life, but I compare them with those which I have had that are most like them. If the resultant conclusions are correct, if they parallel reality, I derive benefit from them; but if they are erroneous I suffer. When I have taken this step I rely more and more upon mental experience to furnish me the necessary knowledge.

But whether the experience be mental or physical, we have but one reason to rely upon it; which is that it furnishes us with more or less accurate data for future action. It is only because we have found, in a similar way, that we can more or less clearly anticipate conditions and profit by that anticipation that we learn to rely upon the processes of the mind. Sense impressions and reason are thus alike valuable only in so far as they furnish correct knowledge, for upon this depends the ability of the organism continuously to adapt itself to environment, and upon this ability depends its survival. Failure to adapt itself to an environment accurately apprehended and correctly reasoned upon means first pain, and finally death. On the other hand, continuous adaptation means continued life, and the more perfect the adaptation the fuller the life. Man, then, has found that reason based upon the perceptions of his physical senses is necessary for adaptation and consequent survival; but its value depends upon their accuracy, and if some other means can be discovered that will give more accurate results, or additional information, progress demands its adoption. That such other faculties exist in nature is a fact which, relied upon, bring satisfactory results; but a glance about us to demonstrate. For example, the homing pigeon needs neither reason nor any past experience of the region over which it flies to find its way unerringly to its roost, hundreds of strange miles away. And a honey-bee needs neither reason nor compass to take a straight course to its hive through forests and over mountains. The oriole also needs no previous experience to enable it to build its cleverly-woven hanging nest. These and many other instincts of wild creatures are reliable within their boundaries, just as man's reason is reliable within certain limits. Experience alone determines in any case how much reliance can be placed on either; and this conformity of later experience to expected results alone is the test of the value of any faculty.

To learn thus to check the reports of the senses by experience is to test in the laboratory of life the accuracy of observation and the conclusions based thereon; especially to be able to do this mentally, without going through the slow and usually painful processes of physical testing is the greater part of wisdom. Early in life the great sage, Giordano Bruno, found out this truth. Looking across the undulating foot-hills to Mt. Vesuvius,¹ apparently scarred and bare of all vegetation, he desired greatly to visit the volcano and observe its barren stretches at close range. Finally the opportunity came for him to take the journey and he set forth from his native fields and vineyards. What was his surprise on reaching the distant mountain to find its sides covered with vegetation, while, looking back on the lands of his fathers from that distance, they seemed as barren and destitute of life as the mountain had done. This lesson was never forgotten. From it he learned to distrust the reports of his senses, and thereafter carefully devised means of checking and testing the accuracy of all sense impressions. As a result he became the greatest scientist of his time and assisted in the overthrow of the Aristotelian system of philosophy and the establishment of the Heliocentric system of Astronomy, by his achievements proving that he had found the true method of Wisdom.

His greatness was directly connected with the fact that he early discovered what we must all discover before we can correct and improve our knowledge; namely, that we constantly misinterpret our sense impressions, and despite repeated efforts to check them one against another and to subject them to reason we almost daily draw from their reports wrong conclusions. Thus, we see a familiar face across the street and go to offer greetings only to find ourselves confronted with an utter stranger; we have made a mistake. Or we hear a sound, and conclude it comes from a great distance; but investigation proves it to be a faint sound close at hand that, because of lack of volume, we mistook for a greater sound, more remote. If our eyes be bandaged and someone slightly prick our skin, at the same time trickling a little warm water over the spot, we may get the impression that there is profuse bleeding, and even faint away. Every day we are deceived more or less by this sort of failure correctly to interpret our physical sensations. And our reason, upon which we so pride ourselves, subjects us daily to small errors and occasionally to greater ones. This is demonstrated by the demand for those who have sound judgment, and the infrequency with which they can be found.

But in addition to the reports received by these physical senses, we have to consider the claims of the superphysical senses. For some people declare they are able to check the impressions of the physical senses by impressions received through other avenues. They also assert that they are able to draw correct conclusions without the ordinary process of reasoning. Both the truth and the reliability of such impressions and conclusions must be subjected to the same tests. Their value like the value of more usual conclusions can be determined only by experience. We have just found that our only excuse for accepting the reports of the physical senses and the ordinary reason as a basis for action is that conclusions based upon them have coincided with later experience. The reliability and truth of other methods of interpreting phenomena must be determined by the same standard.

Thus if by some other faculty than physical sight I see a friend approaching, and later this friend actually pays me a visit, and I ascertain that he was on his way at the time I had the vision, I tentatively conclude there is an inner sense of sight. If I have frequent experiences of this kind, as some persons certainly do, and if on each occasion when I see the event by clairvoyant vision, the external event actually transpires, though I had no means of knowing, through any physical avenue, that it would so transpire, I am gradually justified in placing confidence in such visions as a basis of future action. If, again, some business proposition is presented to me and even before I have reasoned about the matter I feel that it will prove a failure, and events later prove this Intuition correct; and such occurrences frequently take place, I am justified in concluding that there is a possibility of arriving at a correct judgment apart from reasoning. And if on many occasions I find the experience with reality coincides with the impressions received through intuition, I am justified in basing future actions upon intuition. If in such a case the report of physical sight or ordinary reason conflicts with the inner sense of sight, and with Intuition, I must then reflect which has more generally proved correct in the past, and incline toward that one.

It should be unnecessary to call attention to the foregoing obvious truths. But there is a tendency fast developing among certain scientists to overlook the fact that the physical senses are but instruments by which reality may be determined, and that their value lies wholly in their ability correctly to report the universe and to direct man's actions in conformity therewith. To assert, as many of them do, that the physical senses and the reason are the only means by which the universe may be apprehended and knowledge gained, is thoroughly unscientific, for such an assertion is based upon assumption and is beyond verification by experience.

When it takes this attitude, science is as dogmatic as the religions it ridicules, for it assumes

a superiority and infallibility that its own history refutes. It boasts of its experimental methods, but fails to apply those methods except to a very limited section of the universe; a limited section which it dogmatically assumes to be the only legitimate field of investigation. When scientists take such an unwarranted stand, sincere men, seeking the truth in all regions, seeking, that is, to conform cognition to the infinite and inexhaustible Reality, must protest.

Attempts like this to narrow the field of inquiry arise from a very natural effort to bring the subject of study; this vast universe; within reach of the circumscribed intelligence of the investigator. It is not a new attempt. The Inquisition rose to a similar effort, and haled before it, a few hundred years ago, the famous scientist, Galileo, who had dared to investigate beyond the ecclesiastical limits and to inquire into the solar system. Such breadth of inquiry was then held sacrilegious, just as the breadth of inquiry of Psychic Research and still more of Occultism is subject to the reproach of orthodox physical scientists. For while today the legitimate field of experimental investigation has expanded to include the entire realm of physical phenomena, it is still restricted to that comparatively limited field, and those who declare that there are vaster realms to be explored, interior to the physical, are considered to be as foolish as were the first astronomers who declared the earth to be, not the center of the universe, but merely one planet among many, moving around a sun a million times larger.

Since we are agreed that all knowledge must be based upon experience, and since repeated experiences, as we have just seen, tend to correct false impressions derived from a too-limited experience, it is clear that any avenue by which man can arrive at that wider and more accurate cognition is legitimate, and that the only test of its usefulness lies in the verity of its conclusions, as measured by subsequent events. If I have a dream, and this dream is followed in a few days by a certain event and I have the same dream again and again, and on each occasion it is followed by the same event, it is, then, just as useful a source of information regarding the approach of this particular event as if the information had come through some recognized physical channel. If such dreaming is cultivated and the images thus presented to the mind are found by experience invariably to signify approaching events, and by this means situations are foretold accurately and repeatedly that could not have been known by any merely physical means, these dreams become a legitimate source of valuable knowledge, whose reliability has been determined by repeated experiment. As a matter of fact, many people receive information through such dreams, and there are indisputable records of lives having been saved by them.

True, I am not justified in coming to the conclusion that dreams, clairvoyance, telepathy, and other psychic faculties, now called occult, are to be relied upon without full proof; and I am not justified in accepting loose explanations of them without carefully tested experiments. Thus if I hear a voice clairaudiently, purporting to come from someone long since dead, I may accept the fact that I hear the voice and wait for further confirmation of its supposed source. Devices have been arranged to check physical experiments against false conclusions, and tests may be contrived in these cases also to preclude the possibility of deception in determining the identity of a disincarnate entity. Nor am I justified in following the advice received through this clairaudient faculty unless I have found through repeated observation of information so gained that it is reliable. Even then, on some particular occasions the information gained might lead astray, just as I might find the advice of a friend usually very good, but on some special occasion it would prove faulty. The accuracy and value of information received through any channel, physical or psychical, then, should be experimentally determined.

The literature covering the field of psychic research, here just touched upon, will prove amply to any unprejudiced mind that there are senses and faculties other than the five

physical senses. Physical science, as yet unable to account for these powers, conveniently ignores them, and, assuming an air of enlightened superiority, puts the entire matter aside by simply saying "Bosh !" This is bad enough, as an exhibition of the limitations of our advanced men of science, but it is worse because to the lay mind the utterances of these men are considered final. For the impression is general that material science is infallible, when the truth is that it is undergoing a constant process of revision, each decade trying to correct the mistakes of the previous decade; and thus what is accepted as scientific today was unknown a few years ago, and may in its turn be refuted in years to come. Indeed, many of the very things science proclaimed to be impossible thirty years ago are now accomplished facts. Current scientific opinion is thus continually overthrown by new discoveries, and the whole structure must be rebuilt to conform to the altered conceptions. This is not at all to the discredit of science, for, as we have been seeing, it conforms to the methods by which knowledge grows; but nevertheless to build upon the conclusions of material science alone is to build upon the ever-shifting sands. Its conclusions must be steadied and bettered by the binding cement brought from other and wider regions.

But whatever the value of the conclusions of others, every true scientist after assimilating them, desires to read the Book of Nature for himself. Sooner or later he examines the ground of his own first-hand knowledge, and here he may well start with the positive knowledge "I AM." This, certainly, he knows of himself. Next he discovers there is something else than I AM : The universe exists. This he Feels. And from these feelings he endeavors to determine the nature of that universe in relation to himself, to the one who feels and knows. And here he discovers the dimly-felt presence of the super-physical senses and is almost sure to learn that in his community is someone claiming to possess these senses in a more marked form. Through this person, or others of the same sort, the earnest scientist supplements the knowledge gained from physical research with the further knowledge to be gained from psychical research. It is probable that his first experiments will be inconclusive; but if he persists, over a sufficiently extensive area, he will discover beyond the shadow of a doubt;½as has every scientist who has done thorough work in this field;½that there assuredly are faculties, principles, and forces as yet undreamed of by materialistic philosophers. With this conviction he becomes an occult scientist.

Already in the realm of physical science he has found its advocates making claim to knowledge they can in no way substantiate. He knows that the things conceded to be the very bulwarks of scientific accuracy and precision are very far from it when put to the test. Such discrepancies between theory and practice are not loudly announced to the general public, because the bread and butter of scientific men depends upon their reputation for knowledge and accuracy. For example, the Law of Gravitation, which is the basis of all astronomical and mechanical reckoning, and is stated thus;½The attraction of Gravity between two bodies is directly in proportion to the product of their masses and inversely as the square of their distance;½does not give precision in celestial calculations. By all the teachings of physical science the planets should exert an influence upon each other which could be exactly measured according to this law. But as a matter of experience it is found that a decimal must be added to the squares of their distances, and even with this tampering with figures to make the answer coincide with observed results the actual positions of the planets continue to vary from their calculated places, and there is a continual alteration of the mathematical formulas in an attempt to get the correct answer.

Again, take the theory of the tides as accepted and taught in the schools of the land. One might suppose, from the definite way it is set forth, that this theory is the essence of scientific accuracy. But in actual practice the tides do not at all coincide with their theoretical rise and fall² indeed, the divergence is sometimes so wide that the Moon apparently repels the tides instead of attracting them,³ and they occur at points almost opposite those at which they would be theoretically calculated. Therefore in actually

predetermining the tides for practical purposes their fluctuations are frankly calculated from past observations. It is a case of getting the right answer without knowing why, like a schoolboy working a problem whose answer is given in the back of the book.

Noting this familiar performance on the part of men of standing in the scientific world, our occult investigator is not surprised to find that there are many claims advanced by enthusiastic students of occultism also that cannot be verified. But he no more throws over all of occultism when he makes this disconcerting discovery, than, under similar circumstances, he cast aside all the findings of physical science

At this stage, his attention may be called to Astrology. No one can seriously and thoroughly investigate this occult science without becoming convinced that certain positions of the planets coincide with certain characteristics and events in the life of man. No psychic sense is needed for such a demonstration. It is purely a matter of experiment. For if a certain angular relation of two planets coincides always with events of a certain nature, and enough birth-charts of persons having this position can be secured to prove it to be much more than a coincidence, no amount of theoretical argument can refute the facts. Physical science is reluctant to accept such conclusions, or even to make the necessary experiments to verify them, because it has so far found no adequate theory to account for them. But since Nature quite fails to confirm many of the most precise and attractive theories of science, her failure in this case has a certain advantage. For it looks as if we were considering, not an assumption to fit the preconceived ideas of man, but an unacknowledged and misunderstood fact of Nature.

Alchemy may next claim the attention of our investigator. Although he knows it is stigmatized as an exploded science, he no longer accepts as final the dictum of a school he has found to be often prejudiced, a dictum, moreover, pronounced by men without knowledge of the subject they condemn. He finds that the two chief tenets of Alchemy, as laid down by the ancients, are that there is a Primitive First Substance of which all physical matter is composed, and that it is possible to transmute one or more metals into another totally distinct metal. Such ideas have been ridiculed by chemists until within the last few years. Now, however, it has been proved that all atoms are composed of electrons, the difference between one element and another being the number and arrangement of the electrons. These electrons occur in two forms, positive and negative, "exactly alike in strength of charge but wholly different in inertia or mass, the negative being commonly associated with a mass which is but 1/1,845 of that of the lightest known atom, that of hydrogen, while the positive appears never to be associated with a mass smaller than that of the hydrogen atom." This electron has been isolated and accurately measured, and, "in its two forms is, according to the physicists' present view, the building stone of the sub-atomic world." It constitutes the First Matter of the ancient alchemists. Further, it is found radium decays into helium. Also, that in the presence of water it produces neon and with copper sulphate in the water argon is formed. And Professor Ramsey, a short time ago, succeeded in transmuting copper into lithium" thereby demonstrating the possibility of transmutation. Thus the very theory and processes of Alchemy, so long scoffed at by material scientists, has now been demonstrated in their own laboratories.

By methods as experimental as theirs, under conditions as strictly scientific, the Occult Scientist has demonstrated Magic, Astrology, and Alchemy. This makes him reluctant to discard any branch of occultism without first giving it a thorough investigation. He approaches different methods of Divination with, perhaps, a good deal of skepticism; but even in this he is surprised to find results that cannot be attributed to coincidence, and he is forced to conclude that there are laws underlying such matters totally ignored by physical science. But then he reflects that physical science has never determined the laws governing the source of the sun's heat. Every theory it has formulated to account for this

phenomenon; and, for that matter, for numerous others it has been torn to pieces by later investigations. It is not astonishing, then, that it has failed to discover the mental laws governing Divination.

But just as the true scientist finds the material sciences oppressed by many erroneous ideas and theories, so also he finds speculation and supposition so largely covering the facts of occult science that he can gain very little through reading the current works upon such subjects. Mystical folly and absurd and conflicting doctrines meet him on every hand. Everyone whom he consults has an opinion, but usually quite unsupported by experimental facts. His only recourse seems to be to advance step by step, applying the methods of experimental science to psychic and spiritual things, and so gain knowledge at first hand. He knows that to do this requires application, and effort, keen discrimination, and, finally, the development of the senses of the soul.

Now, there are seven physical senses by which the phenomena of the physical plane are reported to consciousness. The majority of people have only five of them well developed, a few possess the Sixth Sense, Intuition, and a still smaller number possess the Seventh Sense, Thought Transference. But whether five or seven, the experience gained through these physical senses is the foundation of all knowledge of physical life. There are also seven soul senses by which the phenomena of the world interior to the physical are reported to the sub-consciousness and thence may be raised into the region of objective consciousness. The experience gained through the use of these soul senses is the foundation of knowledge of life on the inner planes. Nor are they so rare as to make this manner of investigation a practical impossibility, for more people than is generally supposed possess at least one of them in a more or less advanced stage of development. The number is unknown because the ridicule that follows the announcement that one possesses such a faculty frequently deters people from making their psychic ability known. Nevertheless, even a little candid investigation will reveal the fact that such senses exist, and that by their use worlds other than the physical may be explored and understood, even as the physical world is explored and understood through the reports of the physical senses.

Moreover, even as the physical senses may be developed to a state of keenness and accuracy, so may the soul senses be roused from their dormant condition and be educated to a state of efficiency. In this education, two methods may be followed. One is negative, mediumistic, passive, and destructive to the individuality. It brings a train of evil results and should never be followed. The other method is positive, controlling, active, and tends to build up the Will and Individuality, increasing the power of the mentality and bringing greater vigor to the body. This constructive method of training will bring highly satisfactory results and may be followed without danger. Moreover, as the soul senses develop, their reports should be carefully analyzed and verified. They are yet immature, and as it took years after birth to educate the sense of sight so that it became a reliable guide to effort, it may take that long to develop soul-sight, or any of the soul senses, to a comparative degree of accuracy. For most persons' soul senses when first awakened, are just about as accurate as were their physical senses immediately after birth. Consequently it is absurd to take the reports of these rudimentary faculties as indisputable. But they can be developed through exercise, and experience will determine just how much reliability can be placed upon their reports. It will be found that they often give information that can later be verified; such information as could not possibly be gained at the time through the physical senses. And as the reliability of the soul senses increases they may safely be used to report the phenomena of the inner worlds. These reports may be checked one against another, and compared with later experiences of those realms in such a way as to give the same certainty about the things of the inner worlds as may be had through the physical senses about the things of the outer world.

At a still later period of occult development, if the student has had the patience and ability to follow so far the royal road leading to initiation, it becomes possible to leave the physical body consciously and travel on a plane interior to the physical. Means may be devised by which it is possible to prove with scientific certainty that this journey was an actual fact, and that the places thus visited were actually entered. When he makes such a journey, the student is able to say with certainty that there are inner regions, just as when he visits a city on the physical plane he is certain that such a city exists, and can describe it. Immortality is more difficult of proof, still, one who visits the homes of the dead and converses with them has ample assurance of life after death.

In our experience with the material world we have often found the instincts implanted by Nature a better index to reality than reasoning from limited premises; so in this matter also we find our instincts a better guide than prejudice. Thus instinct teaches animals to prepare warm dens for winter and stock them with food. They do not know of winter by individual experience, for they make this preparation for the first winter of life. Similarly, man instinctively looks for a future life and strives to prepare for it. The occultist, urged on by this instinct, prepares for a life immortal, a life of never-ending progression, and by the development of his individual faculties explores its realm, and while yet alive gains knowledge of its laws.

We repeat that the data upon which occult science rests is purely experimental, and even as in physical science it is necessary to form a hypothesis as a working basis, so also in occult science certain working hypotheses are essential. But occult science does not stand or fall by the correctness of these theories any more than does physical science. For example, the science of chemistry was founded upon Dalton's Atomic Theory, until recently universally accepted. But with the explosion of that theory which so long served as a working hypothesis for all chemists, and the adoption of the Electronic Theory in its stead, chemistry does not fall. Neither does the disproof of any prevalent occult theory seriously affect occultism. Its truths are based upon observed phenomena carefully checked and compared. And when some ideas not sufficiently checked and confirmed are admitted into the edifice they can be removed or improved without destroying the whole structure. Although we find that the ancients conducted such precise experiments generation after generation covering periods of thousands of years; the results of their researches are recorded; and these records can be read by those qualified to interpret them; still it is not necessary to place faith in these ancient deductions. The means lie within the reach of the competent occultist to verify or disprove these researches by experiments of his own.

Every student who sets out to discover truth is, then, confronted by two contending factions: dogmatic scientists and dogmatic mystics, both of whom pose as absolute authorities. But to rely upon the opinions and assertions of others is to discount one's own intelligence, and to accept another as authority is to give that other a power which has nearly always been abused. On the contrary, to cultivate such faculties and intelligence as will enable one to investigate both physical and spiritual truths personally is to emancipate the soul, develop the individuality, and arrive at a positive knowledge of truth.

We are not here denying that it is of great assistance to any traveler to meet another who has already explored the country he is about to enter. Nor does the author of these Lessons care to assume the responsibility of deciding the vital issues of belief for others. He only presents the ideas of the ancient sages; those travelers who have gone over the ground; as personally verified by himself, and as possibly of some assistance to other explorers. Not as an arbitrary authority, but in the spirit of those who have already made explorations by the experimental methods we have indicated, and who desire to give such information as may help others who undertake to travel the same arduous ascending spiral way, the Brotherhood of Light presents its teachings.

Notes

1. William Boultong, *Giordano Bruno, His Life, Thought, and Martyrdom* (Salem, NH: Ayer, 1914/1972).
2. Charles A. Young, *A Scientific Book of General Astronomy for Colleges and Scientific Schools*, p. 307 (Boston: Ginn, 1888).
3. Sir George Darwin, *Tides and Other Kindred Phenomena*, p. 161, 188 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898).