

## Occult Methods Which Foster Faith

There is an occult reason for the decline of faith and it is useless to discuss a remedy until a cause has been found, for no haphazard measure will turn humanity permanently back to the path of rectitude. Let us first consider some of the causes commonly given, then we shall understand the occult scientific reason all the better.

We often hear it sneeringly said that the reason the churches stand empty is that the minister has no new message but is continually rehashing the old Bible stories. The reproach loses its force the moment the question is asked: "Have we learned the Bible by heart?" We expect a child to repeat the multiplication table indefinitely until it knows and can apply it. It is more important that we should know the Bible thoroughly than the child should remember the table, hence repetition is necessary.

The Athenians on Mars Hill were always seeking some new thing that would give them food for discussion, but something more is required for soul growth. Paul specifically informs us that although we may know all the mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not love, it profits us nothing.

The reproach of the empty pews rests particularly upon the Protestant churches of all denominations, and it may not be out of place therefore to draw a comparison between their method and the method of the mother church. If we are anxious to learn, we must put prejudice aside and strive to look at the merits and demerits of each in an unbiased manner.

Let us first look into the ordinary Protestant church, where the minister strives to give the people the Gospel. Nearly all the pews are empty; among those present the ladies outnumber the men by six to one or more. The minister is usually earnest and strives to be eloquent when he addresses the Deity in prayer. But he has heard the reproach of repetition so often, that he is always afraid of having one service resemble another in the slightest degree. A new prayer, a new sermon, a new song from the choir, everything as new as possible, so as to escape that dreadful reproach. He is almost a nervous wreck because of the haunting thought that his people may think him "stale."

Next, let us go to a popular church and see what methods they use. The minister in these churches is always "progressive" and "up-to-date." There is often a gymnasium and a physical culture instructor attached to the establishment. Every night in the week there is a meeting connected with this, that, or the other club. There are picnics, lawn parties and dances in the summer, and church suppers in the winter. Meetings for men and meetings for women are usually sandwiched in, so that the whole is one dazzling phantasmagoria with never a dull moment during the week—and on Sunday, ah, that is the real treat, the great attraction; then the pastor entertains, as only he knows how. He is assisted by a matchless choir of high-priced artists trained by an equally high-priced conductor. The music is not particularly religious, save as all good music fresh from the heaven world speaks to the spiritual man and awakens the memories of our eternal home. But it is a treat to the music lover and draws hundreds on that account.

Between the opening and the closing parts of the musical program comes the so-called "sermon." One of our contributors, Blanche Cromartie relates that once she was horrified, on entering a church, to see on the pulpit this inscription, "I preach not the gospel." The words of the context: "Woe unto me if" were hidden on the other side of the pulpit, and the effect must have been startling to say the least. But it is a motto that

might be on the pulpit of more than one "progressive" Church, for though the "sermon" may open with a quotation from the Bible, that is usually the only reference to the word of God. The rest is an excellent oration on whatever topic may be the most live local or national issue; or if there be a dearth from the general social and political sources, there are always the temperance and purity problems. True, they are old and worn, like the Gospels, but by taking a bottle of beer on the pulpit, working up a frenzy and smashing the cursed thing, it is still possible to make an appeal to the jaded taste for sensationalism, which is ultimately developed by most of his hearers. But by that time the "progressive" pastor gets a call to go and build up another church elsewhere.

This much is admitted universally, that under the continued pastorate of one man the churchgoers lose interest. Not because their ministers are not sincere and hard working, the great majority are exemplary in every way, but somehow they cannot keep their hold on the people. Some denominations allot the churches under their jurisdiction to their ministers for a certain term, and at the end of that time transfer them to another section to work there awhile.

Much may be said both for and against these various schemes, but that is beside the present discussion. Only one remedy for lack of interest seems to have a potency sufficiently powerful to meet the general approval as a producer of at least temporary enthusiasm; viz., the revival.

There people flock to hear a stranger, always of strong, dominant and aggressive personality, with a voice that can speak in octaves from a low pleading call, catching the crushed sinner, to the clarion cry which sounds like the crack of doom to the recalcitrants. Like the 'progressive' pastor, he is ably aided by a trained staff, choir and orchestra, all arranged to make a powerful appeal to the sensations. People are "converted" by thousands and religion (?) takes on a new lease of life in that community.

But alas, only for a while. It is a fact, needing no more than the bare statement, that after a very little while all but a pitifully small per cent of the converts backslide, and the poor minister must go on laboring to keep the semblance of religion in a community increasingly negligent of spiritual matters.

This state of affairs has become so notorious, that comparatively few young men enter the seminaries; there is thus a decline in church goers and ministers both, which, if continued, can have but one ending—the extinction of the Protestant church.

When we investigate the methods of the Catholic Church for the sake of comparison and to arrive at the correct conclusion regarding its power of attraction, we should first note the absolute contrast between the service there and in the Protestant churches. If we listen for a moment at the door of a dozen of the edifices of Protestant denominations, we shall find that each minister has a different topic; but we may go to any Catholic church in the wide world and we shall find that they are all using the same ritual at the altar on a given day, and what the priest may say from the pulpit is negligible in face of that all-important fact; for words are vibrations, they are creative, as demonstrated when sand and spores form geometrical figures in response to the voice of a singer, and the Mass chanted in countless Catholic churches scattered all over the world reverberates with cumulative power through the universe as one mighty anthem, affecting all who are in tune therewith, raising their religious fervor and loyalty to their

church in a manner unapproachable by the isolated and haphazard efforts of individuals, no matter how sincere.

In corroboration of this assertion regarding the cumulative power of a ritual, we may mention the phenomenal hold of Christian Science on its followers. They have no high priced preachers; their music is not out of the ordinary, yet they are filled to the doors and are branching out at a wonderful rate because they have, first, a message of vital interest: health and wealth; and, second, the occult effect of concentrated effort obtained by using identical readings in every Christian Science church in the world, so that the cumulative effect may be felt by every Christian Scientist who is in tune. This effect would be much stronger if the service were really occult and chanted to a certain strain, as is the Mass.

Thus, to sum up this phase of the matter, the persistently continued individual attempts of Protestant preachers to guide their people by new and original sermons are a failure, while concerted efforts centered in uniform rituals repeated year after year, as put forth by Roman Catholics and Christian Scientists, and even by the Freemasons and Fraternal Orders, holds the audience.

In order to understand this mystery and apply the remedy intelligently, it is necessary to understand the constitution of man, both during the years of growth and also as an adult.

In addition to the visible body of man which we see with our physical eyes, there are other and finer vehicles that are unseen by the great majority of mankind; nevertheless, they are not superfluous appendages to the physical body but are indeed much more important from the fact that they are the springs of all action; without these finer vehicle the physical body would be inert, senseless and dead.

The first of these vehicles we call the Vital body, because it is the avenue of vitality which leavens the dead lump of the mortal coil in the years of life, and gives us the power to move.

The second is the Desire body, which is the basis of our emotions and feelings, and which galvanizes this visible body into action. These three vehicles together with the mind, constitutes the personality, which is then informed by the spirit. Each of the bodies we have named has its own essential nature, and we may say that the keynote of the physical body is "Inertia," for it never moves unless impelled through these finer invisible bodies. The keynote of the vital body is "Repetition." That is easily understood when we consider that although it has power to move the body, it is only by repeated impulses of the same kind that it is taught to co-ordinate the movements of the body as the spirit wills. If we go to the organ for the first time and endeavor to play, we are not at once able to move the fingers in the desired manner to produce the proper tones; it requires repeated efforts to execute even the simplest co-ordinated movements of the fingers requisite to making the proper harmony. Because of this necessity for repetition, it is an occult maxim that all occult development begins with the training of the vital body.

The desire body, which we sense as our emotional nature, on the other hand, is always seeking something new. This desire for change of condition, change of scene, change of mood, love of emotion and sensation is due to the activities of the desire body, which is like the sea in a storm, full of waves, tossing hither and thither, at

random and without design, each one powerful and destructive when unbridled and without allegiance to the central directing power.

The mind indeed, is the focus through which the spirit endeavors to subdue the lower personality and guide it according to the ability acquired during its evolutionary period. But at the present time it is so vague a quantity that among the great majority of people it cannot be reckoned with and they are therefore led principally by their feelings and emotions, without much amenability to reason or thought.

Recognizing the great and wonderful power of the emotions, and its amenability to "Rhythm," which may be said to be its keynote, Progressive Theology has addressed itself to, and focused its efforts upon appeals to this vehicle. It is this part of our nature which enjoys the entertainments of the sensational vaudeville pastor; this vehicle it is that sways and groans under the rhythmic rant of the revivalist, itself vibrant with emotion; rising and falling in the well calculated measure of the speakers' voice, unity of pitch is soon established, a state of actual hypnosis where the victim can no more help going to "the mourners bench," than water can refrain from running down hill. They realize powerfully, for the time being, the enormity of their sins and they are equally anxious to start a better life; but alas, the next wave of attraction in their emotional nature washes away all that the preacher has said, all their resolutions, and they stand exactly where they were before, much to the chagrin and sorrow of the evangelist concerned.

Thus all efforts to elevate humanity by work upon the unstable desire body are and must always prove futile. This the Occult Schools of all ages have recognized and they have therefore addressed themselves to the changing of the vital body by working with its nature, which is repetition. For that purpose, they have written various rituals suited to humanity at the different stages of its development, and in that way they have fostered soul-growth, slowly but surely, and regardless of whether man was aware that he was being worked upon in that manner or not. The Ancient Atlantean Mystery Temple, which we speak of as the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, had certain rites prescribed in the mount by the divine hierarch who was their particular teacher. Certain rites were performed during week days, other rites were used on the Sabbath, and again other rites at the times of the new moon and on the great solar festivals; nor was it within the province of any one from the high priest down, to alter this ritual, under pain and penalty of death.

Also among other ancient people do we find evidence of a ritual—the Hindus, the Chaldeans, and the Egyptians all used it in their religious services. Among the latter we have, for instance, the so-called Book of the Dead, as an evidence of the occult value and the scope of such ritualistic services; even among the Greeks, though they were notoriously individualistic and anxious to give expression to their own conception, we find the ritual in the mysteries; and later, during the so-called Christian Era, we have the same occultly inspired ritual in the Catholic church as a means of fostering soul-growth by work on the vital body.

It is not contended that there were no abuses within these various systems of religion, that the priests were always Holy men, and that their hands were clean and spotless when they ministered at the Sacrifice or ritual. It is indeed true that abuse at times became so great that reorganizations were necessary, and the Protestant movement was inaugurated by Martin Luther in order to get away from the abuses that had sprung up

within the Catholic Church. But all these systems had in them the kernel of truth and power in the fact that they worked for the development of the vital body, and therefore, no matter how corrupt the priests might be, the ritual always retained its great power. Hence, when the reformers left the ritual behind them, they were exactly in the same position as the Athenians on Mars Hill, they were forced to always seek some thing new. In each denomination there is a desire for truth; each of the sects today is struggling to solve the problem of life in its own way; but each is striking a new note in a haphazard manner, and therefore they are all failing, while the Catholic church with all its abuses, still holds a wonderful sway over its adherents because of the concerted power of the ritual.

In order that we may learn from them how to fill our churches and foster the soul-growth in our Protestant people, we must first realize the fact that "in unity there is strength." We must cease our senseless disputes about details. Whether we "sprinkle" or "immerse," whether we are "predestined" or "free," what does it really matter? None ever was saved because of this hair splitting. The words of Abraham Lincoln, "in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity," must be adopted before anything else can be done. Agreement to that proposition in true consecration to the great object must be the cornerstone, and on that basic principle a Federation of the Protestant churches could then be formed. The details of government could be worked out by the membership.

Having attained this point, the important question of ritual could be worked out in two, or maybe three ways.

(1) Either it could consist of certain readings from the Bible arranged in such a manner that they would form a connected and consecutive service. A number of such rituals could be written so that each would be suitable for a certain feast, and on ordinary Sundays another ritual could be used in all the Protestant churches of the world.

(2) The ritual of the Episcopal Church could be adopted as it is, or in a modified form.

(3) An occultist capable of getting in touch with the cosmic sources of knowledge might be found and persuaded to write a ritual that would have in it a power unattainable in any other way.

The first of these ways would be the least effective, the last would be the most efficient method of attaining the desired end; but conversely, to obtain a ritual by the last method would be much more difficult.

But before a ritual can have its maximum effect, those who are to grow thereby must become attuned to it. And this involves work on their vital bodies while those vehicles are still in the making.

It is a matter of occult knowledge that birth is a fourfold event, and that the birth of the physical body is only one step in the process. The vital body also undergoes a development analogous to the intrauterine growth of the dense body; it is born about the seventh year of life. During the next seven years the desire body is ripened and comes to birth at about the fourteenth year, when adolescence is reached; and the mind is born at twenty one, when the age of manhood and womanhood commences.

These occult facts are well known to the Catholic Hierarchy, and while the Protestant ministers work upon the emotional nature, which is ever seeking something new and

sensational, without realizing the futility of the struggle and the fact that it is this most rampant vehicle that drives people from the churches in search of something more new and more sensational, the occultly informed Catholic Hierarchy concentrates its effort upon the children. "Give us the child up to its seventh year and it is ours forever," they say, and they are right. During these important seven years they impregnate the plastic vital bodies of their charges with their views by means of repetition. The many times repeated prayers, the time and tune of the various chants, the incense, all have a powerful effect on the growing vital body; nor does it matter that the ritual is in an unknown tongue, for to the Ego this vibratory message is a divine color chant intelligible to all spirits. Neither does it matter that the child repeats like a parrot, without understanding, so long as it does repeat what is given it. The more the better, for these occult vibrations are thereby incorporated in its vital body before it sets, and remain with it through life. Every time the Mass is intoned by the servants of the church in any part of the world, the cumulative vibratory power of their effort stirs those who have its lines of force in their vital bodies in such a manner that they are drawn to the church with a, generally, irresistible force. This is on the same principle that when a tuning fork is struck, others of identical pitch commence to sing.

Some Catholics have turned against the Catholic Church, but subconsciously and at heart they have remained Catholics to their dying day, for the vital body is exceedingly difficult to change, and the lines of force built into it during its gestatory period are stronger than almost any individual will.

It follows, therefore, that if we would change the tendency of the world to pursue pleasure and sense gratification to the exclusion of religion, we would do well to begin with the small children. If we gather them at the altar and teach them to love God's house and incorporate certain universal prayers and parts of the ritual in their forming vital bodies, avoiding even the semblance of a "church supper," but cultivating in all who enter the ideal of reverence for a holy place, then we shall by degrees build around the physical stone structure an invisible temple of Light and Life; this is literally meant, for such temples are visible to the spiritual sight, as the one "Manson" the "Servant in the House" described in the following words:

"I am afraid you may not consider it an altogether substantial concern. It has to be seen in a certain way under certain conditions. Some people never see it at all . . . You must understand, this is no dead pile of stones and unmeaning timber. It is a LIVING THING. When you enter it you hear a sound, a sound as of some mighty poem chanted. Listen long enough and you will learn that it is made up of the beating of human hearts. Of the nameless music of men's souls, that is if you have ears. If you have eyes, you will presently see the church itself, a looming mystery of shapes and shadows leaping sheer from floor to dome—the work of no ordinary builder.

"Its pillars go up like the brawny trunks of heroes, the sweet human flesh of men and women is molded about its bulwarks, strong, impregnable. The faces of little children laugh out from every corner stone; the terrible spans and arches of it are the joined hands of comrades; and up in the heights and spaces are inscribed the numberless musings of all the dreamers of the world. It is yet building, building and built upon. Sometimes the work goes forward in deep darkness; sometimes in blinding light. Now beneath the burden of unutterable anguish, now to the tune of great laughter and heroic

shoutings like the cry of thunder. Sometimes in the night one may hear the tiny hammerings of the comrades at work in the dome, the comrades that have gone aloft.”

When we have built such a church, we shall find that there will be an overflowing audience, for they will be more than anxious to be "in tune with the infinite", and it is likely that then even Wall Street will be ruled by religion.