

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 1

Edgar Cayce was born on March 18, 1877 in Beverly, Kentucky, a rural agricultural area of south Christian County about twelve miles south of Hopkinsville. He grew up in Beverly and finally left at the age of sixteen (in 1893). Amazingly, none of Cayce's biographers except Kirkpatrick seem to have ever visited the area. As a result, most writers give his birthplace simply as "Hopkinsville," despite the fact that any trip into town would have required a several hours' walk (we also find Cayce riding on horseback or in buggies) in each direction. This is a crucial point, since so much of Cayce's subsequent experience growing up would have been molded by the rural nature of his society and surroundings.(1) Census data from 1880 records two main occupations for the men of south Christian County: "farmer" for those who owned land, and "farm laborer" for those who did not. (Dark tobacco was then the major cash crop: today it is burley and soybeans.) The modest landholdings on which Cayce grew up were actually owned by Cayce's paternal grandparents. Thomas Jefferson Cayce and Sarah Thomas Cayce, Cayce's parents, Leslie Burr Cayce (1853-1937) and Carrie Elizabeth Major Cayce (1853-1926)- sold the farm a few months after the death of the grandmother in 1893 (a nationwide depression had begun, and tobacco prices had plummeted) and left Beverly for what they hoped would be greater opportunities in Hopkinsville. Besides those already mentioned. Cayce's family included four younger sisters (Annie, Mary, Ola, and Sarah) plus two more siblings who failed to survive infancy, as well as a complex extended family encompassing to some degree much of the population of Beverly. As a modern inhabitant of the area. Brooks Major, explained it to me. It would have been natural to feel more of a tie with a fifth cousin who was a neighbor than with a first cousin who lived in Chicago. Perhaps half of the people who knew Cayce in Beverly would have "counted kin" with him in this way.

Like his sisters, Cayce attended grade school in a one-room schoolhouse from 1883 to 1889, after which the school was rebuilt as the two-room Beverly Academy. An 1890 class photo shows Cayce with about fifty other white children. The Cayces' church. Liberty Christian Church (called "Old Liberty"), was nearby and was approximately the same size as the school. Several other churches, mostly Baptist, were located in the area, and much of Beverly's social life centered around church activities. Those goods which could not be made at home were mostly bought from two local general stores, where more socializing took place. Nearby were two doctors' offices and a blacksmith's shop. A Masonic lodge (Forest Lodge No. 308) met in an upper room of one of the general stores, with several of Cayce's relatives in attendance and at one point Cayce's father running the store below. The Masons could not have had many secrets in such a community. Additional social events were offered by something called the Adelpheans Debating and Literary Society, which organized recreational debates on such questions as whether there was "Anything to be Feared from the Growth of Catholicism in America" (the society voted no), or whether "the Government and People of America are Justifiable in Their Treatment of the Indians" (the society voted yes, apparently unmoved by the 1838-1839 passage of the Cherokee "Trail of Tears" through Christian County). Cayce's mother, and possibly his father as well, occasionally participated.(2) Other South Christian County social events to which Cayce would have been exposed included revivals and chautauqua-style lectures.

In an unpublished study of Cayce's family of origin.(3) Stephan A. Schwartz begins by reminding his readers of the temporal and geographic proximity of the U.S. Civil War, then invites us to picture an entire generation suffering from personal losses compounded by lingering antagonism toward the victorious enemy. (Christian County was split on the war issue, with Hopkinsville's Seventh Street being the traditional dividing line.) If the subject is rarely broached in Cayce literature, this is perhaps because the Cayces were Southerners whereas his biographers were Northerners. The character of Cayce's parents--another subject glossed over in the popular Cayce literature--would have been deeply affected by postwar insecurities. Assisted by two psychiatrists specializing in family issues and a psychologist specializing in post-traumatic stress syndrome (who were given Cayce's biographical details but not his name). Schwartz paints a disturbing picture. Even by the standards of the day, Cayce's father was regarded as a hard drinker and a militant racist. (Cayce drank moderately, and though sometimes his readings all but match the racism of his father,(4) at other times they affirm the "Brotherhood of Man" as an ideal instead.) Schwartz portrays the father as a failure in life who abused his family out of frustration. As for the mother, Cayce rarely discusses her, suggesting that she played a passive, codependent role in the marriage. A likely pattern would have been for Cayce to

grow up fearful of his father and distrustful of his mother (for being unable to protect him), only in his later years to harbor contempt for the father and remember the mother as a long-suffering, saintly figure. Children of abusive parents are also particularly prone to dissociation, a fact which may shed considerable light on Cayce's subsequent psychic experiences. The remarkable thing about Cayce, says Schwartz, is the extent to which he managed to rise above his abusive background, ultimately achieving a relatively successful career and family life. I would add that Cayce's religious upbringing augmented his already considerable natural creativity and drive with a certain introspective tendency, coupled with a confidence that God would help him if only he would keep his half of the covenant. This is a clearly a powerful blend of attitudes, whatever one makes of the religion that inspired it.

Cayce felt an early, profound connection with nature as well as the supernatural. Both sets of his memoirs devote much attention to descriptions of the fields and woods of his childhood, and it is surely no accident that Cayce describes his opening up to nature and the supernatural almost in the same breath. For Cayce, the natural world held deep spiritual significance:

It appeared to me even then, if God had made the little birds, the trees, the flowers, the beautiful sky, and set the stars in their places ... He must be in every one of those little creatures in some manner or form.(5)

In many ways Cayce's experiences can be likened to that of members of indigenous cultures. Indeed, Cayce's Beverly-whose families had mostly lived there for many generations-might easily occupy some sort of intermediate ground between truly indigenous cultures and the highly mobile American society of today. Even contemporary natives of Beverly will look on the hills, trees, and fields of the area and be moved to affirm their familiarity (and hence relation) with these natural patterns, or else remember some relative or ancestor who lived there. For them, kinship recognition is not only extended widely but also deeply, with the reality of one's ancestors constantly being reinforced by such reminders of their former presence on the earth. Numerous cross-cultural parallels can be observed between Cayce's experience and shamanism, with the caveat that the meaning and scope of the term "shamanism" is a topic of ongoing debate among specialists. For example, in Cayce we find the typical shamanic: themes of an initiatory illness, hereditary abilities, tutelage by spirit guides, ecstatic trances and visions, and narrated journeys into the spirit world in search of healing knowledge and/or personal advice.

At the risk of venturing the realm of psychology, it seems that when people live in relative isolation for extended periods, especially in a natural setting, thoughts and impulses dredged up from the mysterious depths of the unconscious often find expression in powerful ways. For example, a neighboring area in Tennessee has produced the more famous case of the Bell Witch, a spirit who haunted one particular family until its stated goals were met--the father died, and a daughter broke off her engagement. In the process, the spirit conversed with a number of visitors, including Andrew Jackson.(6) Spiritualist mediums and their audiences similarly received many such messages from the spirit world, though their contacts were seldom so malevolent. Within the Protestant fold Logan County, Kentucky (two counties away from Christian County) was the scene of great revivals in which the Holy Spirit frequently possessed participants to say and do all sorts of improbable things, ranging from barking like dogs to rolling around on the ground in convulsions. Cayce's supernatural experiences as a child and later on attracted suspicion not because such things were unknown to the good people of Beverly, but because the prevailing attitude held that these were best left alone.

Using the same glowing language with which he describes nature, Cayce recalls childhood encounters with invisible playmates who showed him around the family's tobacco-curing barn, as well as conversations with his deceased grandfather, Thomas Jefferson Cayce.(7) In life, the sir and father had seemed to possess psychic abilities:

On a number of occasions I saw him do some very unusual things that I have since learned many people attribute to the working of discarnate spirits. In conversation from time to time I heard people ask him to be present at some sort of meeting. The purposes of these meetings I did not know. I saw

him move tables and other articles, apparently without any contact with the objects themselves. On such occasions he would say, "I don't know what the power is, but don't fool with it."(8)

Thomas Jefferson Cayce drowned in 1881 (when Edgar was four years old) after being thrown by a horse into the middle of a pond. where he was knocked unconscious. According to his memoirs, Edgar Cayce saw him go under.(9) Intriguingly, many years later Edgar Cayce would identify- his newborn grandchild, future ARE president Charles Thomas Cayce, as the reincarnation of Thomas Jefferson Cayce.

Like most of the people he knew, Cayce looked mainly to the teachings of his church for guidance in spiritual matters. While his primary loyalty would have been to Christianity in general rather than to the Disciples of Christ in particular, the influence of his church experiences is undeniable, and few of his spiritual insights could have been entirely unmediated by this background. If we could eavesdrop across time to a Sunday morning at the close of the nineteenth century. we would likely find some twenty-five to thirty souls gathered to worship at Old Liberty,. out of a total listed membership of several times that. One-third of these would consist of Cayces, while another third would consist of Majors (Edgar's mother's family). During this period ministers of the church tended to be professors at South Kentucky College in Hopkinsville, who might preach at Old Liberty twice a month. On other Sundays the pulpit would be filled by ministers from other churches. circuit-riding evangelists. or (less formally) by the church's own elders. No musical instruments of any kind were used until 1906, when a member of the congregation donated an organ over the vigorous objections of one of Cayce's grand-uncles. Church governance was congregational, with formal authority vested in a board consisting of elders. deacons. and the minister.

The service would have been typical of Protestant churches in general. with (Calvinist or Baptist) hymns. congregational prayer, a sermon, and the "Lord's Supper" celebrated every Sunday (the frequency being an important theological issue). The whole proceedings would have lasted approximately two hours. At some point a collection plate would be passed, usually on behalf of some specific cause or expense. This practice was supplemented by more direct financial appeals first to the congregation as a whole, then--if volunteers were lacking--from specific individuals, in public. After the service. people would invite one another to dinner (i.e. the midday meat), a custom of which I am pleased to have been a modern beneficiary. Some took the opportunity to discuss the sermon or other religious topics, perhaps controversial ones. Bro, who knew Cayce during 1943 and 1944, describes Cayce's recollection of this activity:

Discussing sermons was an art form of the time [the late nineteenth century], both recreational and serious. Here Edgar was not shy at all.... Not infrequently the exchanges mirrored his reading, both 'in the Bible and in the tracts and magazines which were common in the Christian Church.

Years later I found he could discuss animatedly the issues that grasped church leaders of the period: biblical authority, the status of ex-slaves, excesses of the Industrial Revolution, musical instruments in worship (when a boy, his church voted against an organ as not scriptural), the validity of missionary societies, the five-fingered "plan of salvation," immersion baptism, communion open to all believers, alcoholism, personal idealism, service to the poor, and more.(10)

In addition Old Liberty offered Sunday school for children. organized Bible study for adults. and hosted a revival perhaps once a year. Brooks Major calls the years between 1878 and 1900 "the years of growth" for Old Liberty--from 85 listed members to about 150--due to the large number of new enrollments resulting from religious revivals.(11)

Should Old Liberty be regarded as conservative? Today most Disciples of Christ churches lie toward the liberal end of the Protestant spectrum. but then these are the churches which have remained after several twentieth-century schisms in which the more conservative churches broke away. (The present-day Liberty Christian Church- which is rather conservative, is an exception.) However, in Cayce's boyhood the nowfamiliar division between religious liberals and conservatives had not yet occurred. People attended Old Liberty not necessarily because they identified with a certain theological position but because their family attended. or because it was the nearest church. If its late nineteenth century

outlook appears conservative by modern standards. so would that of most other churches (and people) of the period. For example, the literal truth of the various biblical myths was not only generally believed but largely taken for granted, since scientific and scholarly information to the contrary took some time to trickle down. Another example: Prior to the 1920's, the boards of Old Liberty and other churches (especially the Baptists) would censure members for such moral lapses as drinking, swearing, or cardplaying. Particularly incorrigible sinners might be "churched" (i.e.. expelled from the congregation) until they showed signs of sincere repentance. then readmitted until they relapsed. Many years later in Bowling Green. Cayce would have such proceedings brought against him for heresy. by which was meant his psychic activities He was acquitted. but banned from all leadership positions in that congregation (e.g. Sunday school teaching).

Even taking into account the fact that the Bible and Christianity were a much more pervasive part of American culture in those days. by all accounts Edgar Cayce was fascinated with religion from an early age. At ten (in 1887) he served as sexton. the first of many volunteer church positions. At twelve, Cayce resolved to read the Bible straight-through once for every year of his life, even to the extent of catching up with the twelve years that had already passed. Sure enough, when he died at the age of sixty-seven. he had read the Bible sixtyseven times. Cayce's religious interests quickly grew into an intense spiritual search which led him far beyond his own denomination:

More and more I sought the companionship of teachers and ministers that chance brought my way, ministers of all creeds and denominations. I remember very well some discussions I had in my earlier years with a very devout Mormon. who was forced to leave the colony when there was the passage of the law that no one could have more than one wife. Also I remember very well the conversations I had with an elder in the Methodist Church. and ministers in the Baptist, the Presbyterian. the Christian. the Unitarian. and the Congregationalist churches. For some time I was with a priest of the Catholic church, seeking I knew not what. Is it any wonder I was called peculiar by my schoolmates?(12)

Following Disciples custom. Cayce was baptised by immersion at the age of thirteen (in 1890). This is lightly said. but the event could have only come after Cayce specifically requested it. having pondered the decision in his heart and felt moved by the Holy Spirit to declare himself a believer. One can only imagine what the experience must have meant to a boy with such strong spiritual inclinations. Shortly afterward, while Cayce was reading his Bible in a secluded spot near his home.

...there was a sudden humming sound out side and bright light fill the little place where eddy sat, and a figure all in white bright as the noon day light, and the figure spoke--saying your prayers have been heard. what would you ask of me, that I may give it to you,--just that I may be helpful to others, especially to children who are ill, and that I may love my fellow man,and the figure was gone.(13)

Cayce's memoirs describe this incident only vaguely. Sugrue's characterization of the visitor as a feminine angel is widely remembered in ARE circles, while Bro doubts this and remembers Cayce denying that this luminous figure or presence had any discernable gender.(14) Whatever its nature, the entity seems to have offered Cayce a wish, whereupon he asked to become a healer.

The following day there occurred his famous "spelling-book incident." Cayce, who was never much of a student to begin with, now found himself hopelessly distracted from his spelling lesson:

In school next day eddy missed his lessons as usual--and had to remain to write the word cabin 500 times on blackboard, and when he arrived at home that evening his Father was waiting for him--eddy studied his lessons in the evening but seemed not to be able to concentrate,at about 11that even he had the first experience of hearing the voice with-in--and it recalled the voice of the visitor of the evening befor-but it said"Sleep and we may help you" eddy asked his Father to let him sleep five minuets,he slept and at the end of the time eddy knew every word in that particular speller.(15)

Cayce's father made generous use of corporal punishment as a teaching aid, so that Edgar received "many a buff and rebuff" before the incident was finally resolved.(16) As a result of his newfound guidance.

Not only was I able to spell all the words in the lesson, but any word in that particular book; not only spell them, but tell on what page and what line each word could be found, and how it was marked ... they appeared before my eyes as recited.(17)

Cayce's father then proceeded to beat him again, this time for having concealed his ability to spell.

Cayce soon found that he could do the same thing with any book. For his eighth-grade graduation ceremony he showed off his ability by reciting an hour-and-a-half-long speech that their visiting congressman, James "Quinnine Jim" MacKenzie, had given against the quinnine tariff. Some details of these incidents suggest that Cayce's mysterious ability to absorb the contents of books may have simply been a photographic memory. For example, he could use his ability to memorize detailed printed information (e.g. page numbers). but not to learn subjects like grammar or mathematics. While other people with this ability do not need to leave the conscious state in order to activate it, there is no reason to think that it could not have worked this way for Cayce. At any rate such an explanation would spare us the necessity of invoking such things as angels or the akashic plane. Sugrue and Bro add that Cayce placed the speller under his head--as if learning could somehow occur by osmosis--but this is not found in any of Cayce's own accounts. On the other hand, Bro reports testing this ability of Cayce's many years later with a review copy of Hans Vincent's *Lighted Passage* which Bro had just received in the mail and not yet read. Cayce reportedly took the book in hand without opening it (or going into trance), and gave what Bro recalls as an excellent summary of its contents.(18)

At fifteen (in 1892) Cayce gave what many regard as his first reading. Following the urgings of his teacher, Professor Thom, Cayce (who was inexperienced at sports) attempted to join other boys in a game of "Old Sow," only to be hit on the head by a baseball:

Someone must have struck me in the middle of my spine or the back of my head, for I remembered nothing that happened the rest of the day--though it was said that I rather mechanically went through all the activities throughout classes. It was nothing unusual for me to be peculiar to the rest of them, but in the evening my sister had to lead me home.(19)

That evening he acted more and more strangely, until at one point he called for a poultice to be applied to the back of his head. His mother did as he asked, and by the next morning he had recovered. The incident was soon forgotten by his family, only to be recalled later when his psychic abilities eventually surfaced in full force.

At sixteen, Cayce fell in love with a girl named Bessie Kenner, who unfortunately did not share his spiritual values. He tried to tell her about his visions.

... but all seemed to fall on deaf ears--for Bess laughed at him and his mysterious tale, and plainly told him she liked him, but didn't care for all these unnatural things to her. she liked to play and romp go to parties go buggy riding, sit and talk, dance, go places for entertainment, this was a sad sad day for eddy, again and again he tried to tell her he loved her wanted her for his wife, home, to build for themselves a place in the world of life and activity--Oh said he I know we are just children as yet, but I can study hard, and be something--maybe the best preacher in the country, we will have a church like Old Liberty, and a lovely garden and fields of pretty crops and the like, but Bess laughed the more--she would never be a preacher's wife--and besides this foolishness of seeing things wasn't right, only crazy people talked about such things, besides Dad says you are not right in the head and can never come to any good end--even if you grow up to be a man-I want a real man a man of the world, that will go out and be something-, not a dreamer of dreams, not one that likes the Bible better than a good love story, one that would make me love him by force, take me in his arms and make love to me, kiss me and make me love him and you, you think all such is foolishness, that is life that is what ever girl hopes for.

Later Cayce confronted Bess's father, a local doctor- about his feelings for Bess:

Eddy--said he, you are a good boy, but you are just a kid not 16 yet are you Oh yes--was sixteen last Mar, said eddy, well any way says the Dr you are too young to think of getting married--while it is the wish of every Father that his daughters marry a fine upstanding man, one well thought of in every sense of the word--but he must be a man eddy... you should be like other boys--be with other boys, you never played marbel--spun a top--threw a ball, or did any of the things other boys do--dont you feel the difference when you are with other boys, but you do nt go with other boys do you, do that and after four five years come talk with me again.(20)

Determined to follow the doctor's advice, Cayce fell in with Tom Andrews, a macho former cowboy who boarded in his house and seemed to enjoy some familiarity with worldly vices. For example, Cayce recalls catching a stray bullet in the collarbone in the aftermath of a craps game which the two of them attended.(21) After Andrews left for the West in the company of another man's fiancée. Cayce attempted to attend the circus in Hopkinsville. even after his God-fearing neighbor had warned him that the circus was "a weapon of the Devil." Fortunately, divine intervention temporarily immobilized Cayce's pony in the manner of Balaam's ass, forcing Cayce to return safely home, whereupon he solemnly resolved not to be such a hell-raiser.(22) As for his relationship with Bess, we hear nothing more on the subject.

Cayce's formal education came to an end after his eighth-grade year, since Beverly Academy did not teach the higher grades and his family could not afford to send him elsewhere. Cayce, not wanting his sisters to be similarly deprived of a high school education. urged his parents to move to Hopkinsville. which they did in 1893. From that time on the family finances would be perpetually problematic. Meanwhile, Cayce went to work on his grandmother's farm under the management of his uncle, Edgar T. Cayce, partly in order to help support his sisters' education. (In order to distinguish between them people took to referring to Cayce as "Edgar Cayce, Jr.") In August of 1893 Cayce's angel (if that is what it was) appeared to him again, urging him to leave the farm to be with his mother.(23) Cayce immediately quit and began walking the thirteen or fourteen miles into town. That very evening Cayce joined his family in Hopkinsville.

Although he had been to "Hoptown" before, it is instructive to reflect on the impression it must have made on the sixteen-year-old Beverly native. Hopkinsville, a regional agricultural hub and Christian County seat, boasted a census population of 5,833 in 1890, 7,280 in 1900, and 9,419 in 1910.(24) In Beverly everybody knew each other. Not so in Hopkinsville, although most people probably had at least one friend in common with most others within their racial community (Hopkinsville being approximately two-thirds white and one-third black at the time). Beverly had only a handful of non-residential buildings. Hopkinsville boasted a regular downtown area with three- or four-story buildings. tobacco warehouses, mills, brokerage offices. newspapers, stables. stores. hotels and boarding houses. restaurants and bars, a theater. a courthouse. a jail, a sprawling mental hospital. a civic auditorium (Union Tabernacle, where Cayce heard such notables as Theodore Roosevelt. John Philip Sousa. Booker T. Washington. and William Jennings Bryan), a railroad station. at least half a dozen fraternal orders, several colleges (South Kentucky College, Bethel Female College, Hopkinsville Male & Female College after 1899) and more than a dozen churches. The Ninth Street Christian Church, which the Cayces attended, had everything that Old Liberty did not: gothic architecture, a choir, an organ (installed in 1887. over the protests of some forty members), a baptistry, stained glass windows, a full-time minister (J.W. IMitcheil until 1896, then Harry D. Smith until 1914), and a full range of Sunday School and prayer group activities for adults. I propose that Edgar's experience of Ninth Street Christian. which must have impressed him with its many seeming improvements over Old Liberty, opened him up to a corresponding expansion of his understanding of the Bible and theology.

Given Cayce's ability (whatever its nature) to effortlessly absorb the contents of books, it seems inevitable that Cayce would have attempted to acquire religious knowledge in this way. While Cayce lacked the education or funds to pursue his hoped-for career as a Disciples of Christ minister, less formal resources were available to him. The day after his arrival in Hopkinsville Cayce searched for a town-based job, and found one with E.H. Hopper & Son Bookstore, which from 1874 to 1913 also housed Hopkinsville's collection of public library books.(25) His biographers add that he initially offered to work without pay, and did such a good job that the owners were essentially embarrassed into paying him a salary. Cayce himself records that his Bible had come from the Hopper store.(26) There "seemed to be something appealing" about the bookstore, and Cayce recalls that "the several years I remained there seemed to be the stepping stones: yea. even the door. to life itself."(27) without explaining why. For him, farming represented

the expression of materiel things for sustaining of the physical man-and these here in the store for sustaining the mental man.but was there not beauty in both-were they for the same persons. or is there one thought for the city or town man and another for the toiler of the soil.no the basic truth are

the same they are different phases of mans experience.and must be treated as one.or so eddy reasoned...(28)

Years later, while entranced, Cayce would often envision the akashic records as shelves of books.

Those Cayce writers who argue that the pre-Dayton Cayce could not have been influenced by occult books since none were spotted on his own bookshelves, miss an obvious and crucial possibility-- namely that Cayce read such books while working as a bookstore clerk. Here it is important to realize that while Cayce was certainly able to read (and possibly gifted with perfect recall), he would probably not have been capable of discerning whether a particular book was sober and realistic or highly speculative in its argument. In that sense he *was* uneducated.

The Hopper store served as something of a social center for young people attending the local academies and colleges:

... to be sure many were the friendships made that ripened into love, eddy became the post office for may a note between girls and boys from either school, and he was invited to the social hours quite often.(29)

1. Beverly's relative isolation is illustrated by the fact that Rural Free Delivery of mail became available only in 190 1. and that gravel turnpikes (many of them freed after 190 1) were the main arteries which connected Beverly with Hopkinsville and other points. Christian County would not have its first paved road until 1932.

2. Brooks Major, *History of Liberty Christian Church*. p. 16.

3. Stephan Schwartz, "Edgar Cayce: A Revisionist Perspective," in A. Robert Smith *et al.*, Griffin report.

4. For example, in 1923 the sleeping Cayce was asked, "Why is It not possible to take a reading on a negro?" (Over the years Cayce knowingly gave only a handful of readings for black people, although others may have received theirs through the mail without alerting Cayce to their race.) The answer: "For the same reason that it would be impossible to teach a dog to talk" (3744-1). Cayce went on to describe negroes as being lower in vibration or soul-evolution. In a 1938 reading in answer to an - inquirer who wanted to know whether to hire a white housekeeper or a black one, Cayce replied that "White. of course. is preferable to the colored: if this is in keeping with the purposes and desires" (257-277). Gladys Davis speculates in a note attached to the first reading that Cayce may have been influenced by racist ideas in the mind of the conductor of the reading, in this case his father.

5. Edgar Cayce, 95-pp. memoirs, p. 4.

6. Two works on the Bell Witch are Bell, *The Bell Witch*: and Brent Monahan. *The Bell Witch: An American Haunting*. So far as I am aware, none of these people are related to me.

7. Edgar Cayce, 47-pp. memoirs, p. I.

8. Edgar Cayce, 95-pp. memoirs. p. I

9. *Ibid.*, p. 1)

10. Harmon Bro, *A Seer Our of Season*, p. 271. The " five- fingered plan of salvation" derives its name from evangelist Walter Scott's habit of enumerating on his fingers five steps on the way to salvation: faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The first three items constitute the believer's responsibilities: the last two represent God's half of the agreement, i.e. the benefits which God promises to provide those who meet the first three conditions. Where other revivalists sometimes suggested that the moment of salvation would be accompanied by an emotional spiritual experience. for those who did not have such an experience Scott's rationalist formulation eliminated much spiritual uncertainty.

11. Brooks Major, *The History of Liberty Christian Church*, p.18.
12. Edgar Cayce, 95-pp. memoirs. p. 3.
13. Edgar Cayce, 47-pp. memoirs. p. 3.
14. Harmon Bro, *A Seer Out of Season*, p. 277,
15. Edgar Cayce, 47-pp. memoirs. p. 3.
16. Edgar Cayce, 95-pp. memoirs. p. 6.
17. Ibid.. pp. 6-7.
18. Harmon Bro, telephone conversation, 1997.
19. Edgar Cayce, 95-pp. memoirs, p. 7.
20. Edgar Cayce, 47-pp. memoirs: pp. 6-7.
21. Ibid.. pp. 8-9.
22. Ibid.. pp. 9-10.
23. Ibid., p. 12.
24. William T. Turner. *Gateway From the Past*, vol. II, p. 5.
25. Ibid.. p. 10.
26. Edgar Cayce, 47-pp. memoirs, p. 13.
27. Edgar Cayce. 95-pp. memoirs, p. 10.
28. Edgar Cayce. 47-pp. memoirs, p. 13.
29. Ibid., p. 23.

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 2

Cayce gradually overcame his self-image as "this clodhopper"(30) and grew more comfortable with his social surroundings. It was as a clerk in the Hopper store that Cayce met college student Gertrude Evans (1880-1945), who became his fiancée in 1897 and his wife in 1903. Gertrude's family was one of the wealthiest and most socially prominent in town, while Cayce struggled financially both before and after the marriage--a contrast which leads Schwartz to interpret Cayce's courtship of Gertrude as a sign of healthy ambition. At the time of their engagement Cayce was nearly twenty and Gertrude sixteen: when they married they were twenty-six and twenty-two, respectively. The extraordinary length of their engagement is a good indication of Cayce's limited finances as well as of his in-laws' reservations. The couple's first home was a boarding house in Bowling Green.

Cayce heard a number of evangelists preach in Hopkinsville, among them Sam Jones, George Pentecost, George Stewart, and Dwight L. Moody. A chance meeting with Moody in 1895 led to multiple mornings of prayer and private spiritual discussion with him.(31) Moody seemed open to the possibility that God might really have spoken to Cayce, and even shared an anecdote from his own experience telling how he had once received divine guidance through a dream. He convinced Cayce that even if he could never become a minister, he could nevertheless find ways to serve God. After that,

I sought more and more to be associated now with the people of the church. A Sunday School class was given to me. I sought to aid some of the Methodist circuit riders, accompanying them on some of their trips, several times filling appointments for them when they were unable to go. In one of the classes I had there were thirty-eight students: I was nineteen years old. There seemed to be something that called for a special study of missionary work. More than half of that class are missionaries in foreign fields today.(32)

Years later Cayce would look back on his talks with Moody as a formative experience, and throughout his life he would remain deeply involved in such traditional church-type activities as teaching Sunday school. visiting prisoners. participating in intercessory prayer groups, and supporting overseas missions. Bro relates that these were mainly medical missionaries and the like, so Cayce may have been motivated by a desire to help the less fortunate rather than necessarily to convert the heathen.(33)

Cayce lost his Job in 1898, when the Hopper store took on another partner. At first he worked briefly in a neighboring store that sold wallpaper, then became a shoe salesman for a dry goods store. Between 1898 to 1900 Cayce worked at the John P. Morton Bookstore in Louisville, a job which he obtained through the ingenious tactic of asking everyone he knew (especially customers of the Morton store) to send letters of recommendation in waves until the management finally relented. Cayce prepared himself for the job by memorizing the company catalogue in the same way that he had memorized his speller. Louisville was "a metropolis to him"(34) and Cayce experienced some difficulty adjusting to his new surroundings. Fortunately, acquaintances from his boarding house and church eased the transition for this "already lonesome, lonesome boy."(35)

Cayce's move first to the Hopper store and then to the Morton store (a wholesaler) would have given him progressively greater access to books in an era when public libraries were as yet generally unavailable. In 1902 he worked briefly for yet another bookstore. Lucian D. Potter's Bookstore in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Unfortunately none of these bookstores exist any longer, and I have not yet been able to come by any definite information as to what titles would have been sold during Cayce's tenure. Also. until historians are able to travel back in time and photograph Cayce with an open book in front of his face. any evidence that Cayce actually read any of the volumes in his charge can only be circumstantial. On the other hand- those who accept that Cayce had an extraordinary ability to absorb the contents of books without reading them cannot logically demand such evidence.

In Louisville Cayce met a woman named Margaret while working at the Morton store. Margaret came from a wealthy family whose business the owners had been seeking for some time. Despite the fact that Cayce was already engaged,

then came conclusion in some quarters there was to one day be a union between Margret and eddy-- this didn't fit eddy's idea of being true to his promise at all, but was circumstances to so shape his life that there was little he could do but drift along with same, for the investing of considerable monies in the firm seem then to hinge on that fact.(36)

The situation was finally resolved in 1900 when Cayce's father offered him a job as a traveling insurance salesman for Woodmen of the World, a fraternal benefit society. This allowed Cayce to leave Louisville (and Margaret) for Hopkinsville (and Gertrude).

In 1900 Cayce began experiencing violent headaches. He had just been given a sedative by a doctor when he lost his voice and failed to regain it--a serious career obstacle for a traveling salesman if ever there was one. Forced to find alternative employment. Cayce took a summer business course at Bryant & Stratton Business College in Louisville. then returned to Hopkinsville to work as a portrait photographer. a trade he was to practice for several decades. (Bro points out that Cayce won awards for his studio portraits. and likes to compare the impulse behind them with that underiving his "portraits" of people in the readings.)(37) As for his voice. a succession of physicians found themselves unable to cure him. and church groups began praying for him. Cayce's weight plummeted to "less than an hundred pounds," down from 165.(38) At this point hypnotists began offering their services. Cayce had been hypnotized before, by stage entertainers like Stanley Hart "the Laugh King" in Hopkinsville, or "Herman the Great" in Louisville.(39) Cayce's biographers add that Hart was one of those who attempted to cure Cayce, and succeeded in getting him to speak under hypnosis (though the effect lasted only while he was entranced).

Eventually a New York psychiatrist with the unfortunate name of Quackenbush attempted to cure Cayce trough hypnosis. Observing the proceedings was Al Layne, a Hopkinsville-based bookkeeper who studied osteopathy and "suggestive therapeutics" as a hobby. (Layne's wife Ada employed him along- with Cayce's sister Annie in her hat shop.)

Quackenbush failed but, after reflecting on Cayce's personal history, wrote to Layne encouraging him to have Cayce put himself into the same kind of trance that he had used to memorize his speller. Cayce did so, then Layne asked the "sleeping" Cayce to diagnose himself Cayce compiled:

Yes--see the body here there is partial paralysis of the inferior muscles of the vocal cords, caused from poisons and is both a psychological and pathological condition, but sugestion that circulation will increase to the affected area of the vocal cords and remove the congestion. should enable the body to speak normal when physicaly awake.(40)

Layne followed Cayce's recommendation. Amazingly, the procedure worked. Cayce was cured--at least temporarily, for he would periodically lose his voice again and have to be hypnotized again in order to restore it.

Some time later, Layne asked Cayce to put himself in a trance again, this time for the purpose of diagnosing Layne's own ailment:

Now there came a series of experiemnts--eddy felt he owed Mr Layne real consideration for what had come about, yet didnt care to become a guinea pig for just every sort of experiment into the field of hypnotism, but Layne said now eddy if you can do that for your self there is no reason you cant do it for others, now lets see what you will say about me. I have had a bad stomach trouble for years, lets see what you say may be done for it. This proved to be a very confusing experience for eddy, while Mr L. improved and was a well man in a few months, the sugestions were to take certain compounds, use certain diets, and exercise. all of this was new to eddy, he had never studied physiology, he knew nothing about. anatomy, and most of all giving or sugesting compounds of things he knew nothing about. must be all wrong, where did such information come from. what did it all mean, did it or not have any thing to do with the experiences he had as a child...(41)

Layne then persuaded Cayce to give "readings" (as they came to be called) for other sick people. These, too, were successful, but Cayce began to gall at the resulting notoriety. In 1902 Cayce moved

to Bowling Green, Kentucky, and the following year married Gertrude. He continued to give readings for Layne's patients, however.

While in Bowling Green, Cayce received a plea from an acquaintance from Hopkinsville on behalf of his six-year-old daughter, Aime Dietrich, whose four-year-old history of convulsions had resisted all conventional medical treatment. The drama of the Dietrich case had already caught the attention of the local press, so when Cayce recovered completely following Cayce's trance-diagnosis (he prescribed osteopathic adjustments, which Layne administered), the story spread all over Kentucky and Tennessee. After this Layne was warned to cease practicing medicine until he obtained a medical degree, and so could no longer serve in his former capacity with respect to Cayce. His role was soon taken over by others. Cayce's father and a number of other people "conducted" the readings in the sense of giving the suggestion for Cayce to enter a trance, and then asking the questions. Layne's medical role was taken over by Wesley Ketchum, a homeopath who took to delivering papers on Cayce to learned medical societies (without Cayce's knowledge). Ketchum's papers eventually caught the attention of the New York Times, which carried the story under the inaccurate headline. "Illiterate Man Becomes a Doctor When Hypnotized" (October 9, 1910). As a result of the increased media attention, Cayce soon received thousands of requests for psychic readings from all over the country.

Cayce did not have to see, know, or examine the subjects of his readings--all he needed was a name and address. How was this possible? The conscious Cayce pleaded ignorance, and drew a strong distinction between himself and the source of his readings. Not only did he claim not to remember what was said during his trance sessions, he often could not understand much of what he had dictated even after waking up, due to the preponderance of technical medical terminology. The same question put to the sleeping Cayce elicited the following explanation:

Edgar Cayce's mind is amenable to suggestion, the same as all other subjective minds, but in addition thereto it has the power to interpret to the objective mind of others what it requires from the subconscious mind of other individuals of the same kind. The subconscious forgets nothing. The conscious mind receives the impression from without and transfers all thought to the subconscious, where it remains even though the conscious be destroyed. The subconscious mind of Edgar Cayce is in direct contact with all other subconscious minds, and is capable of interpreting through his objective mind and imparting impressions received to other objective minds, gathering in this way all knowledge possessed by millions of other subconscious minds.

Cayce's description assumes a model of the mind common among nineteenth-century authorities on hypnosis, particularly Thomson Jay Hudson, and subsequently taken up by New Thought writers such as Thomas Troward. Years later, in the context of another type of reading (the life readings) the sleeping Cayce would explain his ability in terms of his access to the "akashic plane," an invisible realm where all human activity is recorded for eternity.

Cayce describes the procedure itself in this portion of a 1933 talk entitled "What is a Reading":

The first step in giving a reading is this: I loosen my clothes--my shoelaces, my necktie, my shirtcuffs, and my belt--in order to have a perfectly free-flowing circulation.

Then I lie down on the couch in my office. If the reading is to be a physical one, I lie with my head to the south and my feet to the north. If it to be a life reading, it is just the opposite: my feet are to the south, my head to the north. The reason for this difference in "polarization," as the readings themselves call it, I do not know.

Once lying comfortably, I put both hands up to my forehead, on the spot where observers have told me the third eye is located, and pray. Interestingly enough, I have unconsciously and instinctively, from the very beginning, adopted the practices used by initiates in meditation. This instinctive putting of my hands to the point midway between my two eyes on my forehead is a case of what I mean.

Then I wait for a few minutes, until I receive what might be called the "go signal"--a flash of brilliant white light, sometimes tending toward the golden in color. This light is to me the sign I have made contact. When I do not see it, I know I cannot give the reading.

After seeing the light, I move my hands down to the solar plexus, and they tell me--my breathing now becomes very deep and rhythmic. from the diaphragm. This goes on for several minutes. When my eyes begin to flutter closed (up till now they have been open. but glazed) the conductor knows I am ready to receive the suggestion, which he proceeds to give to me, slowly and distinctly. If it is a physical reading, for example, the name of the individual to receive the reading is given me, together with the address where he will be located during that period of time.

There is a pause--sometimes so long a pause (they tell me) that it seems I haven't heard the directions, so they give them to me again--after which I repeat the name and address very slowly, until the body is located, and a description of its condition is begun.

This, then, is how I give a reading. I am entirely unconscious throughout the whole procedure. When I wake up I feel as if I had slept a little bit too long. And frequently I feel slightly hungry--just hungry enough for a cracker and a glass of milk, perhaps...(42)

Note however that this is a relatively late account. given after Cayce had been exposed to practitioners of yoga and similar spiritual paths. K. Paul Johnson's case for a Radhasoami connection (Cayce apparently did know at least one Radhasoami teacher during this period) points to that religion's emphasis on the divine sound and light which may be experienced during meditation.(43)

A parade of researchers, including Hugo Muensterberg, Nikola Tesla, and Thomas Edison (if Cayce's memoirs are to be believed), challenged Cayce to demonstrate his abilities in various ways, often by performing stunts such as describing the activities of someone in another city. Cayce is said to have been immensely successful at this, and ARE files testify to countless instances of incidental clairvoyance in the course of his readings.(44) Of course, the basic phenomenon of Cayce diagnosing patients at a distance would, if genuine, also qualify as clairvoyance. In 1906 a test was arranged for Cayce in which he would give a reading for a patient chosen for him, before a large audience of visiting physicians. However, when the reading proved accurate, members of the audience stormed up to him while he still lay in a trance, and began conducting impromptu tests to see if he really was under hypnosis. One doctor peeled back one of his fingernails, while another stuck a hatpin through his face--common stunts in stage hypnosis at the time. Cayce did not flinch, but later awoke in great pain. As a result of this experience he resolved to stop trying to convince skeptics, but to give readings only for those who genuinely wanted his help. To Cayceans, the incident illustrates the limitations of a formal scientific or scholarly approach to the readings.

Cayce's first child, Hugh Lynn Cayce, was born in 1907 (and died in 1982). In all, the Cayces would have two more children--Milton Porter Cayce (b. 1911. died in infancy) and Edgar Evans Cayce (b. 1918). None of Cayce's descendants seem to have inherited his psychic gifts, although Hugh Lynn is sometimes posthumously credited with a degree of clairvoyance. Until recently, leadership of the ARE was kept within the Cayce family, passing first to Hugh Lynn and then to Hugh Lynn's eldest son, Charles Thomas Taylor Cayce (b. 1942). Following ARE custom, I will generally refer to Hugh Lynn Cayce as "Hugh Lynn." Edgar Evans Cayce as "Edgar Evans," and Charles Thomas Cayce as "Charles Thomas." But all this is to anticipate.

In 1910, Cayce entered into a partnership in hopes of making money from his ability through medical consulting. Dr. Ketchum served as physician of record. Cayce's father conducted the readings, and a financier named Albert Noe provided money for a spanking new photography studio for Edgar in return for a share of the fees for his readings. In 1912. the arrangement dissolved when Cayce discovered that some of the transcripts of his readings had been faked. It surfaced that his three partners- including his father--had conspired to ask the sleeping Cayce questions for which the waking Cayce had not given permission, especially inquiries relating to horse racing and the commodities markets. Cayce learned of the matter when. contrary to his usual experience, he began to feel

physically ill after giving readings. After this discovery, Cayce left Kentucky altogether and opened a photographic studio in Selma, Alabama, where he resided until 1920 (and his family until 1923). Despite his alleged moral reservations about using his abilities in the pursuit of riches, he gave in to the temptation himself on more than one occasion,(45) and continued to advise stock and commodities speculators at least until the Great Depression. Bro points out that Cayce did not typically name specific financial instruments to be bought or sold. but merely encouraged his inquirers to apply any dream information that they might have received on such subjects.(46)

In 1915, Cayce experienced his final episode of "opsonia." For ten days he found himself unable to speak above a whisper. Then he fell unconscious, and had the following vision:

Apparently, there was spread before me all the graveyards in the world. I saw nothing save the abode of what we call the dead, in all portions of the world. Then, as the scene shifted, the graves seemed to be centered around India, and I was told by a voice from somewhere. "Here you will know a man's religion by the manner in which his body has been disposed of."

The scene changed to France, and I saw the soldiers' graves, and among them the graves of three boys who had been in my Sunday School class. Then I saw the boys, not dead but alive. Each of them told me how they met their death: one in machine gun fire- another in the bursting, of a shell, the other in heavy artillery fire. Two gave me messages to tell their loved ones at home. They appeared in much the same way and manner as they did the day they came to bid me goodbye.

As the scene changed again, I apparently reasoned with myself "This is what men call spiritualism. Can it be true? Are all these we call dead yet alive in some other plane of experience or existence? Could I see my own baby boy?" As if a canopy was raised. tier on tier of babies appeared. In the third or fourth row from the top, to the side, I recognized my own child [Milton Porter Cayce, who had died in infancy]. He knew me, even as I knew him. He smiled at his recognition, but no word of any kind passed.(47)

Several more spirits of the dead appeared before him with information for relatives left behind. which Cayce claims was later verified. When he awoke. he could talk normally. The vision left a lasting impression: "I do not know that I yet understand its whole import."(48)

Bro reports the testimony of Cayce's close friend David Kahn (a sometime furniture salesman from Lexington, Kentucky) to the effect that, around 1918. Cayce was secretly summoned to the White House to give psychic readings for President and Mrs. Wilson on the subject of the Fourteen Points.(49) Cayce alludes to two trips to Washington at the request of "one high in authority" who is otherwise unnamed.(50) A. Robert Smith relates that if Cayce did meet President Wilson. Hugh Lynn was never told of it, and suggests that Kahn had confused Wilson with a cousin of the president's for whom Cayce did in fact give readings.(51) Incidentally, the ARE is one of several spiritual movements (along with the Baha'i religion and the Agni Yoga Society) whose members have sought to take credit for the Fourteen Points on behalf of the central figures of their faiths. One wonders what these groups make of less exalted aspects of Wilson's career, such as his multiple invasions of Latin America on behalf of U.S. multinationals, establishment of official racial segregation in the federal government, angry rejection of women's suffrage, or curtailment of civil liberties.

In 1919, Cayce was asked to use his abilities to locate oil in Texas. The idea of making, money through psychic wildcatting inspired Cayce and Kahn to leave for Texas themselves the following year, where they would continue to reside until 1923. Robert Krajenke says that, contrary to the usual Caycean understanding, the initiative in this venture was Cayce's rather than Kahn's.(52) Kahn attributes the failure of the oil venture to sabotage by rival oil companies, which prevented them from striking oil before their leases expired. He points out that another company did discover oil on one of the sites identified by Cayce.(53) Cayce's sons blame the failure instead on the participants' drifting out of touch with the lofty spiritual purposes which Cayce's abilities were intended to serve.(54) How so? Although many Cayce books are coy about describing Cayce's specific moral lapses, one might be Cayce's use of his purported psychic ability as the "hook" with which to secure investors ("speculators"

would be more accurate). Several of Cayce's partners and associates in the several oil ventures were clearly promoters of dubious character. and the question must be asked whether Cayce himself should be considered one as well rather than simply as an innocent pawn of others. as ARE literature suggests. That Cayce no less than Kahn was an active participant in what came to be known simply as "the proposition" is illustrated by his travels to "New Orleans, Jackson, Memphis, Denver, all over Texas, St. Louis, Chicago. Indianapolis, Cincinnati- Washington, New York, Philadelphia, Florida.,"(55) as well as Columbus. Kansas City, Pittsburgh, and New York City. Another morally problematic aspect of Cayce's Texas period was his virtual abandonment of his family, whose finances grew accordingly precarious. Hugh Lynn grew up resenting his father for this, although he did briefly join him in Texas.(56) Cayce had at least one lover in Texas, and Bro (citing Hugh Lynn) adds the unpublished detail that the reason why Cayce remained in Texas for so long was some combination of the lover in Texas and an angry wife back home.(57)

Cayce's biographers portray the whole quixotic quest as a humanitarian effort, tragically unsuccessful, to raise money for a Cayce hospital. It is true that at some point Cayce had conceived of the idea of founding a hospital where his psychic readings could be used to treat patients whose conditions were considered hopeless. Since doctors were often reluctant to follow Cayce's psychic recommendations, control of a hospital staffed with representatives of various medical traditions would ensure that this chronic problem could be overcome. However, it is not always clear whether Cayce sought the money for the sake of the hospital, or the hospital for the sake of the money. In any case, what began as a search for oil and then for oil investors, around 1922 blurred into a direct search for hospital donors. Allies in Birmingham, New York, and Chicago all indicated a willingness to raise money for the venture provided it would be located in their respective cities. The readings, however, indicated the Norfolk area, apparently for spiritual and karmic reasons.

Krajenke entitles his article on the Texas period and its aftermath. "Edgar Cayce and the Crucial Years" since it was during this time that Cayce formulated the spiritual teachings for which he is most widely remembered as well as the approximate institutional arrangements through which it would be promoted. During his absence from Selma, Cayce allowed his studio photography business to wither away. and for the rest of his life he would earn his living exclusively as a psychic. A key moment occurred in 1923 when Arthur Lammers, a photographic supplies dealer from Dayton, Ohio, overcame his well-founded distrust of Cayce's associates to become an enthusiastic supporter of Cayce. Krajenke points out that it was Lammers who first suggested that Cayce establish a psychic research institute, on the reasoning that it would be easier to raise money for that kind of venture than for a hospital. Monies thus raised could then be used to finance a hospital, on the ingenious grounds that a hospital would be a necessary part of the "research" (into Cayce) supported by the institute.(58)

In 1923, Cayce reunited with his wife and sons in Hopkinsville, then returned with them to Selma, where they remained for only a few months. This period is noteworthy chiefly for the addition of Selma native Gladys Davis (later Gladys Davis Turner) as the Cayces' secretary. Records of the readings were not consistently kept until the arrival of Davis, who instituted the practice of keeping carbon copies of the readings (i.e. the typewritten transcripts transcribed from stenographic notes, the originals of which were usually sent to the person for whom the reading was given) for Cayce's files. To convey an idea of her influence, out of some 14,306 extant readings only about 500 date before her arrival, although thousands more must have been given.(59) Over the years, Davis became a close friend of the Cayce family. Rumors to the effect that Davis and Cayce had an affair should be treated with caution since there is no clear evidence for the assertion. and it is just the sort of detail that gossiping tongues would be likely to invent.(60)

From Selma the Cayces (with Davis) moved to Dayton, Ohio at the invitation of Lammers, who agreed to support them. Lammers had an interest in esoteric literature (especially Theosophy, AMORC Rosicrucianism, and the astrology of Evangeline Adams), and encouraged Cayce to begin giving readings on spiritual subjects. Cayce writers usually point to Dayton, 1923 as the occasion of Cayce's first readings on metaphysical or religious subjects. These became known as "life readings" (in contrast to "physical readings", "world affairs readings", etc.) since they, generally describe several of the subject's past lives. Sugrue's biography portrays Cayce as engaging in a profound struggle over the question of whether the application of his psychic abilities to such questions would be compatible

with biblical principles. Ultimately, relates Sugrue, Cayce agreed with considerable trepidation to be asked for a horoscope. The results of the reading supposedly left him stunned and horrified: while asleep, he had explained that astrological configurations on a natal horoscope are meaningful because they represent karmic influences carried over from previous lives. As for Lammers, this was his "Third appearance on this plane. He was once a monk" (5717-1). After much soul-searching, however, Cayce concluded that miraculous healings would not have occurred if his gift were demonic in nature- and gave in to requests for follow-up readings. Cayce eventually came to believe in the spiritual worldview suggested by the readings, which he decided were compatible with the teachings of the Bible after all.

While Sugrue's account possesses considerable charm and dramatic potential, the truth is more complicated. Cayce could not have been altogether surprised at the content of these readings since had been interested in astrology for several years before that, and recalls first having heard of it in 1919. Newspaper editor J-P. Thrash of Cleburne, Texas had asked for Cayce's birth information, then sent back twenty-one astrologers' reports. All of these agreed on a particular date (March 19, one day after Cayce's birthday) when Cayce would be able to answer "questions on any subject." The subject chosen was astrology, and Cayce adds that the resulting reading "has been described by many students of psychic phenomena to be the most phenomenal they have ever seen."⁽⁶¹⁾ As for reincarnation, the first reference to this concept 'In the readings came as early as 1911 (4841-2 refers to the soul being "transmigrated"), although it was not immediately recognized for what it was. Bro recalls Cayce saying that he initially heard of reincarnation by way of Rosicrucianism.⁽⁶²⁾ Prior to Dayton, Cayce had encountered a number of people interested in esoteric spirituality or psychic phenomena, undoubtedly as a natural outgrowth of his psychic career. He remembers initially giving-talks on psychic phenomena to various civic groups while still in Birmingham, Alabama. Among those named were the Theosophical Society and Unity church .⁽⁶³⁾ Johnson has managed to pinpoint the time of Cayce's lecture to the Birmingham Theosophical Society to October 1922 (i.e. a year before Cayce went to Dayton), based on an article in the *Birmingham Age-Herald*. Bro writes that Cayce referred

...to contacts with occultists in his Southern speaking engagements as having prepared him somewhat for the expanded universe of his Dayton experience, despite the general framework of Sunday School Protestantism which constituted his chief thinking along philosophical lines. In periods of my questions to him, my notes show that he granted the preparation of these early experiences in at least having raised his curiosity.⁽⁶⁴⁾

In later years Cayce would have many more such contacts, and admit to reading at least some of the occult books whose influence on him is doubted by Sugrue and his successors. In any event, rather than Lammers persuading a passive, reluctant Cayce to delve into esoteric spirituality, it would appear that Cayce made a conscious decision to expand the subject matter of the readings, and only consequently agreed to Lammers' request for him to relocate to Dayton.

The Cayces remained in Dayton for eighteen months. By 1925 it had become clear that Lammers's financial problems would prevent him from continuing to support them. At this point the Cayces (and Davis) followed the readings' advice and moved to Virginia Beach, where they would reside for the rest of their lives. Funding for the move was provided by New York stockbroker Morton Blumenthal and his brother Edwin, acquaintances of Kahn's who went on to finance a number of other Cayce-related ventures. Virginia Beach has remained the hub of Caycean activity ever since, and the man whose business card once called him a "psychic diagnostician" would forever after take on the air of a prophet.

30. Edgar Cayce, 47-pp. memoirs, p. 13.

31. Ibid., pp. 14-22: cf. Edgar Cayce, 95-pp. memoirs, p. 11.

32. Edgar Cayce, 95-pp. memoirs, p. 13.

33. Harmon Bro, telephone conversation, 1997.

34. Edgar Cayce, 47-pp. memoirs. p. 26.
35. Ibid.. p. 27.
36. Ibid.. p. 3 1.
37. Harmon Bro, *Why Edgar Cayce Was Not a Psychic*, p. 35
38. Edgar Cayce, 47-pp. memoirs. p. 33.
- 39 Ibid., p. 30 1/2.
40. Ibid., p. 33.
41. Ibid., p. 34.
42. In Jeffrey Furst. *Edgar Cayce's Story of Jesus*. p. 15.
43. In the 1930's Radhasoami teacher Bhagat Singh attended readings and lectured at ARE conferences. Later, Cayce writer and conference speaker I.C. Sharma was a minor Radhasoan-lineage-holder, and his guru Faqir Chand was an ARE life member.
44. For examples of incidental clairvoyance see Hugh Lynn Cayce. *Venture Inward*, pp. 36-75-, or Gladys Davis Turner and Mae Gimbert St. Clair. *Individual Reference File*, pp. 80-83.
45. For example in Edgar Cayce, 47-pp.memoirs, p. 46.
46. Harmon Bro, telephone conversation, 1997.
47. Edgar Cayce, 95-pp. Memoirs, p. 59.
48. Ibid., p. 58.
49. Harmon Bro, A Seer Out of Season, p. 331.
50. Edgar Cayce, 95-page memoirs, pp. 65, 77.
51. A. Robert Smith, Introduction, p. 4, in A. Robert Smith *et al.*, Griffen report.
52. Robert Krajenke. "Edgar Cayce and the Crucial Years," in A. Robert Smith et al., Griffen report, p. 9.
53. David Kahn, *My Life With Edgar Cayce*, pp. 66-68.
54. Hugh Lynn Cayce and Edgar Evans Cayce, *The Outer Limits of Edgar Cayce's Power*, pp. 49-70. 139-141.
55. Edgar Cayce. 95-pp. memoirs, p. 74.
56. A. Robert Smith, *About My Father's Business*, p. 47.
57. Harmon Bro, telephone conversation, 1997.

58. Robert Krajenke, "Edgar Cayce and the Critical Years." p. 12. In A. Robert Smith *et al.*, Griffen report.

59. Mary Ellen Carter, *My Years With Edgar Cayce*, p. 11.

60. For the prosecution. Bro recollects that Gertrude Cayce clearly recognized the potential for an affair as a very real factor in the relationship between her husband and Davis (Bro 1989: 361-362), and recalls Hugh Lynn's private complaints about several of his father's affairs, including this one. Others challenge Bro's recollection of events and reliability as a witness. For the defense. Davis's friend and colleague Jeanette Thomas points out the ubiquity of back-biting among Cayce's circle of admirers as well as the sheer logistic difficulty of any such affair being conducted in the midst of such intense scrutiny, and describes Davis's patient but weary denials when asked point-blank about the rumors. It would not be an exaggeration to say that my inquiries to various ARE people on this subject have aroused stronger feelings than anything to do with the source question. or for that matter any other topic.

61. Edgar Cayce, 95-pp. *Memoirs*, p. 66.

62. Harmon Bro, telephone conversation, 1997.

63. Edgar Cayce, 95-pp. *memoirs*;, pp. 8 1-83.

64. Harmon Bro, *Charisma of the Seer*, p. 98.

Cayce's Secret, Part 3

Here it becomes pointless to continue with Cayce's story without assuming a basic knowledge of his spiritual teachings. This chapter attempts to provide this background: later sections will provide more detail on specific subjects. The reader should realize that the numbers in parentheses after Cayce quotes refer to a standard ARE citation system in which the number appearing before the hyphen replaces the name of the person receiving the reading (for privacy reasons, it also replaces the name of the person wherever it appears in the reading), while the number appearing after the hyphen gives a sequential count of all the readings for that person. For example, 3744-5 (quoted in the next paragraph) was the fifth reading-given for inquirer number 3744. Outside of Virginia Beach the only effective way to look up these readings is to use the Cayce CD-ROM.

One way to understand the sleeping Cayce's teachings is as an esoteric elaboration of the Christian Bible. "All souls," we are told, "were created in the beginning, and are finding their way back to whence they came" (3744-5). When asked to recount inquirers' past lives, Cayce would first describe their most recent incarnations (along with natal planetary influences during each life) and work backwards to increasingly remote ages--in some cases, all the way back to the beginning:

In the days before this we find the entity was among those in the day when the forces of the Universe came together, when there was upon the waters the sound of the coming together of the Sons of God, the morning stars sang together, and over the face of the waters there was voice of the glory of the coming of the plane for man's dwelling. [34 1 - 1. cf. Genesis 1:2. Job 38:7]

Where others, notably Jung, have attempted answers to Job. Cayce addresses the voice from the whirlwind: *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?* According to the readings, we were there.

We were meant to be "co-creators" with God (3003-1). who called us into being out of his desire for "companionship and expression" (5749-14). As children of God. we share in many of his qualities. Like God. we are spiritual beings. possessing free will as well as the ability to create with our thoughts. While today we encounter limits to our exercise of these abilities, in the beginning- this was not so. Our primordial souls were purely spiritual beings, without physical bodies. We could transport ourselves around the universe without hindrance. shaping it in accordance with our every whim. As yet there was no death. The earth (including plant and animal life) had been created separately. Being of a lower "vibration" than human souls. it was not designed to receive us:

The earth and its manifestations were only the expression of God and not necessarily as a place of tenancy for the souls of men, until man was created--to meet the needs of existing conditions. [5749-14]

The "fall" (into materiality) occurred when some souls chose to manifest themselves in the earth plane anyway, in spite of God's instructions to the contrary. Inhabiting the bodies of animals for the purpose of sensual pleasure, these errant souls allowed their God-given creativity to run rampant, destroying the natural order which God had established. Physical death was inconsequential to them. since they were able to dive in and out of matter at will, commandeering new bodies whenever they desired. They went so far as to alter the bodies of existing animals to create strange new hybrids. Our legends of mermaids, centaurs and the like are said to be dim racial memories of this epoch:

As has been indicated. in that particular experience there still were those who were physically entangled in the animal kingdom with appendages. with cloven-hooves. with four legs. with portions of trees. with tails. with scales, with those various things that thought forms (or evil) had so indulged in as to separate the purpose of God's creation of man. as man-not as animal but as man. [2072-8]

With time, these souls gradually forgot their divine heritage, effectively becoming trapped in the earth plane.

But God in his mercy prepared a way for these souls to reclaim their birthright. A more appropriate physical form for them--the human body--was designed. whose blend of body, mind, and spirit

mirrors the macrocosmic universe in microcosm. Death was introduced along with reincarnation and the laws of karma, in order to enable us to face the consequences of our actions, and thereby encourage soul growth. The position of the planets at birth indicates or determines what karmic influences we bring with us into each life, although these are never sufficient to override free will. The planets also constitute realms in which souls may dwell between earthly incarnations, partaking of the unique influences of each particular planet.

After creating this elaborate system, God sought volunteers from among those souls which had not fallen. These were to enter the earth plane on a sort of rescue mission and show by example the way of return which he had prepared. In order to do this they would have to allow themselves to become trapped like their wayward brethren, and the process of leading the way out would of necessity be prolonged and painful, lasting- many lifetimes. The leader of this group of souls was the entity known to us as Adam--and also as Jesus, since that was his final incarnation.

Cayce interprets the entire Bible in light of this central theme of the Jesus soul returning to his birthright. Certain Old Testament characters (Adam, Enoch, Melchizedek, Joshua, and Asaph) are described as previous incarnations of Jesus, so that their stories may be viewed as building up to his to some extent. To the biblical epic Cayce adds his own account of otherwise unknown events in Atlantis, predynastic Egypt, pre-Columbian America, and prehistoric Persia, Cayce and the Jesus soul knew each other during at least two incarnations(65) and many of the people receiving readings were assigned past lives as contemporaries with Cayce. Jesus. or both. Events in the Bible often carry an additional level of symbolic meaning applicable to the lives of spiritual seekers generally. For example. the progress of the ancient Israelites represents the path taken by every spiritual seeker (262-28 says. "Those that seek are Israel"), while the various groups of sevens in the Book of Revelation refer to the activity of the seven spiritual centers during spiritual awakening (e.g. 281-29).

Jesus' ultimate accomplishment lay in manifesting through all his actions a spirit of self-sacrifice and submission to the will of God. In attaining Christhood, he managed not only to become aware of his own divinity. but also to demonstrate how we too may return to our rightful heritage. In this view, Christhood is not something unique to Jesus, but a goal or consciousness which all of us should strive to attain. Nevertheless. Jesus deserves our veneration as a "pattern" or exemplar for all humanity.

In this man called Jesus we find an at-one-ness with the Father, the Creator, passing through all the various stapes of development. In mental perfect, in wrath perfect in flesh made perfect, in love become perfect- in death become perfect, in psychic become perfect, in mystic become perfect, in consciousness become perfect. in the greater ruling forces becoming perfect, and is as the model, and through the compliance with such laws made perfect, destiny, the pre-destined, the fore-thought, the will- made perfect. The condition made perfect, and is an ensample for man. and only as a man, for He lived only as man. He died as man. [900-10]

Note that the "stages" named in the above reading make use of language drawn from Cayce's astrological characterization of the planets: "mind" (Mercury), "wrath" (Mars), "flesh" (Earth), "love" (Venus), "death" (Saturn), "Psychic" (Uranus), "mystic" (Neptune), and "consciousness" ("Septimus" or Pluto). Cayce also names Arcturus as "that center from which there may be the entrance into other realms of consciousness" than those of the solar system (282')- 1). "For, the earth is only an atom in the universe of worlds" (5749-3).

Q. The ninth problem concerns the proper symbols, or similes. for the Master, the Christ. Should Jesus be described as the soul who first went through the cycle of earthly lives to attain perfection. including perfection in the planetary lives also?

A. He should be. This is as the man, see?

Q. Should this be described as a voluntary mission [of] One who was already perfected and returned to God, having accomplished His Oneness in other planes and systems?

A. Correct.

Q. Should the Christ-Consciousness be described as the awareness within each soul. imprinted in the pattern on the mind and waiting to be awakened by the will. of the soul's oneness with God?

A. Correct. That's the idea exactly! [5749-14]

Assuming that we wish to partake of the Christ consciousness. what should we do" According to Cayce, the most important step on the spiritual path is the choice of an ideal: "Then. the more important. the most important experience of this or any individual entity is to first know what IS the ideal--spiritually" (357-133). Ideals such as love, compassion, and so on constitute points of contact with God. By contemplating them, applying them in our lives, and revising our conception of them from time to time in accordance with our spiritual growth, we open ourselves up to divine forces and become co-creators with God. This is the central message of the Old Testament as well as of the teachings of Jesus--that humans at any time may choose to attune themselves with God. and thereby initiate the process of returning into his presence.

Cayce habitually divides the universe (and by extension. human nature) into physical. mental. and spiritual levels. Ideals exist at the spiritual level, but are chosen at the mental level. and made manifest at the physical level. As one of Cayce's most often-cited but seldom-referenced dicta puts it. "Spirit is the life. Mind is the builder. Physical is the result." (in fact Cayce seems never to have actually said this together, but did repeat its three components many times each--for example in 1579-1, 1991-1, and 5642-3, respectively.) Using a common New thought analogy, Cayce explained the relationship between these three levels using the analogy of a movie projector. in which the light source would represent spirit, the film frames mind, and the projected image the physical world (900-156). Spirit is unitary, so at this level we are one with God, as well as with one another, while simultaneously retaining our individuality. To cling to materiality or negative mental attitudes is to mask our true nature as luminous spiritual beings.

Christhood is described as the highest possible ideal, although Cayce is careful to distinguish between the "idea" of Christ which is the object of Christian worship: and the "ideal" of the Christ spirit. which is the inspiration behind all religions (364-9). Even so. which particular ideal we choose is less important than our sincere efforts to call forth the best that is within us and manifest it in our lives:

And O that all would realize, come to the consciousness that what we are--in any given experience, or time-is the combined results of what we have done about the ideals we have set! [1549-1]

As we apply what we know, more will be given. Divine guidance is especially likely to come to us during prayer, meditation. or in dreams. These constitute safe applications of psychic phenomena, since they are oriented toward spiritual growth. In this view, psychic phenomena are in fact the natural abilities of the soul (as the very name "psychic" suggests), which may be expected to flower under spiritual influences. They are means to a greater goal, not ends in themselves. To seek them out for their own sake is to stop well short of our birthright as sons and daughters of God.

So far my summary of Cayce's teachings has followed the pattern set by the majority of Cayce writers, and Cayceans should find it familiar enough. Now I would like to introduce some criticisms of the standard. "naive" reading, since on inspection some of its underlying assumptions turn out to be quite hazardous. To begin with, an obvious sort of question to ask is that of whether the readings are accurately recorded. In fact, they find their way to modern readers through a chain of transmission that usually includes Gladys Davis (who may or may not have "corrected" Cayce's language as she took dictation for him), then whatever writers and publishers were involved in reproducing them. Without getting into tired hermeneutic controversies over the location of the "text," suffice it to say that I have checked all of my quotations from the readings against the CD-ROM version. which seems to follow the language and orthography of the typewritten readings transcripts more or less reliably.(66) Whether this in turn accurately reflects Cayce's spoken words must be judged on the basis of the one surviving sound recording of a reading, which is unfortunately of abysmal quality and full of gaps. to boot. Certainly the published books about Cayce cannot be trusted to accurately reproduce material from the readings, although the ubiquitous lapses in this area are attributable to incompetence or unadvertised attempts to "clean up" Cayce's language rather than any intent to deceive. As to whether ARE leaders have suppressed or altered material from the readings. the answer is yes-but only on a very limited scale. For example. Hugh Lynn kept several readings out of the general collection including his own life readings. which said that he had been the apostle Andrew in a previous life. Hugh Lynn apparently did not want to make this claim public, but changed his mind and restored the readings on being confronted about the missing files by young people at the A RE

Camp.(67) Another of the "lost readings" which remains unpublished is one for Gladys Davis which was removed from the files after her death after legal pressure from relatives who objected to its perceived suggestiveness. To convey some idea of its nature, another reading about Cayce and Davis which was left in the collection promises that "though their bodies may burn with their physical desires the soul of each is and will be knit ... when presented before the throne of Him, who gave and said. 'Be fruitful. and multiply'" (294-9). Charles Thomas adds that five medical readings whose content is not particularly interesting have also been left out of the general files at the request of their recipients. Some Cayceans have claimed the number of purged readings to be much higher, but I do not see any reason to treat such assertions as anything other than hearsay.

Beyond establishing the text of the readings, there is the question of their context. Cayce writers commonly treat passages from the readings as if they were equally authoritative and generally applicable. despite the fact that most readings are addressed to individuals rather than humanity as a whole. and were delivered in response to a particular situation which is typically ignored by the exegete. (Mark Thurston is a noteworthy exception.) Yet Cayce clearly tailored his message to the person receiving the reading. While Cayceans have acknowledged this to be a problem with respect to the physical readings (indeed, much of the research into them consists of ARE people trying to pinpoint the commonalities across all readings on a given disease, as opposed to details peculiar to individual patients), similar issues with respect to Cayce's spiritual teachings are seldom considered. For example, many of Cayce's listeners asked him about certain books, movements, and ideas they were attracted to: and Cayce's advice to them varies considerably even when the topic is the same. It may well be the case that the sleeping Cayce was less interested in ensuring the doctrinal correctness of his followers than in guiding them to apply values appropriate to them as individuals. Worse yet, Cayceans generally acknowledge that Cayce's reliability varied with the quality of the inquirer's motivation, among many other variables-- factors which are rarely taken into account by modern commentators except in cases where Cayce appears to have spectacularly messed up. For example the notorious 1933 "Hitler reading," (3976-13), in which Hitler and the Nazis are praised,(68) was given for an inquirer with pro-Nazi sympathies who eventually emigrated to Nazi Germany in an expression of solidarity with its policies. To their credit, the ARE has published this reading in several places without distorting the magnitude of Cayce's blunder. Two of these imbed the reading within a commentary by Yonassan Gershom, a Hassidic rabbi from Minnesota.(69) To my mind, the fact that such embarrassing material exists is our best guarantee that large-scale expurgations of the Cayce corpus have not occurred. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine, even in principle, more embarrassing readings than the ones which have actually survived and been distributed.

More generally, many familiar elements entered into ARE theology only after inquirers asked Cayce a string of long theory-laden questions, to which he replied with a mere "correct" or "yes." Most of the details of the link between the Lord's Prayer and the seven *chakras* would fit this description. as would much of Cayce's commentary on the Book of Revelation. Even the ARE emphasis on "meditation" (considered as something distinct from prayer) is arguably extraneous to Cayce's preferred form of spirituality, especially as the waking Cayce was never observed "meditating" in anything like the fashion typically practiced in Caycean circles. This need not imply that such elements are illegitimate, only that Cayce was not their true author, and that the readings should be regarded as collaborative works in which Cayce's was not always the primary voice.

The usual approach to the readings also ignores the passage of time. Readings from different decades are quoted alongside one another. typically (due to the nature of the ARE's citation style for readings extracts) with no indication of when they were delivered. Yet a certain evolution can be observed in the content and tone of the readings over the five decades of Cayce's psychic career. which becomes lost whenever readings from different periods are lumped together indiscriminately. Besides the basic shift from physical readings to life readings in the 1920's. Cayce in the 1930's and 1940's added such flourishes as a visionary account of the Last Supper. predictions of massive earth changes followed by starvation and economic collapse. and trance-channeled messages from such mysterious entities as "Hallaliel" and "Michael, Lord of the Way." It may also be relevant that during this period the waking Cayce began to experience psychic experiences of his own telepathy. the ability to read auras). as he had in his childhood. and that the sleeping Cayce gradually developed a much more active persona. even to the point of resorting to the first person singular on occasion.

A chronic problem is that those aspects of Cayce which manage to find their way into popular publication are those which match the needs and mores of the Cayce movement. These are often arbitrarily or ideologically chosen, and in any case reflect Cayce's own perspective only imperfectly. For example, it is no accident that the ARE has chosen not to emphasize Cayce's racist readings or the Hitler reading: his lack of concern for the effects of cigarette smoking (which 1981-2 holds to be harmless in moderation); his qualified warnings against masturbation (268-2): his observation that only twenty-three male babies were born in the United States on June 23, 1913 (5725- 1: this would be a much easier claim to research than, say, the effects of castor oil): or his explanation that the akashic records of dogs "may not be understood unless you learn dog language" (406- 1). On the other side of the equation, it so happens that many of the exotic flourishes for which Cayce is most frequently remembered (the sinking of coastal California), are found in only one or two readings. More fundamental distortions are also likely to occur through the ARE's selectivity. Cayce dissident Harmon Bro challenges researchers to approach the readings using the methodology of content analysis, which would require us not only to note the presence of a particular idea but also to assess its frequency and centrality within the total system of the readings. Such a revision would have the immediate effect of obliging us to weigh the medical material about three times more heavily than life readings, and traditional Christian or biblical parallels far more heavily than occult or esoteric ones. While conceding the presence of various Spiritualist and Theosophical elements within the readings, Bro sees these as statistically minor departures from Cayce's normal ideology and praxis. Beyond that, Bro (a Disciples of Christ minister) considers that the picture of Cayce that would emerge would be one of a person devoted to serving God and his fellow man--not by revealing the secrets of the universe, but by helping individual people with concrete needs through whatever means were called for. This assistance was imparted "using that person's own values and stretching them towards a new relationship with God."(70) In this light, Cayce's Bible teaching, prison ministry, and support for medical missionaries were no less important than his psychic readings. Cayce, Bro argues, took those who came to him and gave them specific guidance tailored to their concrete situations. He did not market himself to the masses as the ARE does, but warned against broadcasting "the Work" to those who did not seek it out. Instead, interest was to grow naturally as people turned to information in the readings for aid--first as individuals, then classes, then the masses. In terms of method, Cayce approached spirituality using the same empirical, Bible-based perspective which he knew from his church work, a perspective which the ARE wrongly treats as incidental coloring to the readings ("like Southern twang").(71)

In that spirit, Bro laments that the Cayce whom he knew becomes lost amidst several distorted versions which have been promoted by the ARE over the years. First there is Cayce the "psychic whiz" (Bro names Henry Reed as the chief exponent of this Cayce) who "invites you to love God for the benefits you can get," such as health, wealth, or marvelous psychic experiences.

The whole ARE emphasis on hypnosis and parapsychology, says Bro, serves to obscure Cayce's own biblically-inspired perspective which held such "techniques" to be incidental to higher spiritual purposes. Then there is Cayce as "esoteric revealer" (championed by Mark Thurston) who, Gurdjieff-like, offers his initiates some sort of elite gnosis. Bro complains that this approach wrongly conflates the fact of a particular bit of knowledge or visionary experience with the question of its application--as ethicists are wont to say, you can't derive an "ought" from an "is," however numinous that "is" may be. Without a wider context of social and religious commitments, says Bro, self-exploration can all too easily become escapist and narcissistic. Another ARE-sponsored image is that of Cayce the "all-purpose health guru" (exemplified by William McGarey). Where Cayce spoke to individual inquirers, taking their whole lives into account rather than only particular health complaints, ARE researchers have approached the medical readings as an engineering problem and attempted to distill from them cures which would promise universal results. Cayce himself dissuaded Bro from using the readings to search for cures for diseases as a class, or trying to persuade a reluctant medical community of their efficacy. Instead, he urged Bro to follow the example of Christ who "took them as they came" (254-114), tending to each individual's physical or spiritual needs as called for. Finally there are those (such as John Van Auken) who revere Cayce as something like a "religious founder." This wing of the ARE emphasizes the miraculous or revelatory aspects of Cayce, especially those relating to ancient civilizations or prophecies of the future: and habitually quotes the Cayce readings in much the same spirit that fundamentalist Christians quote the Bible, i.e. as a proof-text. Bro points out that Cayce did

his work in the context of an active church life. Other people, he says, were encouraged to do the same rather than form a new church or spiritual grouping centered around Cayce.(72) Without this traditional religious foundation, the other, more popular aspects of Cayce lack a certain depth and richness. Bro quips that he did not "think much of Cayce--and neither did Cayce."

One who did take up Bro's challenge to engage in content analysis is J. Gordon Melton. In an article describing Cayce's assignment of past lives to his inquirers (based on the sequence of life readings running from 1400 through 1599). Melton identifies certain patterns which, if accurate, would seriously undermine what literal plausibility the readings ever possessed:

The great majority of Cayce's [reincarnation] readings were for individuals and included (besides an astrological reading) the delineation of (usually) four past lives, each of which was having some karmic effect on the present. As one begins to read a sample of the life readings it is soon evident that the number of different settings of the past lives presented in Cayce is rather small. That is, in giving readings to his clients, Cayce chose from a limited number of points in time and places on the world--what I have termed a *time-culture slot*. Further reading reveals not only a repetition of particular time-culture slots, but of actual content, so that after a cursory reading of several past life accounts, one could begin to predict the content. When a person is told that s/he once lived in, for example, ancient Rome, the reader would know immediately what effect that life will have on the person presently. The time-culture slot functions as basic symbols to carry the message of the readings....(73)

Most Cayceans will recognize the "time-culture slots" which Melton identifies: Atlantis: prehistoric Peru and the Yucatan; Egypt circa 10,000 B.C.; Persia just before the time of Zoroaster; the Trojan War; classical Greece and Rome; biblical settings associated with Nebuchadnezzar, Ezra, and Christ; the Crusades; Scandinavia at the time of Eric the Red and Lief Erickson; England, France, and Germany of the post-medieval period; and finally America during the colonial period, the Salem witch trials, the Revolution, and the Gold Rush. All told, "a mere fifteen time-culture slots account for approximately 90% of all the incarnations which Cayce recounted."(74) Furthermore, where the life immediately previous to the present one was listed, it was nearly always as an American. The exceptions were equally revealing, since "Where there was a deviation in the time-culture slot pattern, *it was often related to the place of birth* of the individual."(75) For example, people with past lives in Poland or Scandinavia often turned out to have been born there in this life. Since place of birth is one of the few types of biographical facts noted of Cayce's inquirers, Melton speculates that many similar patterns might be revealed if not for the anonymity of the readings' recipients. I would add that the names of Cayce's main companions can be matched with their reading numbers easily enough, and biographical information supplied. (The ARE Library keeps a file of the names and reading numbers of those inquirers whose identities are considered fair game.)

Cayceans will explain Cayce's disproportionate assignment of past lives to certain periods by pointing to his belief that souls reincarnate in groups due to their shared karma. Yet it cannot be coincidence that "the fifteen time-culture slots concentrated on ones relatively well-known to the average American in the early twentieth century."(76) Nor can group karma explain the remarkably skewed occupational categories of these previous eras. Judging from the readings, people in predynastic Egypt found employment mainly as royalty and their retainers, priests and priestesses, workers in the great temples of healing, or managers of granaries (cf. Genesis 41). The composition of the Atlantean workforce was similar except that technicians and engineers also formed a significant occupational sector owing to that continent's reliance on high technology. Melton suggests that instead of providing information about literal past lives, Cayce's reincarnation readings serve as symbolic evaluations of an inquirer's present situation. For example, those who had been priests in ancient Egypt were encouraged to become teachers in this life.(77) Melton's account has the additional virtue of explaining how Cayce could have assigned the same past life to more than one person.(78)

Melton's account captures much of the peculiar flavor of Cayce's reincarnation readings which more general treatments cannot convey. The names which Cayce produces for these past lives are another distinctive element, and are more consistent with the imperfect understanding, of world history which we must assume him to have possessed while awake, than with history as it could have actually occurred. A list of ancient Greek names from the Cayce readings yields six Xenias, four Xercias, two

Xelias, and one each of Xeonna, Xerpia Xenxoi, Xelio, Xentia, Xerten, Xeria, Xerxon, and Xenobian. Similar names are sometimes assigned to Persians and Egyptians as well: perhaps Cayce was thinking of Xerxes or Xerxes, who appears in the readings under both spellings. Other names from the ancient Near East include Perlyanne, Eleiza, and Matilda. Palestinian Semites at the time of Christ have names like Edithia, Josie, Jodie, Judy, Esdrela, Sodaphe, Josada, Roael, Mihaieol, Zioul, and Durey. A single "Caucasian" dynasty included Ararat, Aarat, Arart, and Araaraart, which must have caused some confusion. The "Persian" readings give us Uhjldt (Cayce), Eujueltd, Ujndt, Ujladi-Elei, Uljhan, Ajhujtn, Jeuen, Uhjenda, Jdjil, Ullend, Ujtd-Pti, Ujeldhto, Oujdte, and Ujxed. The first name in this list, Uhjldt, is said to be pronounced "Yoolt", perhaps Cayce's spelling is meant to transliterate the silent letters of some now-extinct Persian written language. Those with previous incarnations in Lemuria, Peru, or pre-Columbian America had names like Ummmu, Oumi, Ouelm, Om-muom, Oumu, Oeueou, Uuloou, Oum-om, and Mmuum. One can only conclude that humans at this early stage of evolution had fewer teeth than those from the Persian period. Many Caycean names seem to represent distortions of familiar ones. Besides Xerxes one could name Ajax (becomes Ax-Tel, Ax-Tenuel, Ax-Ten-Tel, or Ax-Ten-Taa), Isis (Isris, Isois, Isis, Isis-bee, Isai), Aida (Aidia, Addia), Marcellus (Marcelleus, Marcellia), Cleopas or Cleopatra (Cleoparia, Cleopiasis), and Hatshepsut (Hept-sepht. She-hepat Sebar-t. Ispt-shept). Elsewhere we find a Lady Gondolivia of England (243), Hester Prymme (5180), Charlotte Bonte (189), Hans Anderson of Germany (955), Periclean of Persia (187), Susan Anthony (2487), Samuel Hustonson (781), and Spanish crusader Charlemeinuen (1021), Bucefulus, whose name sounds like that of Alexander's horse. Is said to have been the son-in-law of Cyrus (2284). Some names may well be symbolic, as in the case of nineteenth-century Americans John L. Self (877) or Boob of Atlantis (2917).

A fair number of famous people also appear to have been reborn as Cayce's inquirers. In no particular order we find Mary Tudor (130-1), the Shulamite (1499), Charles II of England (1915), Charles III of Sweden (2824), Jude (137), James V of Scotland (1378), Lazarus (1924), Eli Whitney (2012), Cyrus the Great (2795), Eric the Red (2157), Marie Antoinette (760), Jared (3063), Elizabeth I of England (2156), Semiramis (1101), Haman (1273), Cato (2162), Franz Liszt (2584), Jethro (1266), Edward Bulwer-Lytton (3657), Oliver Cromwell (2903), Leonardo da Vinci (2897), and Augustus Caesar (1266). Noah's family turns out in full force with Noah

(2547), Shem (2772), Japheth (2627), and several wives in attendance. Characters from the *Iliad* include Achilles (900: Blumenthal) and Hector (5717: Lammers), among others. Several of Jesus's apostles are represented: Mark (452), Andrew (341: Hugh Lynn), Luke (2824: Charles Thomas): and Matthias (2181), with a new incarnation for Judas having been identified but never given a life reading (5770). American historical figures present include William Penn (980), John Hancock (760), John Quincy Adams (2167), and Benjamin Franklin (165). Even more numerous than the famous historical figures themselves are their otherwise unknown relatives and acquaintances, such as Myra the sister of the Virgin Mary (509), or Normalene the daughter of Socrates (538: Gertrude).

One of the biggest issues facing Cayce research is the question of through what fields or genres he ought to be approached. For example, should Cayce be placed alongside Barth, Tillich, Bultmann, and the Niebulir brothers as an influential twentieth-century Protestant theologian (albeit one whose views have not found their way into seminary curricula)? Does he belong together with William James, Jung, and the Rhines as an apologist for certain extraordinary psychic or spiritual aspects of the human mind? Is he to be grouped with Blavatsky, Rudolf Steiner, and Gurdjieff as an esotericist: or with Shirley MacLaine, Marianne Williamson, and Jose Arguelles as a New Ager? Should we look to the world's great mystical traditions for Cayce's peers, taking up various Taoist, Vedantin, and Sufi writers in addition to the gnostics and medieval mystics of his own religion? Perhaps he is a great institutional organizer like Saint Benedict or George Williams.

Attempts to pinpoint Cayce's religious heritage are inevitably contentious given the strong feelings of so many people who seek to claim (or reject) him as a representative of their own beliefs. Christian-oriented Cayceans such as Bro stress the Christian basis of his teachings while asleep and active church life while awake, over the objections of Christian opponents of Cayce who emphasize his many departures from mainstream Christian doctrine. New Agers note Cayce's use of language and ideas consistent with various Western esoteric traditions. while Christian-oriented Cayceans point to his

efforts to distance himself from Spiritualism and occultism. There is something to be said in favor of all of these perspectives. I propose to call Cayce a syncretizer, since this brings out the diversity of his sources and suggests fruitful link's with other turn-of-the-century syncretizers. However, even if I am right, there is no reason to suppose that this would exhaust the possible categories into which Cayce might fall. While any number of perspectives may be worthwhile, the approach followed should be appropriate to the information sought. The literature relevant to reconstructing Cayce's teachings will be different from that appropriate for evaluating Cayce's teachings (or those of his predecessors), or for gauging their influence. In addition, some approaches (especially the broader comparative ones) ought to presume detailed knowledge of Cayce through other approaches as a preliminary.

In the case of many of the genre labels proposed for Cayce, it is difficult to decide whether such a categorization would be accurate absent agreement as to the proper scope of the various terms which have been proposed. To complicate matters, several of these carry evaluative as well as descriptive meanings. Some terms are used as pejoratives, as when conservative Protestants condemn "mysticism" or Cayceans take offense at the word "occultism" as applied to them. Sometimes they become honorifics, as in the New Agers' use of "mystical" to include only those religious which meet with their approval, or conservative Protestant denials that Cayce is really a "Christian." Evaluative uses presuppose knowledge of the ultimate truth about religion, a claim which is inevitably contentious. While I do not propose to set forth a standardized lexicon, I would point out that the fact that today "mysticism", "esotericism", "occultism", "metaphysics" and "New Age" are so easily conflated indicates the extent to which the various spiritual perspectives which they represent have been successfully incorporated into a common subculture by syncretizers like Cayce. At the same time, the fact that all of these names imply some sort of distinction from forms of those Abrahamic traditions perceived as mainstream, obscures the fact that Cayce was also involved in and influenced by versions of Christianity which this alternative milieu rejects or attempts to modify.

65. For the record, Cayce's past lives included periods as Ra Ta, a high priest in predynastic Egypt; Uhljdt, a warrior in prehistoric Persia; an unnamed messenger sent to warn Lot of the destruction of Sodom; Xenon, a Trojan warrior who fought alongside Hector; Armitidides, a Greek chemist who studied under Aristotle; Lucius, a Cyrenian soldier of mixed Jewish/Roman ancestry who became bishop of Laodicea and compiled the Book of Luke; Dale or Dahl, illegitimate grandson of Louis XIV and Maria Theresa and associated with the French court; and John Bainbridge ("Bainbridge" being the name of a district within Christian County, Kentucky), a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century English adventurer (or two adventurers?) who landed in Virginia Beach and proceeded to live a life of debauchery. Of these, Jesus (as Zerd, the father of Zoroaster) was Cayce's son in their Persian incarnation, and (as Jesus) converted Lucius to Christianity. Glenn Sandurfer (*Lives of the Master*, p. 70 ff) argues that Jesus was also Hermes, architect of the Great Pyramid under Ra Ta.

66. The typists who prepared the database for the CD-ROM version sometimes made typos or intentional alterations to the original sentence structure, and in one case fabricated an entire Cayce reading in a humorous vein. The use of multiple checkers ensured that most of the gross changes were short-lived: however, new typos continue to be brought to the attention of Jeanette Thomas, organizer of the CD-ROM project after the death of Gladys Davis. Updates with corrections are released periodically.

67. A. Robert Smith, *About My Father's Business*, p. 231.

68. In this reading Cayce describes Hitler as spiritually led, hails Nazism as "a new ideal in the hearts, in the minds of the people" of Germany; approves of the one-party system as "the best for Germany at present"; dismisses fears that Hitler would invade other countries as "propaganda", and, in answer to a question about the Jews, hints darkly that "their rebelliousness and their seeking into the affairs of *others* has rather brought them into their present situation." Elsewhere the Cayce readings are favorable toward Jews and critical of fascism, so perhaps his comments here truly are anomalous.

69. Yonassan Gershom, "Edgar Cayce and the Holocaust. " *Venture Inward* 13 no 2 (March/April 1997), p. 37ffThe article is excerpted from Gershom's second ARE Press book on reincarnation from the Holocaust. *From Ashes To Healing*. The "Hitler reading" is also reprinted in the circulating file on "Books" owing to its relevance to *Mein Kampf*.

70. Harmon Bro, *A Seer Out of Season*, p. 9.

71. My citations of Bro in this and the following paragraph are based on a mixture of written notes, taped comments, and personal memories of points to which he was wont to return over and over again. His identification of "four false Cayces" was to have been the topic of a lecture at Asilomar in 1997, which he was ultimately unable to attend due to medical problems.

72. One inquirer asked for help in creating a pamphlet on the life of Jesus, to which the sleeping Cayce cautioned: "AGAIN, what is the purpose? What is to be gained from this that has not been accomplished in other data of similar nature? Is it for the propagation of propaganda for a group that is attempting to make a cult, or is it to supply the needed stimuli to A for service in the channels in which they find themselves drawn, for one or another cause?" (2067-7) It is amusing to note that this has not prevented the ARE from publishing any number of such books.

73. J. Gordon Melton, "Edgar Cayce and Reincarnation," p. 42.

74. *Ibid*, p. 44.

75. *Ibid*, p. 47.

76. *Ibid*, p. 48.

77. *Ibid*, p. 45.

78. Melton points out that Cayce identified two inquirers as the woman caught in adultery (295 and 1436), and another two as the rich young ruler from Mark 10 (2677 and 1416). When asked about the former duplication, Cayce affirmed that there were two women caught in adultery (295-8). When similar inconsistencies were pointed out in Cayce's account of the composition of the Magi, Cayce explained that there were "more than one visit of the Wise Men" (2067- 1). On the subject of Cayce's inconsistencies, the readings variously give the date of Jesus's birth as December 24 or 25 (5749-7), January 6 (5749-15), or March 19 (2067- 1). His explanation seems to allude to the use of multiple calendrical systems (2067- 1), although I do not see how that could possibly explain the dates which he gives.

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 4

To understand why so little has been published on the source question, one must first understand the nature of the Cayce movement and particularly that of its driving force, the ARE. Unfortunately, such an understanding is not easy to come by. The only book-length history of the Cayce movement yet written is A. Robert Smith's biography of Hugh Lynn Cayce, *About My Father's Business* (1988). His edited book *The Lost Memoirs of Edgar Cayce* (1997) also contains many primary sources for the early years of the Cayce movement. Other historical material may be culled from ARE periodicals such as *Venture Inward*, or made the object of original research at Virginia Beach. *A Search For God* (1942, 1950: my page citations follow the two-volume edition) is an indispensable part of Cayce's legacy, as are the study groups centered around it. Other important printed sources used in this chapter are the *Handbook for ARE Study Groups* (1957, revised 1971, hereinafter referred to as the *ARE Handbook*), and assorted ephemera.

The Cayce movement is not quite identical with the ARE. To begin with, Cayce's followers were meeting well before that organization's formation. Moreover, many consumers of ARE-sponsored products and participants in ARE-sponsored activities are nonmembers. Finally, several organizations besides the ARE are devoted to Caycean or partially Caycean perspectives. The Edgar Cayce Foundation is legally separate from the ARE, but has an identical board of trustees. Atlantic University has a separate board and until recently was closely allied with the ARE. Cayce study groups and the Glad Helpers healing prayer group receive support from the ARE but operate independently of any institutional control (by Cayce's design, I am told). The ARE Clinic in Phoenix and Home Health Products in Virginia Beach are linked with the ARE mainly on the basis of franchising or licensing agreements. The Logos Center of Scottsdale, Arizona (Anne and Herbert Puryear) and the Pilgrim Institute of Cape Cod, Massachusetts (June and Harmon Bro) were founded by prominent dissidents within the Cayce movement. The Heritage Store in Virginia Beach branched out from providing Cayce products to become a general New Age center. Somewhat farther a field we find the Gathering, a UFO-oriented intentional community in Schuyler, Virginia whose leader--Tom Ringrose--hails the devil (actually a reptilian alien) as a liberator. Although most Cayceans would probably be aghast to learn of the Gathering's evolution from a Search For God group in the 1960's, many of its practices and mores do stem from the Cayce movement. The ranks of those who have been loosely influenced by the Cayce readings would probably include much of the New Age and holistic health movements in general, as illustrated by the vast number of Americans who have heard rumors to the effect that California is doomed to sink 'into the ocean without realizing this to be a distorted form of a Cayce prophecy.

A. Evolution of the ARE

In Chapter One we left Cayce after his 1925 arrival in Virginia Beach. In 1927 Cayce, Kahn, the Blumenthals, and several others formed a nonprofit corporation called the Association of National Investigators (ANI for the purpose of supporting psychic research. To that end the ANI raised money for the establishment of a small (thirty-bed) hospital in Virginia Beach known as the Cayce Hospital for Research and Enlightenment, which opened the following year, Cayce filled many of the available positions with his relatives. In 1930 another ANI-sponsored project opened its doors, this time a small liberal arts college dedicated to Cayce's teachings. Also based in Virginia Beach. Atlantic University attracted more than two hundred students in its first semester. Unfortunately, both projects suffered from fundamentally unsound finances exacerbated by a lack of planning or accountability, graft, nepotism, personal conflicts between trustees (Kahn and the Cayces versus the Blumenthals), and the onset of the Great Depression. The Association of National Investigators was disbanded in 1931, the hospital closed that same year, and Atlantic University shut down in 1932.

After the collapse of the ANI, Cayce contacted a number of people who had received readings and asked them whether they thought he should continue his work. The response was overwhelmingly positive. A meeting was quickly held with sixty-one persons in attendance.

Cayce spoke:

Friends, I have nothing to sell. I am not attempting to spread propaganda. Each one here has had personal experience with the information, or phenomena, as manifested through me: some of you know of my own shortcomings, as well as shortcomings of others. It isn't a question as to whether I want to go on, but the question is, do you, as a group, as individuals, want to see a study of the phenomena, or the information, continue? Is it worth while? My own position is this: Some years ago, when through the information my wife's life was spared, a little later my boy's eyes received their sight [Hugh Lynn was said to have been temporarily blinded in an accident involving photographic flash powder] and the younger boy was healed also. I could only say, 'God, I don't understand, but for the good that has come to me, may I be able to help others when they ask.' You all know from your own experiences whether this is worth while. Do not consider my experience, but your experience.(79)

A round of testimonials followed, interspersed with pleas urging Cayce to continue his work- A new organization, the ARE, was formed by those present. In accordance with a suggestion by the sleeping Cayce, the ARE adopted as its purpose or ideal, "that we may make manifest the love of God and man" (254-42. cf. Luke 10:27), a desideratum which is now inscribed above the doors of the ARE Library Building. Cayce's son Hugh Lynn, who had recently graduated from Washington and Lee with a bachelors degree in psychology, was named its first director (later president). Unlike its predecessor, the ARE drew its strength primarily from Cayce's grassroots supporters rather than a few major donors. It deserves noting that during Cayce's lifetime, the bulk of the ARE's membership--like that of the ANI before it--consisted of those who had enrolled because membership (which costed ten dollars) was required of those who sought a reading from Cayce. The idea was to prevent Cayce from being charged with fortune-telling or practicing medicine without a license, since technically Cayce himself was not receiving any money for his readings. In those years the ARE operated out of the Cayces' house on Arctic Crescent.

The same year that the ARE was founded (1931), the first Cayce study group began meeting (and would continue in some form until 1970). Under the inspiration of study groups organized by Hitler supporter and occultist William Dudley Pelley, who offered to teach people how to become psychic, several people who frequented Cayce's weekly lectures asked him whether he could do the same. Cayce agreed, resulting in the formation of Study Group 41. Its dozen or so members included Gertrude, Les Cayce, Hugh Lynn, Gladys Davis, Mildred Davis (Gladys's cousin), and Esther Wynne (a Norfolk English teacher). The sleeping Cayce steered the group toward spiritual deepening through meditation, prayer, dream analysis, Bible study, and most especially the transformation of attitudes. Cayce also asked group members to summarize in writing the lessons learned, resulting in the two (or three) slender volumes of *A Search For God*. Theoretically a collective work by the members of Study Group #1 *A Search For God* was actually compiled by Esther Wynne and edited by Hugh Lynn. The whole effort took place under Cayce's psychic direction between 1931 and 1942. Much of its unwieldy language is taken directly from readings given by Cayce especially for this purpose (262-1 through 262-1-30). Each chapter focuses on a topic relevant to the spiritual path, such as "Cooperation", "Know Thyself" and "What Is My Ideal?" These were suggested by Cayce himself who asked members of the group not to leave a topic until they felt (and the readings concurred) they were successfully applying, that principle in their daily lives. Other groups quickly formed in the wake of Study Group #1. Cayce himself urged the formation of the Glad Helpers intercessory healing prayer group, whose original membership largely overlapped with the first study group. Most new groups, however, arose by themselves and chose to follow a format centered around *A Search For God*. That is, rather than create their own texts and follow the discipline of the first group, subsequent groups would simply study the text which was already written and which had received Cayce's imprimatur. New formats were developed for later groups which, unlike Study Group #1, could not center their activities around Cayce's personal psychic guidance. Over the years the ARE has made support for study groups one of its main tasks, providing materials and referring inquirers to local groups.

The first annual ARE Congress was held in the summer of 1932 at the instigation of Hugh Lynn. Sixteen people attended. Like every ARE Congress ever since, the week-long event took place at Virginia Beach: and like future conferences it featured speakers from diverse fields who lectured on the relevance of Cayce for their areas of expertise. In those early years Cayce himself would give lectures as well, both while awake and while entranced, which must have been the high point of the Congresses. In 1948 additional conferences came to be offered during the summer tourist season,

and today the role of organizing conferences has become another of the ARE's most basic functions. Incidentally, ARE Congresses have no legal authority although they often forward recommendations to the ARE board, which may or may not deem them feasible. In recent years Congresses have been treated essentially as a peculiar sort of conference.

Cayce died of a stroke on January 3, 1945, and Gertrude died three months later. Both Hugh Lynn and Edgar Evans Cayce were serving overseas at the time, leaving Gladys Davis, graduate student Harmon Bro, and a few others to rally the shrinking number of people (from several hundred down to several dozen) involved with the ARE. There was a real question as to whether the ARE could survive the death of the psychic whose teachings it had been founded to study. For six months a certain Dr. Bidwell gave readings in Cayce's place (Cayce having left a huge backlog of undelivered readings). Controversy arose over what to do with the 145,000 carbon pages of the Cayce readings, with some trustees urging that they be donated to Harvard or Duke University (the latter owing to the fame of its parapsychological program). Davis responded by securing the readings in their vault (which had been built into the Cayces' home), and the vault key on her person, until such time as Hugh Lynn could return from the army to take charge of the ARE.(80)

On his eagerly-awaited return in the fall of 1945, Hugh Lynn had to decide whether to steer the ARE to become (as Smith puts it) "a research foundation, an adult education fellowship, a quasi-religious lay order, a healing center, [or] a publishing firm."(81) Hugh Lynn ultimately decided to concentrate the ARE's dwindling energies on bringing the philosophy of the Cayce readings to the attention of the world. To that end he fired Dr. Bidwell. As for the fate of the readings, some members proposed that a separate entity--the Edgar Cayce Foundation--be created that would have both physical custody and legal ownership of them, and sponsor research into them as well. This proposal inspired vigorous objections from others who preferred that the ARE retain them, but the arrangement offered Hugh Lynn the irresistible opportunity to control how the readings would be used through his appointments to the new board. Throwing his support behind the proposal, Hugh Lynn won the agreement of the ARE board of trustees in 1947, and the Edgar Cayce Foundation (ECF) was chartered the following year.(82) Today the ECF board of trustees is identical to that of the ARE.

In the 1950's and early 1960's, the ARE could easily have been taken for a local religious cult. Most of the members lived in Virginia Beach, with core participants living on the premises of the ARE headquarters (the former Cayce Hospital, which Hugh Lynn had managed to buy back in 1956). Hugh Lynn practiced an authoritarian, temperamental leadership style made possible by his status as Cayce's son, augmented by his effective control over appointments to the ARE board of trustees. He made policy decisions unilaterally, and did his best to control the content of any Cayce books published. Conference lecturer Jessica Madigan found herself summarily stripped of ARE sponsorship after Hugh Lynn tired of her infatuation with him.(83) An "image committee" led by former reporter Mary Ellen Carter was formed to dispel the public impression of the ARE as (in Carter's words) "the nuts on the hill."(84) Free public lectures began to be offered--first weekly, then daily--in order to provide an opportunity for local people to acquaint themselves with the ARE. These lectures continue today. The 1960's counterculture brought a wave of interested seekers to Virginia Beach, resulting in a serious culture clash between the newcomers and a more conservative old guard. After some initial consternation, Hugh Lynn eventually decided to reach out to the hippy camp and encourage their assimilation.

Although Hugh Lynn explored the idea of recruiting some new psychic to replace Cayce, ultimately the ARE never expanded its purview beyond the Cayce readings. Betty McCain and Ray Stanford gave Cayce-like readings at the ARE in the 1950's, but Hugh Lynn evidently lost interest in them.(85) In later years many more psychic claimants offered their services, and periodically ARE members would become enchanted with one or another of them. More than one medium claimed to have received posthumous messages from Cayce himself, to no discernable effect on the ARE or the Cayce family. Smith cites a 1970's-era wisecrack attributing to the ARE an eleventh commandment: "Thou shalt have no other psychics before me."(86) More recently a number of professional psychics have spoken or taught at ARE conferences, and psychic readings are even provided as career counseling aids to students in the ARE-affiliated Atlantic University class, "Finding Your Mission In Life." While the ARE has never officially endorsed any psychic--including Cayce--in practice psychic claimants are

somehow being evaluated in the process of considering their suitability for these roles.(87) Aron Abrahamson, Kevin Ryerson, Al Miner, Paul Solomon, and Carol Ann Liaros are well-known psychics with ARE ties.

Prior to the late 1960's. the main route whereby information on the Cayce readings saw print was through newsletters and pamphlets, whose influence was primarily limited to ARE circles. During Cayce's lifetime, a few popular accounts of his work had appeared. In 1943 positive articles by Margueritte Bro (Harmon's mother) had appeared in *Christian Century* ("Explain It As You Will") and *Coronet* ("Miracle Man of Virginia Beach") resulted in a flurry of interest: and the same thing occurred on a larger scale with the release that year of the first full-fledged Cayce biography, Thomas Sugrue's *There is a River*. After Cayce's death in 1945, popular interest declined: flared briefly with the publication of Gina Cerminara's *Many Mansions* in 1950 and Morey Bernstein's *The Search for Bridey Murphey* (which contains two chapters on Cayce) in 1956; then continued to fall until 1967, the year Jess Stearn's *The Sleeping Prophet* was published. This book drove demand for more Cayce titles. Soon the number of Cayce books skyrocketed, including not one but two independent series on him (namely the "Edgar Cayce's Story of..." series by Berkeley, and the "Edgar Cayce On..." series by Paperback Library and Warner). The bulk of these feature an introduction by Hugh Lynn. Between 1969 and 1970 Hugh Lynn hired onto the ARF staff four psychology Ph.D's with parapsychological or Jungian orientations (Herbert Puryear, Mark Thurston, Henry Reed, and Charles Thomas Cayce), all of whom went on to become well-known ARE writers and lecturers. In the 1980's. the ARE, which had self-published an ever-increasing number of volumes beginning with *A Search For God*, established the ARE Press. In recent years the ARE Press has published an average of perhaps a dozen trade paperbacks per year, but has not yet succeeded in effectively marketing and distributing its books to people outside of the Cayce movement. In 1996, its editors announced a distribution agreement with Putnam-Berkley. which they hoped would result in Cayce books being sold from supermarket bookracks. The following year they admitted that the agreement had in fact fallen through, but pointed to progress with several bookstore chains.

The popular availability of Cayce books is an important consideration in the health of the Cayce movement. since readers of Cayce books constitute the main source of new Cayceans. With that in mind, the ARE makes every effort to present information about the organization either at the beginning or end of every new book. along with its postal address. Starting in the 1970's. business-reply cards offering to send information on ARE membership and/or study group participation have often been included as well. and recently the ARE has even experimented with free three-month trial memberships. Advertisements in non-Caycean publications have not been emphasized. owing to Cayce's discomfort with the idea of commercializing his teachings. However, conferences were advertised in several New Age magazines during the 1970's, and advertisements for the ARE Press may be seen in similar publications to this day.

Before the 1970's. few Cayce readings were generally available outside of popular books-and even the authors of these required the cooperation of Gladys Davis. who alone knew how to locate information on a given subject in the voluminous and unsystematic material. Following Cayce's death, Davis supervised the ARE's efforts to preserve and index the Cayce material until her own death in 1986. The initial task of noting all the topics mentioned in each reading took approximately twenty years. The readings were microfilmed by Remington Rand during 1959-1960. The process of indexing these topics took another decade, until 1971.(88) The ECF claimed copyright to the readings at this point, although the legal basis for this is questionable.(89) Beginning in the 1970's, "circulating files" compiling Cayce's teachings on a growing number of medical and religious subjects were prepared, which members could borrow through the mail. Between 1973 and 1988 the ARE gradually published twenty-four volumes of *The Edgar Cayce Library Series*, which served a similar purpose. In 1994, nearly all the extant Cayce readings were made available on CD-ROM, along with many supporting documents and convenient search features.

With the rise of the modern New Age movement in the 1970's and 1980's. Cayce's teachings enjoyed their widest audience. Phillip Lucas entitled his article on the ARE "Saved by the New Age"(90) to indicate that organization's probable fate had Hugh Lynn not managed to market Cayce to New Agers. At the same time, the ARE lost its cutting-edge quality as new spiritual movements succeeded in

establishing themselves. Those who sought deeper interpretations of Christianity now had other trance-channeled material to choose from.⁽⁹¹⁾ Those uncomfortable with Christianity altogether had access to a wide variety of Eastern religions and Western esoteric organizations. Those seeking an intimate gathering dedicated changing its members' lives with the aid of a higher power could join a twelve-step group. In short, the ARE lost much of its market share to upstarts: fortunately for them, the market itself was booming, giving the ARE a thinner slice of a considerably larger pie. Here is a chart showing, ARE membership rates between 1945 and 1995:

1945 300 (average, estimated)
1955 1.000 (average, estimated)
1960 2.000 (average, estimated)
1965 3.000 (average, estimated)
1970 12.000 (average. estimated)
1975 14-449(average)
1980 20-249(average)
1985 43.762 (as of July 1), of which 29.319 were regular paid members
1990 (92) 70.202 (as of July 1), of which 39.114 were regular paid members
1995 31.939 (as of July 1), of which
28.934 were regular paid members

Since then, the membership levels have fluctuated around 30.000 (give or take a few thousand), with almost all members residing In the United States or Canada.

Estimating the number of study groups or study group participants is vastly more difficult. While the ARE asks study groups to register with the study group department at headquarters. it is clear that many groups neglect to enroll, perhaps in order to avoid the inevitable fund-raising letters from the ARE. At present there are approximately 800 study groups which are formally affiliated with the ARE, and perhaps 100 unaffiliated ones. No reliable historical statistics are available, since Hugh Lynn tended to Live an optimistic "parson's count" which he apparently calculated by dividing the number of ARE members by the ideal number of study group participants. Study group coordinator Jim Dixon thinks the number peaked in the late 1980's, while membership director Kevin Todeschi thinks the study group numbers have remained relatively steady for several decades, independent of fluctuations in the number of ARE members. In 1997 the ARE appointed a task force to determine how to halt what is apparently a trend toward a shrinking, number of study groups.

As the ARE achieved a certain critical mass. it was able to expand services and programs as well as membership. The number of Cayce-oriented retreats and conferences multiplied. In 1969 the Heritage Store opened in Virginia Beach for the purpose of selling, health products recommended in the Cayce readings (as well as New Age books. A competing store with the unlikely name of "PNIS" opened in 1974.⁽⁹³⁾ In 1970 the ARE Clinic opened in Scottsdale. Arizona for the purpose of treating patients using Cayce's medical and health recommendations. An ARE children's camp which had been held at Virginia Beach since 1958 was moved to its

present site in western Virginia in 1974. In 1975 the ARE completed the Library Building, the building most frequently pictured in ARE literature and the main reception center for visitors or tourists. The ARE magazine *Venture Inward*, a glossy bimonthly, began publication in 1984, although it had several predecessors extending sporadically back to the 1930's. In 1985 Atlantic University (whose charter had been kept active despite the institution's collapse) was resurrected from the dead. this time as an unaccredited⁽⁹⁴⁾ institution offering masters-level courses in "Transpersonal Studies," mostly by correspondence. Thus the ARE has managed to restore Cayce's failed hospital and university. or reasonable equivalents thereof.

Hugh Lynn officially stepped down as ARE president in 1976- at the age of seventy, in favor of his son Charles Thomas Cayce, Charles Thomas, whose doctoral training was in child psychology had previously served as ARE youth coordinator. The combination of his qualifications, ancestry, and personal connections were easily sufficient to elevate him to the ARE presidency over his nearest rival. Herbert Puryear.⁽⁹⁵⁾ Despite his official resignation, Hugh Lynn continued to exercise considerable

informal authority for several years more. He died in 1982. In marked contrast to his father, Charles Thomas does not seem to have been gifted with either a forceful personality or natural managerial abilities, and, as a result, his formal authority has declined considerably over the years. The board of trustees lessened his responsibilities to "president" in name only--first by creating a new office of CEO (filled by Edwin N. Johnson from 1992 to 1995) with full administrative responsibilities, then in 1995 by appointing an "executive council" consisting of Nancy Eubel, Mark Thurston, and John Van Auken.(96) Charles Thomas remains sole president of the Edgar Cayce Foundation, however, and exercises considerable clout behind the scenes at the ARE as well. In the early 1990's a decentralization strategy resulted in the devolution of a number of ARE functions to (so far) ten multi-state regions and several metropolitan areas. This process is likely to continue, with progressively greater authority and responsibilities given to the regional directors. Cayce Centers have opened in New York, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Stockholm, Madras, and Costa Rica, among other places.

The ARE's membership levels already place it on a level comparable with the total world followings of Theosophy or Anthroposophy(97) --both of which, I cannot resist pointing out, have received far more sustained academic attention than the Cayce movement. Furthermore, the number of people for whom the Cayce readings represent an important component of their spiritual path is much larger than the number of people who pay dues to the ARE. For example, formal membership is not required in order to participate in study groups, order books from the ARE Bookstore, or attend conferences. Cayceans would probably rather gauge Cayce's influence in terms of the number of people who have been led to "venture inward" or conduct their own search for God" as a result of his teachings. Unfortunately, I see no good way of counting these people, let alone assessing the degree to which their lives have been transformed. In any event, ARE membership levels are significant in that it is primarily through the efforts of the ARE that the Cayce material is promoted and these various opportunities to be influenced by it sustained.

What prospects are there for the future of the Cayce movement? Cayce himself indicated that his study groups might still be meeting a hundred years later, or 2034 (262-71), and this seems likely enough. As for how many people we can expect to be involved in them, this would depend on certain critical assumptions: Will there be future surges of interest in subjects relevant to Cayce? Will the ARE be effectively managed and marketed? How will its competitors fare? Will the oft-rumored Cayce movie ever actually be produced, and if so will it be successful? My own sense of the matter is that the natural course of evolution is for the Cayceans to slowly dwindle in number. After all, new Cayceans are neither born (ARE membership does not tend to be multigenerational, despite the ARE's best efforts to encourage youth participation) nor made (the ARE does not actively seek converts as the Mormons do), but must volunteer. Such volunteers will be forthcoming only when the ARE is an obvious choice for people seeking to meet a felt spiritual need. As the Cayce movement ages, however, its theology is likely to appear increasingly quaint and its organizations hidebound. Many aspects of the ARE which make it unique are also those which are most likely to age poorly. I do not mean to write their obituary--after all, the number of Swedenborgians has dwindled, but visitors to their churches will discover a movement which is very much alive despite its declining numbers. Perhaps the ARE should be compared to the various New Thought churches, whose fortunes have varied mainly depending on to what extent they have succeeded in shedding traditional Protestant trappings in favor of New Age ones. Some observers (e.g. J. Gordon Melton) conclude that the New Age movement is presently on the wane, in which case both the ARE and the New Thought churches could soon face a choice between transforming a second time, or competing in an environment for which they are not very well-adapted. The ARE has published a long-range planning document called the "2020 Vision" report which anticipates substantial membership and study group growth and the creation of several new programs.(98) Unfortunately, the document only covers the year 2020 and not any of the intervening years, during which the planners apparently rely on the Holy Spirit to arrange the projected growth. K. Paul Johnson also has an optimistic view of the ARE's future, arising out of his observations of that organization's adaptability as well as the possibility of membership growth through international outreach (one of the goals mentioned in the "2020 Vision" report). I see the ARE's "adaptability" rather as a lack of any clear purpose or defining characteristics, and am dubious of its ability to attract many members from outside the United States and Canada.(99)

79. Edgar Cayce, "My Life and Work", in Jeffrey Furst, *Edgar Cayce's Story of Jesus*, p. 394.

80. A. Robert Smith, *About My Father's Business*, p. 159.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

87. Former conference manager Rebecca Ghittino explains that psychics offering to use their ability to guide others at ARE conferences are evaluated by several staff members. The evaluation consists of the psychic giving readings for the staff members, whereupon the staff members decide if their readings seem helpful.

88. A. Robert Smith, *About My Father's Business*, p. 165: cf. Mary Ellen Carter, *My Years With Edgar Cayce*, pp. 135-137.

89. Harmon Bro on p. 29 of *Why Edgar Cayce Was Not a Psychic* writes: "The act of copyrighting work by a person who did not seek that status in his lifetime, and gave away copies of much of his work without restriction, is illegal, as a firm of copyright attorneys has pointed out in an expensive brief."

90. Phillip Lucas. "The Association for Research and Enlightenment: Saved By the New Age" in Timothy Miller (ed.). *America's Alternative Religions*.

91. Of these, *A Course in Miracles* (1975), channeled by New York psychiatrist Helen Cohn Shucman, seems to have made the most inroads into the Cayceans' natural market. The *Course* boasts several significant marketing advantages over the Cayce material. To begin with, its author is said to be Jesus Christ. Its language is usually prettier and more comprehensible than that of the Cayce material, and its New Thought-oriented teachings are designed for general application (as opposed to the Cayce readings, which are usually addressed to individuals). The three volumes of the *Course* are far more manageable than the 14,306 extant Cayce readings. Finally, in some cities students of the *Course* have established full-fledged churches complete with Sunday morning services. A number of Cayceans are also students of the *Course*, and *Course* speakers have been featured at ARE conferences. At the same time, differences between the two systems have not escaped the notice of their respective supporters-- from the Caycean side, Harmon Bro and Ed Birchhaus attacked the *Course* at the 1992 ARE Congress, leading to furious debate in the wake.

92. Starting in 1979 and 1980 the ARE experimented with free three-month trial memberships, \$ 15 nine-month trial memberships, and direct mail solicitations through American Family Publishers (Ed McMahon). As a result, ARE membership rolls swelled to more than 100,000, although few of the new recruits renewed their membership. (Core, paid membership levels remained constant at about 25,000 to 30,000.) The costs and administrative burden for these programs were considerable, leading new CEO Edwin Johnson to end the practice over the objections of most of the board, especially by Gerald C. Madin (cf. his essay, "What is our membership strategy?" in *Venture Inward*, Jan/Feb 1994, p. 49) and Charles Thomas.

93. A. Robert Smith on p. 222 of *About My Father's Business* reports that PMS ran into financial trouble when the ARE board refused to aggressively promote its products, fearing an FDA crackdown.

In 1982, the company was bought by Samuel Knoll, who renamed it Home Health Products. Knoll reached an agreement with the ARE under which the ARE certified that the products sold did indeed follow Cayce's recommendations (several different types of product integrity were distinguished), sent catalogues to everyone on the ARE mailing list, and received royalties. In 1996 Home Health Products was purchased by the Darby Group, which has indicated that it will renew the ARE agreement when it expires in 1998. but only with respect to direct sales to consumers.

94. In 1992 AU received accreditation from something called the Distance Education and Training Council, which is not one of the regional accrediting bodies. AU literature points to the fact that the DETC's accrediting commission is "listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally-recognized accrediting agency" and "a recognized member of the Council on Postsecondary Education." Former AU administrative director Kieth VonderOhe explained to me that the AU board had seized on DETC accreditation as a means of satisfying the requirements for a state charter, and insisted that this was not an attempt to deceive prospective students who might have lacked expert knowledge of the accreditation system. However, this would not explain why fundraising letters trumpeted that AU had achieved "accreditation" without specifying what kind, or why *Venture Inward* (Sept/Oct 1994, p. 5) similarly called AU "accredited" without qualification.

95. A. Robert Smith, *About My Father's Business*, p. 266.

96. Mark Thurston is a longtime ARE writer and administrator with a psychology Ph.D. from Saybrook. Nancy Eubel was brought on board as the chief financial officer. John Van Auken, a popular conference speaker on such subjects as kundalini or the end times, is the main executive in charge of the ARE Press.

97. Geoffrey Ahem on p. 100 of *Sun At Midnight* reports an estimated total world membership of all Theosophical societies as 34,421 (of which some 10,000 are Indians born into the tradition), compared with approximately 23,000 Anthroposophists.

98. The three programs are a "health and rejuvenation center" (translation: a Virginia Beach version of the ARE Clinic in Phoenix), perhaps as an expansion of the Reilly school: a Life Purpose Institute where people can learn their mission in life much as Cayce's inquirers did: and a School of Intuitive Sciences devoted to training people how to be psychic ("Visionary Long-range plan proposed." in *Venture Inward* 13no. 3. May/June 1997). The last two programs are apparently 'intended to replace elements of the Atlantic University curriculum now that the ARE and AU have had a falling-out. Harmon Bro notes that each of the three is a pet program of one of the planners.

99. In theory, the ARE could dramatically expand its membership by claiming even a tiny fraction of spiritual seekers 'in Latin America or Eurasia. However. the obstacles are formidable. ARE membership is too pricy for many of these markets. Headquarters is ill--equipped to handle inquiries in languages other than English, while local groups in foreign countries must either organize spontaneously or be developed through resource- intensive missionary programs. The ARE has little experience organizing under conditions of serious governmental or church hostility. In many countries. the ARE's natural niche is already occupied by other organizations such as the Steiner groups in Western Europe, the Roerich groups in Russia. or the Kardec groups in Latin America. Most basically, almost everything that the ARE does is oriented toward the interests of middle-class white Americans. While medical remedies could be marketed easily enough. ARE culture as a whole (Including the Cayce myth itself) Is as American as Caodaism is Vietnamese, and simply lacks a compelling basis for non-Americans to adopt it.

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 5

B. Caycean life

In the course of surveying, the history and teachings of the Cayce movement, it is easy to lose sight of the actual experience of its participants. After all, Cayceans are typically less interested in studying the origins of their institutions than in contemplating the possibility of deeper levels to the universe and themselves, or in changing their lives to reflect more of a spiritual orientation. The ways in which these aspirations are expressed are numerous. On an individual level the ideal Caycean lifestyle would theoretically include meditation, prayer, dream analysis, Bible study, charity, the formulation and application of ideals, maintaining a positive attitude, exercise, massage, regular eliminations, and the observance of a complex body of dietary restrictions. In this section, however, I feel it would be more illuminating to focus on practices typically encountered at group functions. In order to more realistically convey what participation in the Cayce movement is actually like.

The New Age is sometimes called a bookstore religion, and New Age books are clearly a typical way of learning about Cayce and the ARE for the First time.(100) Suppose that one has just read a Cayce book and finds its teachings attractive. There are two immediate possibilities for further involvement: joining the ARE and/or participating in a Cayce study group. Although the ARE readily sends inquirers information about both, these are really two distinct choices, since many study group participants are not on the ARE rolls, while many ARE members are not active in a study group (perhaps because their town or region lacks one).(101)

There is not much to ARE membership *per se*. As of 1997 three types of membership were available: associate (\$40 per year), sponsoring (\$60 per year), and life (\$2000, payable at one time or in installments). Associate member scholarships are available for those with financial need. This price structure has remained stable since the 1930's. when the ANI offered \$15 "Associate" membership for those who had received readings before: \$20 "Subscription" membership: \$250 " Life" membership: and \$ 1000 or more for " Endowment" membership. With membership came the privilege of requesting Cayce to give readings at \$ 10 each. Today the main benefits of ARE associate membership include: subscriptions to *The New Millennium* and *Venture Inward* magazines (both bimonthly), assorted pamphlets, discounts on ARE conferences, access to ARE Library material by mail, and a membership card. The benefits of sponsoring membership are essentially the same, except that sponsoring members additionally receive three new releases from the ARE Press over the course of each year of membership. New sponsoring members are also sent a copy of the *Individual Reference File* compiled by Gladys Davis Turner and Mae Gimbert St. Clair (1970). Life members receive all of the above, plus two permanent conference passes (on which however restrictions have begun to be placed, much like frequent flyer miles). As a side-effect of membership, one can also count on receiving catalogues for Home Health Products and the ARE Bookstore. In fact I received six of the latter in a single year, again illustrating the central place of New Age books in the Caycean experience. Note that nearly all ARE membership benefits are also available to nonmembers for a price, and that the phenomenon of ARE membership is something which exists primarily through the mail. Some ARE leaders have expressed a desire to move away from the concept of ARE membership as essentially a package of products and services provided in exchange for money. However, it is not at all clear what else membership could conceivably mean unless the organization were to encourage its members to identify with it as with a religion, or else democratize in such a way as to give members some say in its direction. Neither of these is likely. As for the Cayce dissidents, none of them seem to offer anything like "membership" as conceived by the ARE, although they do of course maintain lists of supporters and other interested parties.

Apart from contacting, Virginia Beach, information on local Cayce study groups may also be found in such places as New Age directories or the bulletin boards of metaphysical bookstores. The ARE presently distinguishes between three principal varieties of study groups: (1) weekly Search For God groups, the oldest and most popular type; (2) weekly "Venture Inward" groups, which follow the same format but substitute other material in place of *A Search For God*; and (3) mutual interest groups, which meet monthly and focus on some particular specialized topic such as dreams. In 1990, the Northern California/Northern Nevada region boasted about forty Search For God groups, eight Venture Inward groups (including four devoted to *A Course in Miracles*, one variable-topic groups and one each on angels, astrology, and healing) and seven mutual interest groups (including two variable-topic groups and one each for "economic healing", dreams, prayer healing, numerology, and a teenagers' group).

A number of printed sources profess to formulate or characterize the purpose of ARE study groups. The *1971 ARE Handbook* states that

An ARE Study Group is a group which is affiliated with ARE Headquarters Study Group Department and which holds to the ideals outlined in the Handbook with appropriate material based on the Edgar Cayce readings, and/or where the study is based on the Search for God books.(102)

In another book from the same period. Worth Kidd itemizes some of the things which are meant to be excluded from the purview of ARE study groups:

It is not the purpose of an ARE group to function as an open-ended discussion group, a hypnotism club, a development group for mediumship or psychic phenomena, a contact point with astral bodies or spaceships. Nor is it a research club for ghosts, out-of-body experiences, palmistry, astrology, phrenology, card reading, crystal ball gazing or any other prediction or fortune telling service. It recognizes the existence of extra-sensory perception but does not pursue it. Nor does ARE recommend or endorse anyone commercially involved in these fields. It does not promote a new religion, endorse or sponsor any causes--particularly political causes--and does not become allied with any other organizations, crusades, or movements.(103)

Earlier formulations reflect somewhat different concerns. For example, a 1947 pamphlet defined group study as "a cooperative method of studying and presenting the records of Edgar Cayce's clairvoyant readings." and also as "a plan for stimulating and directing the thinking of friends and neighbors toward metaphysical truths" as well as relating the Cayce material to "other records of truth."(104) A decade later. Esther Wynne wrote an article in *The Searchlight* characterizing ARE study groups as "an endeavor to make a careful study of how Jesus became *The Way*: and of how an individual may, by forgetting self--as he did--reach a consciousness of at-one-ment."(105) While such statements are noteworthy, it is unclear what authority any of them have ever carried since study groups are "congregationally" governed.

Anyone can start an ARE study group, whether or not one is an ARE member. The ARE will send interested parties a start-up packet. When someone fills out a form declaring that they would like to form a new study group. the ARE will send notices to its members in the area. Once the study group starts meeting regularly. the ARE will give out their contact information to any new inquirers from that area. That is about the extent of the ARE's involvement. Study groups are theoretically free to follow whatever format they choose, although I attended a group in San Francisco which was initially refused registration as an ARE study group (a mistake. according to study group coordinator Jim Dixon) on the grounds that they wanted to focus on *A Course In Miracles*. When I met them, they had agreed to use *A Search For God* in order to be put on the list. but eventually decided to switch to James Redfield's *Celestine Prophecy*, which like the Course they considered to be teaching essentially the same thing as Cayce. On the other hand, the groups I attended in Phoenix and Virginia Beach followed almost all of the ARE's recommendations--partly (I surmise) out of conservatism, partly owing to a lack of better ideas. partly because following a standard format provides a better sense of connection with the Cayce movement as a whole, and partly because the format honestly worked well for them.

Besides the official group study policies outlined in the *ARE Handbook*, the ARE's suggestions are incorporated into several handouts included in the study group start-up packet. For example, a rosary-card style bookmark entitled "Suggested Order: Search for God Study Groups" sets forth a recommended format for meetings along with the text of several important Caycean prayers: Cayce's Prayer of Protection," the Lord's Prayer, and the Twenty-Third Psalm (the last two in the King James Version). A checklist reprinted from the *ARE Handbook* is also included, and its details are instructive:

1. Do you start on time?
2. Do you open with a prayer?
3. Do you read from the Bible?
4. Do you discuss dreams?
5. Do you study SFG for an hour?
6. Do you have disciplines?
7. Do all members report?
8. Does everyone take turns leading?
9. Do you keep on the subject?
10. Do you keep to SFG?
11. Do you relate to other ARE books?
12. Do all talk?
13. Do you discuss "opportunities"?
14. Do you meditate each meeting?
15. Does everyone take turns leading meditation?
16. Do you have healing prayers?
17. Does the group have a prayer list?
18. Does everyone meditate daily?
19. Do you receive an offering?
20. Do you close on time?

I will refer back to this checklist in the course of my discussion of ARE study groups. Keep in mind that other handouts give slightly different instructions owing to the complex social and textual history of study group publications.(106) and that in any case not all Cayce study groups are equally concerned about following the ARE's diverse recommendations.

Generally, anyone is welcome to attend ARE study groups, whether or not one is an ARE member. A one-page memorandum entitled "Ideals and Purposes of ARE Group Work" states that "the only requirement for group membership is interest in researching the readings, desire to apply concepts from the readings in life's circumstances, and a desire to cooperate in group study," and even this is probably a stricter standard than most study groups actually demand. Nevertheless, many early groups were closed to outsiders (Study Group #41 limited itself to twelve members, in imitation of the twelve apostles), and this is true of a few groups today as well. Since the ARE will only give out phone numbers, not addresses, there is little chance of a study group being visited by unwanted guests.

Visitors to ARE study groups can expect to find them meeting one evening a week in someone's living room (except in the few large cities which have Cayce Centers), often the same person's every week. The number of participants will typically range from four to twelve,(107) at least two-thirds of whom will be female.(108) These evenings are usually not family affairs. Children and teenagers are rare, while married people frequently attend without their spouses.(109) Most participants appear to be middle-aged or elderly, and with some regional exceptions are mainly white, educated professionals.(110) No special effort is made to dress up. Participation is free.

The ARE also recommends that one person lead the proceedings, and that leadership be rotated on a regular basis. However, some groups may not bother appointing a formal leader for the evening, while others may look toward one person (typically the host or hostess) to perform that function on an ongoing, basis, especially when volunteers are lacking. The leader of the San Francisco group I attended held that role on a permanent basis, because group members acknowledged her as having, well-developed psychic abilities. I have already mentioned Tom Ringrose, who led a faction of one New York City study group to reform itself into an apocalyptic UFO commune. Cayce himself seems to

have anticipated the recognition of permanent study group leaders. A 1937 "Study Group Manual" written by Esther Wynne announces the creation of a "teacher training group," whose members must promise to attend their groups regularly and devote at least two hours per month to studying the material. In addition the teacher should (a) "be a Christian" with Inner experience of the Father: (b) know the Bible, study group lessons, and "other principles of religious thought" as well as "have some knowledge of the opinions held by Ouspensky, Hudson, James, Kant, etc."(111) and (c) "know self." It is unclear whether such teachers were ever found, but by the 1970's the assumption that a single group leader would be desirable seems to have been abandoned in the wake of concern about "the tendency to lean on some teacher, master, or guru."(112) ARE literature also calls for a slate of elected officers such as a chairperson and secretary/treasurer,(113) although this recommendation does not seem to be commonly followed.

After a certain amount of socializing and inquiries after those who have not yet arrived, the leader for the evening (if there is one) will typically call the meeting to order by leading the others in a prayer. The bookmark recommends that "business" be discussed at this point in the proceedings, for those few groups that have any real business to discuss. Announcements of ARE or other New Age-type events may also be made at this time, and new participants introduced and welcomed. Following Cayce (262-100), the bookmark also recommends that study groups read from the Bible, searching for ways to apply the passages encountered, and the *Search For God* workbooks suggest Bible passages to accompany the various *Search For God* chapter topics. Of course the Protestant Christian Bible is meant, although Catholics and Jews are well- represented in ARE circles. Some study groups have mixed feelings about the Bible and consequently leave this part out, while others feel just as strongly about retaining the practice. Discussion of dreams is recommended by the bookmark, but this seems to be commonly omitted. Although Cayce taught (and most Cayceans believe) that dreams are safe sources of spiritual guidance and can even preview future events, not everyone can bring themselves to inculcate the habit of writing their dreams down in order to remember them. Another factor to consider is that discussion of dreams can easily eat into the time allotted for other activities.

After these preliminaries, the first half of the evening will typically center on group discussion of a text. Most but not all ARE study groups choose to discuss *A Search For God*. Why would some groups decline to use this material? To begin with, the writing style (drawn in equal measure from the Cayce readings and the King James Version of the Bible) is frequently impenetrable, nearly always stilted, and follows no discernable organizational structure. Moreover, the books are frankly Christocentric, and many of their topics (not to mention their pious tone) appear to have been drawn from the genre of prewar religious tracts. Study group participants with mixed feelings about mainstream Christianity may prefer to discuss angels, dreams, reincarnation, Atlantis, or the spiritual laws which govern the universe. Another factor to consider is that after many years of working with *A Search For God*, many groups will simply grow tired of it. Meanwhile let the text's defenders argue that it possesses the significant virtue of focusing on fundamental issues of the spiritual path--living up to our ideals, respecting others, opening up to God--without getting sidetracked into esoteric details about Atlantis or reincarnation. Furthermore, they say, few of us are likely to have truly mastered these principles, or be incapable of benefitting from another reading of them.

Those groups which do use *A Search For God* will usually have each person read a paragraph or two, pausing after each passage for comments and discussion. While Cayce asked the members of Study Group #1 to stick with each topic until they had successfully incorporated its insights into their lives, the more usual practice is to remain with each chapter for the length of time it takes to read the material aloud and discuss it to the group's satisfaction. Application of the material is most often done on a week-to-week basis, using exercises (the "disciplines" mentioned in the bookmark) from a set of workbooks published by the ARE in the 1970's. For example, commenting on a line from *A Search For God* which asks us to "replace our negative thoughts with positive ones". Thurston suggests the following:

Experiment: Work on relating, to others with kindness. Especially focus on speaking kindly. Record those instances where you were able to replace an impulse to speak harshly or thoughtlessly with kind words. Record as well, without a sense of self-condemnation, those instances where greater kindness than you expressed would have been helpful.(114)

Most Cayce study groups devote considerable time to this type of practice, with participants reporting their experiences applying a given "experiment" during the previous week. (It is by no means uncommon for attendees to confess that they forgot to do it, or to find that they cannot remember what the exercise was.) After reading further in *A Search For God* during the meeting, a new discipline will be agreed upon for the following week. K. Paul Johnson is convinced that the exercises are Gurdjieffian in nature, and Thurston does indeed have some spiritual roots in the Gurdjieff work.(115) However, the earliest mention of such exercises within the Cayce movement dates from Esther Wynne's 1955 *Searchlight* article,(116) which lists a few for each *Search For God* chapter.

After about an hour of discussion, and perhaps a short break, the rest of the evening will center around a period of meditation. Although the meditation itself only lasts about fifteen minutes (with lengthy prayers before and after), it is almost universally felt to be a crucial part of the proceedings. Consternation inevitably arises on those rare occasions where it must be omitted for some reason (for example, if the discussion lasts too long and people have to go home). Interestingly, some early study group meetings seem not to have included meditation, and Cayce himself seems to have preferred Christian prayer (although his process of attunement while going into a trance might be considered "meditation"). Other early study groups expected their members to meditate every day at a commonly-agreed time. (Cayce himself had asked his inquirers, wherever they were, to spend in prayer the hour in which their readings would be given.) Notwithstanding the fact that a few study groups still do this, today the bookmark's suggestion that everyone "meditate daily" should be taken as more of a pious ideal than a reflection of common practice.

A Search For God recommends some form of preparation for meditation. in order to place the meditator in a receptive mood. While [have never known a study group to engage in ritual hand-washing or to ask members to abstain from sex (both of which are mentioned as possibilities in *A Search For God*), many will light candles, bum incense, do simple breathing exercises, roll their necks. chant "ALIM" or "Arrr-eee-ommm."(117) or play New Age music. Prayer is by far the most widely-used preliminary, and the bookmark recommends a particular sequence of prayers which is therefore often used. To begin with, each of the twenty-four chapters of *A Search For God* includes an "affirmation," and these are often rotated on a monthly basis. For example, the "Cooperation" chapter (1: 24) suggests the following affirmation (which Cayce actually refers to as a "prayer." I Hugh Lynn having later ordered the change to New Thought terminology):

Not my will but Thine. O Lord, be done in and through me. Let me ever be a channel of blessings, today, now, to those that I contact. in every way. Let my going in,mine coming outs, be accord with what Thou would have me do, and as the call comes. "Here am I, send me--use me!" [from 262-3). cf. Luke 22:42. Isaiah 6:81

Next on the bookmark comes Cayce's mysterious "Prayer of Protection":

As we open ourselves to the unseen forces that surround the throne of grace, beauty and might, we throw about ourselves that protection that is found in the thought of the Christ. [Paraphrase of 762-3]

According to Cayce, spiritual practice makes one receptive to many inner voices, not all of which are equally worthwhile. By focusing on our ideals, and weighing insights gleaned during meditation against them, less exalted voices can be tuned out. This prayer accordingly places participants under the "protection" of Christ, regarded by Cayce as the highest ideal. (Similarly conceived "prayers of protection" may be encountered in Unity churches.) The Lord's Prayer, which Cayce regarded as a prayer of cleansing for the seven charkas, is also recommended and commonly used. (Kidd adds. "Let's agree to say 'debts' to avoid confusion.")(118) Study groups have been known to occasionally suffer great controversy over whether such obviously Christian prayers ought to be omitted out of consideration for Jewish participants, or retained out of fidelity to Cayce and/or Christ.

No particular instructions for meditation are usually given on the spot, and Cayceans may variously try to eliminate all thought from their minds. focus their minds on God or their ideals, or simply relax. The

"Meditation" chapter of *A Search For God* views meditation essentially as a way of opening up to divine guidance. Meditation should be used in conjunction with prayer, the text advises, since "In prayer we speak to God. In meditation God speaks to us." Through prayer we ask for cleansing, and through meditation we are cleansed of "all that hinders the Creative Force from rising along the natural channels of our physical bodies to be disseminated through the sensitive spiritual centers in our physical bodies" (1: 6). Sometimes, *A Search For God* uses "flow of forces" imagery, in which the divine is conceived as a kind of internal river flowing through the subtle body: and the process of meditation as a removal of obstacles to the flow of kundalini energies through the seven chakras. At other times the chapter uses "vibration" imagery, in which the goal is a radio-like "attunement" with the divine. Another source, the Suggested Meeting Format, explains that "During the silence, each person holds their attention on the affirmation and when the mind starts to wander, brings it gently back to the affirmation."

Participants usually remain seated in their chairs to meditate, although some may sit cross-legged on the floor on the floor (in the ordinary way, not in the lotus position). That the eyes should be closed appears to be taken for granted. Another widespread assumption is that the spine should be kept straight, ostensibly to keep from blocking the flow of kundalini energy up the spine. Most often the meditation is silent, although members of the San Francisco group were accustomed to having their leader guide them verbally in the style of a hypnotic suggestion ("With your feet flat on the floor, you feel yourself grounded by healing earth energy..."). If the meditation is a silent one- it is usually brought to an end when the leader rings a little bell, or simply begins reciting a prayer which others then join in.

The Twenty-Third Psalm is a common closing devotion. Often other prayers are included as well-- for example, the group in Virginia Beach would hold hands with each person around the table saying in turn, "I pass the love and light to you. [name of next person]." At some point in the proceedings intercessory prayers are typically offered on behalf of others known to group members. Some groups keep written prayer lists, while others invite those in attendance to say aloud the names of those in need. The group I attended in Phoenix used a similar pattern for prayers of petition. Going around the room, each person was offered a chance to pray for whatever they felt appropriate, while the others attempted to augment that person's requests with their own prayer energies. Adapting a practice common in Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish services, an ARE handout also recommends that participants pray for "All absent members and those on their personal prayer lists". "The ARE, its members and activities." and "Other areas of Group concern, i.e. leaders of nations, troubled areas of the world, community concerns, etc." Meetings most frequently dissolve into a generous period of socializing and refreshments, during which Cayce's dietary recommendations are wantonly and unashamedly violated.

100. A 1991 Member Survey based on responses to a questionnaire in *Venture Inward* reveals that out of 1,948 respondents, 68,3 percent first heard about Edgar Cayce through a book. followed by 31.8 percent whose initial exposure came via a friend or relative. The figures for how members first heard of the ARE were 60,0 percent and 25,4 percent for the same two responses. Whatever its methodological failings, this survey is all we have.

101. The 1991 Member Survey found that out of 1,948 respondents. 32,2% had contacted an ARE study group in their area. while another 0,7% had started one. No Information is available as to how many study group attendees are ARE members.

102. 1971 ARE *Handbook*, p. 5.

103. Worth Kidd, *Edgar Cayce and Group Dynamics*, p. 11.

104. "A Program for Group Study with the Association for Research and Enlightenment Incorporated" (1947), p. 1. From the ECF archives.

105. Esther Wynne, "Group study: Suggestions from the Edgar Cayce readings." *Searchlight* 7 no.9 (Sept. 1955). p. 3.

106. The first study group manual was "started" by Esther Wynne in January 1935 and first published around 1937 after its contents were approved by the sleeping Cayce (262- 100- the manual itself is included as a supplement to that reading). A decade later she wrote an article for *Searchlight* 7 no. 9. (Sept. 1955) which was republished two years later as *A Handbook for Group Study with the Association for Research and Enlightenment* (1957). This was the First *ARE Handbook*, major revisions of which were undertaken in 1964 and 1971. In the meantime study groups were meeting, experimenting with different formats, and offering suggestions of their own. Thus, a particular study group handout might have been inspired by any of a number of closely-related sources.

107. P.7 of the 1971 *ARE Handbook* suggests "two to ten": reading 254-96 gives ten as the upper limit.

108. The 1991 Member Survey respondents were, as a group, 67.8 percent female, with the remainder consisting almost entirely of males. Note that *Venture Inward's* readership is only loosely correlated with study group participation.

109. The 1991 Member Survey, at 1,948 respondents, found 51,29% were married (24.2% were single, 17,2% divorced, and 5,8% widowed), and only 25,2 percent had children under eighteen living at home.

110. The 1991 Member Survey, at 1,948 respondents, found 7,5% with a total household income under \$ 10,000 *per annum*: 12,5% with \$ 10-20,000; 23,9% with \$21-30,000; 15,6% with \$31-40,000; 11,4% with \$41-50,000; 9,8% with \$51-65,000; 11,9% above \$65,000; and \$7,37% who did not answer the question. As for age, 6,0% were under 30; 25,3% were 31-40; 31,2% were 41-50; 17,6% were 51-60; 14,5% were 61-70; 5,0% were over 70; and 0,5% did not answer. At 100 respondents, 16,0% had a high-school education or less whereas 84,0% had had at least some college. Data on race was not collected.

111. The names of Ouspensky, (Thomson Jay) Hudson, and (William) James frequently appear in ARE lists of recommended reading, because Cayce recommended books by all three of these authors. As for Kant, my best guess is that he was included because Hugh Lynn had to read him for a 1929/1930 course he took at Washington & Lee on the fourth dimension (his summary of which is preserved in the ECF archives), since several important early theorists on the subject were inspired by Kantian metaphysics.

112. 1971 *ARE Handbook*, p. 2 1.

113. e.g. 1971 *ARE Handbook*, p. 8.

114. Mark Thurston, *Experiments in A Search For God*. p. 4.

115. The fact that the Gurdjieff and Cayce movements each refer to themselves as "the Work" need not suggest any particular causal relationship. Not only is an equivalent term (*opus*) well known in alchemy, which influenced both indirectly, but it is also found in the "theme song" of a women's group at Liberty Christian Church circa 1935, "To the Work" Major 1957: 25).

116. Esther Wynne, "Group study: Suggestions from the Edgar Cayce readings," *Searchlight* 7no.9 (Sept. 1955), p. 7.

117. Cayce refers to exercises "with the body seated IN what is ordinarily termed as Chinese or Japanese fashion, and with the chant that has long been a portion of the body--of the Ar-ar-r-r-e-e-e-o-o-o-m-m-m, in the deep breathing and the circular motions of the body" (275-45).

118. Worth Kidd, *Edgar Cayce and Group Dynamics*, p. 32.

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 6

Study groups have been asked to "pass the basket" from the very beginning. Esther Wynne's manuals stipulate that a "free will offering" be collected to defray the cost of outreach, and suggest using the money to start a small library of ARE books, sponsor public lectures, distribute literature, finance the expenses of ARE writers, or support other special projects.(119) Today, the ARE's request that study groups collect contributions seems to be practiced on an irregular basis when it is not disregarded altogether. Of the groups which I have attended, only the one at ARE headquarters solicited donations each week, with one dollar appearing to be the standard per *capita contribution*. Another group kept a kitty into which contributions could be made on the initiative of individuals present, which seems to have happened once or twice a year. Still another did not appear to ever collect any money. Theoretically, "One half of the receipts should be sent quarterly to the Association Headquarters at Virginia Beach" and the rest should go to charities chosen by the group as a whole.(120) (The bookmark's reference to discussing "opportunities" refers partly to this practice, and partly to good deeds of a nonmonetary nature.) ARE study group coordinator Jim Dixon expressed some frustration with the reluctance of many study groups to support his department financially, since those funds are used to mail information and start-up material to new study groups. Solicitation from the ARE itself (as opposed to one's study group) is separate and takes the form of annual or semi-annual mass mailings. Their tone ranges from the businesslike to the evangelical: and in this connection I cannot resist mentioning, a recent letter from John Van Auken which announces that 1998 may turn out to be the year of Christ's return, and that ARE members can help make this event possible through their donations.

Beyond attending Study groups, many possibilities for further ARE involvement might be described. However, only one other ARE activity would be experienced by more than a fraction of devout Cayceans,(121) and it is to this activity that I now turn. Each year in recent years there have been offered about thirty conferences at ARE headquarters in Virginia Beach (averaging four to six days in length), about the same number of field conferences (which are sponsored by Virginia Beach but held elsewhere), and more than a hundred region-sponsored programs (which however tend to be much shorter, lasting either a day or a weekend). These conferences variously call to mind quasi-academic gatherings for the purpose of presenting papers, group religious retreats, or New Age fairs such as the as tile Whole Life Expo. Perennial conference topics include psychic experience and psychic guidance, holistic health, reincarnation, death, career choices, relationship issues, hypnotherapy training, 1998 and the millennium, meditation, divination systems such as astrology or tarot cards, and the Atlantis/Egypt conferences. Unlike study groups these conferences are by no means free. In fact they are quite upscale, although a limited number of partial scholarships are available for some conferences. During 1997 tuition alone was typically around \$300 for a four-day headquarters conference and \$600 for a six-day conference (prices varied considerably), with ARE members receiving a small discount. The lowest-priced headquarters conference was the annual ARE Congress (\$25. formerly free), while the most expensive event was "Health, Rejuvenation, and Wellness Week" (\$1500 members; \$1540 nonmembers) owing to the fact that participants would receive services from medical doctors as apart of the program.

The standard pattern in ARE conferences is to have morning, Afternoon, and evening lectures, with guided meditations incorporated into them. Early-morning exercise and meditation sessions are usually offered daily, and fun-type activities such as parties and games may also be scheduled during longer conferences. Special programs for children and youth are often offered as an adjunct to the larger conferences. Conferences at Virginia Beach generally feature at least two and possibly many more speakers, while about two-thirds of the field conferences and region-sponsored events feature one speaker only. Regional conferences such as the semiannual conference at Asilomar, California sometimes substitute for a lecture a choice of "workshops" in which local ARE members give presentations, in imitation of the simultaneous lecture format of the Whole Life Expo. Some conferences organize "small groups" or "sharing groups" consisting of around ten conference attendees plus a facilitator, in order to provide a degree of interactivity. After all, for many Cayceans one of the chief attractions of ARE conferences is the opportunity to meet other Cayceans. so practices like these fill a felt need.

Insofar as the Cayceans alter the decor of their conference environment, it will be in the direction of liberal Protestant or New Age trappings. For example, the Asilomar organizers hang colorful banners depicting the night sky, rainbows, a flaming pyramid, a lotus, crosses, angels, doves, the Holy Grail, and several heavenly figures who are probably meant to represent Christ. Corporate sponsorship is not solicited. and commercial activity at conferences is more likely to take the form of the sale of ARE books, tapes, incense, oils, and herbs; the production of astrological charts; professional massage; the placement of information tables with stacks of pamphlets for various ARE programs; and the auction of donated items.

Who is chosen to speak at ARE conferences? By my count, out of 65 individual speakers at all 1997 headquarters conferences, 23 were well-known ARE people, 30 were prominent New Age figures (usually authors) from outside the ARE, and another 12 were miscellaneous professionals. Many of the ARE people spoke at more than one conference, so their total representation was greater than these figures suggest. Rebecca Ghittino, who until recently served as ARE conference director, explains the topic is chosen first, then the participants. The subjects would be evaluated according to whether they are "of interest to people now" and are "topical to the readings." (This last criterion is interpreted broadly enough to include a wide variety of spiritual perspectives.) Then Ghittino would ask herself "who is good in that field," with intuition also playing a part in her selection. Ghittino does not think that name-recognition plays so important a role in her selection as I suppose, and points out that one of her most popular speakers, John Van Auken- was relatively unknown before she began spotlighting him. Kieth VonderOhe, her successor, describes much the same procedure but adds that since Ghittino's tenure ARE conferences have faced more competition. forcing organizers to pay more attention to factors such as name-recognition. As for speakers at field conferences and region-sponsored programs (whose contents are chosen by other people), these appear to be roughly evenly divided between familiar and unfamiliar names. As a general rule. the fewer the number of speakers, the more likely they are to be primarily ARE figures. All told, outsiders and Cayceans alike might be forgiven for concluding that the pinnacle of the Caycean spiritual path is to either write a New Age book or go to work for the ARE.

Even those Cayceans who never visit Virginia Beach (as most probably do not) will find constant references to it in ARE literature. It would therefore be fitting to describe this Caycean Vatican, this axis *mundi*. The ARE headquarters are located somewhat north of a three-mile boardwalk lined with expensive hotels and tacky tourist shops (there are dolphins in the ocean); just south of an army base, Fort Story (the town's signature lighthouse is located on its premises); and adjacent to Seashore State Park, euphemistically known as a wetland. Other major local attractions include a marine science museum, and a center and university founded by television evangelist Pat Robertson. The ARE grounds themselves are unremarkable. Picture a square parking lot with its eastern border bounded by Atlantic Avenue (and a block away, the ocean). On the other side (i.e. west) of this parking lot, the three-story Hospital Building sits on top of a hill. Painted in the blue-and-white of ARE stationary or perhaps Jesus's robes (the building was originally brown), it houses most ARE offices as well as the Reilly School of Massotherapy. Facing the north side of the parking lot is the two-story Library Building, whose modern style would blend into that of many community colleges. Besides the library itself it houses the ARE Bookstore, ECF offices, two auditoriums, and a meditation room. Cayceans may be interested to know that I dreamed of the interior of this building, including its spiraling staircase, before I ever went there. At the corner between the two buildings are a meditation garden and the rather nondescript Esther Wynne Building (which houses Membership Services as well as the ARE Press). Each day visitors are given free tours. introductory lectures on various topics, and an opportunity to test their ESP through an electronic Zener-card machine.

I personally tend to think of "the Beach" in terms of the various people I met there, and in this light I should mention that I found most of the ARE higher-ups to be quite approachable (Charles Thomas for example answers his own phone) despite the fact that many Cayceans tend to view them as "stars," or that not everyone who approaches them is entirely sane. At the same time there is a darker side to the Beach which a casual tourist may not encounter, but most people working there acknowledge, namely the byzantine and incestuous politics. The nature of the ARE and its affiliates is such that decisions are rarely discussed, arrived at, or explained openly. Personal connections are typically decisive in determining what projects will be supported, whose views will be publicized, who

will be hired or invited onto the board. The ubiquitous internal gossip is probably an important means of communication, not to speak of self-preservation, by those whose careers depend on maintaining good *kuan hsi*. The resulting rumor-mill can verge on the bizarre. At one point I was told of recently-discovered documents supposedly implicating former board chairman Gary Christie and/or former CEO Edwin Johnson in a plot to turn the ARE over to the Moonies.(122) Notwithstanding the evident absurdity of the rumor (and those who think it even remotely plausible should read the preceding note), I am told that it was spread by ARE board members, whose closed and minute-less meeting format has apparently been known to encourage unbridled discussion of persons not present.

The ARE/ECF board is self-perpetuating, and according to some has become dominated by a few key personalities. (Trustees serve for one-year appointments which are usually renewed for five years, after which they must leave the board for at least one year.) While the ARE makes a great show of soliciting nominations for the board, as often as not the board already knows who will be selected before the call for nominations goes out. (New board members are typically people known to sitting trustees through ARE activities such as regional work.) The blame for the ARE's lack of democracy must be placed squarely on Cayce himself, who insisted on having board members selected or approved by the readings and allowed an ANI prospectus to specify that "No class of membership possesses the privilege of vote." Self-perpetuating boards are not unusual among charities or research organizations, not to mention businesses (and Cayce's psychic activity was after all a family business on which the Cayces depended for their livelihood). Even the closed nature of the boards proceedings is common enough in those spheres. However, in view of the ARE's Southern Protestant roots-where a high degree of openness and church democracy is the norm-the ARE's politics must be considered regressive. Individual ARE members periodically call for the ARE to democratize, but Charles Thomas points out the logistic difficulties associated with having some thirty thousand members elect a board from among candidates they know little about. Of course, the mere existence of democratic mechanisms would not necessarily lead to a more enlightened institutional culture, again as illustrated by many Southern Protestant churches. A democratic ARE (to the extent that such a thing is even conceivable) might easily prove even more anti-intellectual and personality-driven than its present incarnation. At the same time, the example of the Swedenborg Foundation demonstrates that it is possible to combine academic respectability (recent monographs have dealt with D.T. Suzuki, Henri Corbin, and Kant) with at least nominal democratic safeguards (e.g. proxy voting). A key difference is that the various Swedenborgian churches are institutionally separate from the Swedenborg Foundation- whereas the ARE combines both of these functions and many more besides. Meanwhile the Baha'is are even more geographically diffused than the Cayceans, and yet manage to govern themselves through an elected hierarchy of local and national assemblies. I should add that despite their vastly greater ethnic diversity, the Baha'is are much more united and organized than the Cayceans; that their system avoids reliance on individual leaders and encourages the active participation of ordinary Bahi'is to a remarkable degree; and that these democratic gains are somewhat offset by a religious culture which anathematizes serious dissent. Less centralized but equally participatory religions include the Quakers, most neo-Pagans, and many communitarian groups. At the other extreme lie top-down but nonprofit religions such as Roman Catholicism, as well as the so-called "client religions" (often New Age or psychological in nature) which deal with followers almost exclusively on a fee basis. The ARE lies more toward this end of the participatory spectrum, although elements within it (such as study groups) have had power devolved to them.

C. Selected variations

So far I have been discussing a few ARE-sponsored activities as if their numeric predominance made them normative. Let me now suggest something of the diversity of Caycean practices. One can hardly get any more diverse than the Gathering, which I have been exploiting mainly for its shock value as an example of the more outrageous fringes of the Cayce movement. However, once one overcomes the fact that its members believe themselves to be in regular contact with space aliens, and that the nine core members pool their income, they seem like remarkably normal people--sincere, articulate, idealistic, and open to other points of view. Some of their practices reveal the group's Caycean roots. Every day at 5:00 A.M. before shuttling off to their jobs in Charlottesville, core members (except for Tom and Isis Ringrose) meet in an upper room of their house for morning devotions. Prior to entering the sanctuary they remove their shoes and don white sashes, yarmulkes, and Jewish prayer shawls.

Seating themselves cross-legged, they begin by chanting psalms for perhaps ten minutes- Then one of them celebrates the eucharist. After this comes several exercises which Cayceans will find familiar: breathing exercises in which one nostril is used at a time; neck-rolls (although Cayceans may be startled to see them synchronized); ten minutes of silent meditation; followed by the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the Twenty-Third Psalm. Unusual in view of the Cayce movements usual Protestant trappings is the Gathering's inclusion of the Hail Mary in the service.

Cayceans may challenge the appropriateness of my including the Gathering in a description of the Cayce movement. especially since that group now focuses on Ringrose's readings rather than Cayce's. I admit the difficulty, but point out that the usual boundaries conceal as much as they reveal. Any number of Cayceans (including some highly-placed in the movement) have sought readings from other psychics. whose teachings inevitably differ from Cayce's on some points. Several ARE administrators have been quite open in recommending certain contemporary psychics to me, and more than one well-known Caycean has given Caycestyle readings himself It seems that like many religions. the ARE as an institution is more open to claims of subordinate spiritual experiences which serve to bolster its worldview and social structure, than to claims of independent experiences which modify ARE perspectives or threaten to divert power away from it. When members of one New York City study group apparently achieved the psychic benefits hinted at in ARE literature, but failed to subordinate its insights to the Cayce movement, the result was the Gathering.

The mission of the Glad Helpers healing prayer group is a good example of the opposite tendency, since it assumes the reality of certain paranormal events (i.e. the efficacy of intercessory prayer) but restricts their expression in a way which subordinates them to the ARE worldview rather than risk them blossoming into independent revelations. Unlike the ARE, the Glad Helpers are not an open-membership group. Participants join in prayer weekly in the ARE meditation room (or in their homes in the case of those who live far away) and like the similar organization Silent Unity, pray for the names on a lengthy prayer-list as well as a detailed itemization of international trouble spots. During meditation those present are offered the opportunity to receive healing through the laying on of hands. Several people who have been approved by the Glad Helpers offer themselves as channels of healing by standing behind empty chairs, while those in need of healing take those seats. Both healer and receiver silently attempt to open themselves up to spiritual forces. After that the receiver sits down and is replaced by another person, until everyone who seeks a turn has had one. This type of healing ritual has spread to a number of other Caycean groups including the Logos Center and the ARE Camp.

By any measure healing is a major emphasis of the Cayce movement. Of the several Cayce organizations headquartered in Scottsdale, Arizona, two of them are medical clinics while the third (the Logos Center) also offers medical care. The ARE Clinic was begun by William McGarey (an M.D.) and Gladys Taylor McGarey (an M.D./homeopath) in 1970, partly for research purposes and partly to provide a place where Cayceans could go for Cayce-oriented medical care. With the divorce of the co-founders in 1990, Dr. Gladys left the ARE Clinic to found the Scottsdale Holistic Medical Group. Both clinics are family practices whose patients are not necessarily Cayceans, although they will usually be attracted to holistic health (perhaps because they have found traditional medicine to be ineffective for their complaints). Both McGareys agree that the ARE Clinic hews more closely to Cayce's health recommendations whereas the Scottsdale group makes use of elements drawn more broadly from across the spectrum of alternative medicine. However. even the ARE Clinic makes use of non-Caycean alternative therapies such as acupuncture and biofeedback. At the ARE Clinic patients with "serious or chronic" conditions are encouraged to undergo the "Temple Beautiful" program (named for a comprehensive healing institution in Cayce's Egyptian readings), a seven- or eleven-day residential program in which various holistic treatment modalities and lifestyle modifications are combined with counseling, meditation, and spiritually-oriented workshops.

Cayce-oriented health care is also offered by several chiropractors affiliated with the Logos Center, who additionally practice other techniques including "Neuro-Emotional Complex Therapy" (whatever that may be) and various naturopathic approaches. Still, the Logos Center does not have just one function any more than the ARE does. Besides the chiropractors the center houses a New Age bookstore and hosts speakers and study groups (including both ARE and *A Course in Miracles*

groups). For some time founder Herbert Puryear envisioned Logos as an educational institution, calling it "Logos World University." While this apparently did not take a "Logos Church" which Puryear started in an attempt to secure First Amendment freedom of religion protection for the center's alternative medical products, has taken on a life of its own. When I visited, about a hundred people were present for a Sunday service with Christian metaphysical or New Age trappings. Photocopied extracts from the Cayce readings were passed out along with the hymns, and a Glad Helpers style healing service followed the main service. Before the service Puryear had led a study group devoted to the *Aquarian Gospel*. In view of my observations about the ARE board of trustees, I was intrigued to learn that members of the Logos Center's board are selected by "the information." Further inquiry revealed that "the information" is channeled by Anne Puryear, Herbert's wife. A professional psychic, Anne receives spirit-messages from a son who committed suicide, and has written a book about this experience (*Stephen Lives!*).

The Pilgrim Institute, another multifaceted entity founded by Cayce dissidents, describes itself as

...a small non-profit center for research, graduate-level education, and publication, in spirituality and culture, located at Cape Cod in Massachusetts, where it was founded in 1974. It is governed by a national board of trustees who are church members in various traditions.(123)

To the casual observer the main purpose of the Pilgrim Institute may appear to be to further various projects of its co-directors, June and Harmon Bro, although perhaps several dozen other people are involved with it to varying degrees. (How Harmon Bro's recent death will affect the Institute is unclear at this writing.) Its "publication" has consisted mostly of articles or progress reports by Harmon, and must have quite a limited distribution. Video- and audiotapes by Harmon are also produced and sold there, and the Institute stocks a number of spiritual books favored by the directors. The above passage's mention of "graduate-level education" refers primarily a masters program in "depth education of adults" which the Bros organized for Lesley College in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Its curriculum emphasizes Jungian studies, world religions, and selected spiritual practices (meditation, dream analysis, and small group Work).(124) Doctoral and post-doctoral researchers may also apply to become fellows of the Institute and study directly under its auspices. "Research" refers not only to this but also to a "prayer guidance research project" in which several Christian ministers and their spouses attempt to give Cayce-style readings for those in need of medical or nonmedical aid. Recipients must be members of a church, synagogue, or the like-- and have access to a minister or rabbi, chiropractor or osteopath, psychotherapist, and medical doctor. Following Cayce's example, emphasis is laid on the motivation of the inquirer. No claims of the program's medical efficacy are made--rather, the program is intended to research this question--but the ministers involved are cautiously optimistic.

Atlantic University is the most well-known attempt by Cayceans to establish an educational institution. Its original incarnation, as a full undergraduate program complete with a football team, lasted about a year and a half (from fall of 1930 to the end of 1931). In the 1970's the name "Atlantic University" was revived for a series of glorified conferences. In its present form AU accepted its first students in 1985 and (after receiving a license from the state of Virginia) awarded its first degrees in 1990. The sole degree offered is an M.A. in something called "Transpersonal Studies," conceived as a blend of transpersonal psychology with various other subjects of interest to spiritual seekers. Anyone with a bachelors degree may be admitted to the program, which in 1997 costed about \$500 per course or \$1500 per semester. Most students take most of their classes by correspondence, although every semester a few residential courses have been offered at ARE headquarters (some of them piggy-backed with conferences). Besides an introductory class, AU's core curriculum consists of "Religious Traditions East and West"; "Origin and Destiny of Human Consciousness" (i.e. the evolution of consciousness as described by writers like Ken Wilber, Erich Neumann, and Rianne Eisler); "Spiritual Philosophies and the Nature of Humanity" (which compares Cayce to two other similar modern figures such as Gurdjieff and Steiner, or Jung and Montessori); and "The Inner Life" (which introduces students to the practice of meditation and dream analysis). Other classes emphasize creativity and the arts, archetypal studies, or the cultivation of psychic abilities.(125) Course requirements are typically low (e.g. five-page reflection papers), and the qualifications of the professors are often marginal or in dimly related fields.(126) A survey of some thirty-odd masters theses accepted to date reveals wide

variations in quality. Many students have made valiant and worthy efforts, often producing theses the length and quality of dissertations, others should have never had their theses considered, let alone accepted. I would estimate that about two-fifths of the theses probably deserved to be accepted, another two-fifths clearly did not, and I am undecided about the remainder. A major problem is that thesis topics are all over the disciplinary map, and have included everything from Brazilian spiritism to sports medicine to early childhood education to the Noachian deluge. Either the handful of professors who have consented to judge all of these diverse subjects are polymathic geniuses, or the program is ill-defined.

AU had just added even more subjects to its already full plate when a rift developed between AU and the ARE. Apparently some ARE board members have long faulted AU for insufficiently emphasizing Cayce in its curriculum, in what some feel to be a pointless attempt to curry favor with regional accreditation authorities (pointless because Cayce-oriented studies were Atlantic University's *raison d'être*). In 1996 AU president Jerry Cardwell died unexpectedly after only a few years in office. When the AU board finally agreed on his replacement a year later, they chose Thomas Wallace, a candidate with no particular ties to Cayce or the ARE. The ARE board objected, and in order to forestall future disagreements demanded a majority of seats on the AU board for their own appointees. The AU board refused, prompting the ARE to make good on its threat to sever its relationship with AU and evict the nascent university from its premises. Some observers blame these developments on the personalities of certain individuals; others say that the conflicts themselves were primary. At any rate, Atlantic University moved out of the ARE Library Building a few months later (in September of 1997) and at this writing appears intent on continuing its present course independent of the ARE.

The ARE Camp is located in Rural Retreat, Virginia (near Wytheville and the Blue Ridge Mountains), surrounded by a state forest and a tree farm. To call the facilities "primitive" hardly begins to capture the camp's intentionally rustic charm. but the area is beautiful. Each summer there are several coeducational children's camps, several family camps, and an adult camp.

Compared with other camps the cost is quite reasonable. Most camp activities are of the sort that could be found at any camp--games, hikes, handicrafts, folk-songs, and square dances. Cayce is not overtly stressed, since many of those who attend are not particularly interested in Cayce but were brought (or sent) there by Caycean family members. At the same time many of the camp's operating principles assume Caycean perspectives: the kitchen follows Cayce's dietary recommendations; each morning begins with Cayce-inspired stretching exercises; meditation and healing rituals follow Caycean norms; speakers for the family and adult camps teach Caycean topics. At the family and adult camps, the camp's "lawnchair exclusion principle" stipulates that no one be nagged to attend any of these activities. Although I am told that different sessions have different atmospheres, the ambiance of Family Camp #3 seems to owe as much to the 1960's counterculture than to the New Age movement, possibly owing to the orientation of several of its organizers. I met a number of people who had attended the camp as children and returned years later (often for the same session) with spouse or children in tow. I wish I could convey something of the camp's spirit of cultivated goofiness. In that spirit I reproduce the following jewel of Caycean hymnology, which may double as a fitting summation of the Cayce movement in general:

"Turning ARE" [sung to the tune of "Turning Japanese"]

1) I held a crystal: I had a dream
You were so lucid, I had to scream.
And you told me not to eat
Lots of sugar and red meat...

[Chorus] I think I'm turning ARE, I think I'm turning ARE,

I really think so.
I think I'm turning ARE. I think I'm turning ARE,
I really think so.

No gum, no candy, no soda, no TV.,
No flush toi-lets are found at ARE camp.
Everyone around me is meditating,
Even the garden is vegetating,
Edgar... Oh oh oh Edgar...

2) I meditated: my mind was clear,
I dreamed of Genie, and she was there,
And now I'm hopin'and a-prayin'
That my vision will be stayin'... [Chorus]

3. I hear a ringing, inside my ears.
There's someone singing, but no one's here.
And now there's clearly no disguisig
That the kundalini's rising... [Chorus]

[Fade away to base line of "Arr-ee-omm, Arr-ee-omm"]

119 Esther Wynne, "Study Group Organization" (1937 manual). From the ECF archives. Cf. the 1947 "Program for Group Study with the Association for Reseach and Enlightenment Incorporated." p. 7. from the same source.

120. 1971 *ARE Handbook*, p. 8.

121. According to the 1991 Member Survey. at 100 respondents 25,0% had attended conferences. However. the same level of respondents also produced the information that 67,0% were male, a result so wildly out of touch with ARE demographics as to suggest disregarding the information about conference attendance.

122. How could intelligent people believe that ARE board members would willingly yield hard-won turf to a religion which none of them actually belong to? The basis for the rumor appears to be that Johnson. in the process of experimenting with various operating models for the board (today he likes to cite Steiner's threefold model and the Carver model). contacted the spiritual teacher of an Alice Bailey group called the Human Service Alliance (HSA). The HSA offered to send several people to sit in on the ARE board. Although this was never done. when the board failed to renew Johnson's contract he mailed to each trustee a packet containing communications he and Christie had received from the HSA teacher. Since Johnson's wife had worked with the Moonies twenty years before (but is not a member herself), and since that church's full. official name is the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of Christianity (with the first three words often abbreviated, coincidentally, to "HSA"), some Cayceans feared the worst.

123. From a 1996 Pilgrim Institute application form.

124. "Curriculum in Depth Education for Adults: Content, Evaluation, and Administration" (1994-95). Pilagim Institute in association with Leslie College, Cambridge, MA.

125. *Atlantic University 1995-1996 Academic Catalogue*.

126. Of the four full-time faculty members in 1997, Raye Mathis has a masters degree in social work plus some studies at the C.G. Jung Institute in Zurich. Robert Danner, a Disciples of Christ clergyman, has a doctorate from an unaccredited university and is working on a D.Min. Douglas Richards has a Ph.D. in zoology. Henry Reed, whose Ph.D. in psychology is from UCLA, would seem to have the best paper qualifications; unfortunately, my eavesdropping on two of his classes suggested serious academic shortcomings. Other Instructors during 1997 included Kieth VonderOhe (a United Church of Christ minister with an M.Div.), Greg Deming (an artist with an M.F.A.). and David McMillin (who has a

masters degree in clinical psychology). If this seems like a strange assortment, remember that in the 1980's the ARE drafted nearly every available Caycean with a graduate degree to teach for AU.

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 7

D. The nature of the ARE

At last we are in a position to assess the nature of the Cayce movement in general and the ARE in particular. Especially important is the question of whether the ARE is or is not a *de facto* religion. Institutional attitudes toward skepticism directed at the Cayce material are a closely related issue. To illustrate: if the ARE were something like a religion, then depending on the nature of the religion it might be unrealistic to expect it to give voice to skepticism, any more than one would ask Vatican publications to provide equal space for atheism. Alternatively, if the ARE were closer to a research society (whether historical, medical, or parapsychological), then to the extent that it favored believers over skeptics it would be a very poor one. If the ARE were something like a twelve-step organization or an alternative health-care provider, we would not expect it to encourage either skepticism or explicit dogma, since neither of these are likely to be perceived as having clear practical relevance to the task of changing lives. Still another possibility is that the ARE is primarily a business, in which case its leaders would support whatever they thought would make money.

Officially, the ARE exists

to promote the study, application, and dissemination of the information contained in the psychic readings of Edgar Cayce, and to help people change their lives for the better through the spiritual concepts in the Cayce readings.

Even if this statement were perfectly nonproblematic, this would not be the final word on the ARE's identity, since subunits such as the study group program publish mission statements of their own which are quite different from this one.

Most decision-makers within the ARE actively resist suggestions to the effect that their organization is a church, denomination, or religion—for example, after my frequent slips of the tongue in which I absent-mindedly compare them with "other religions." (I take "church", "denomination", and "religion" to be interchangeable in this context—since the independence and organizational complexity of the ARE are not in dispute.) To the extent that ARE leaders admit the ARE to resemble a church, they usually rue this tendency. Yet the ARE propagates a distinctive set of spiritual teachings and organizes spiritual practices (e.g. through study groups) for its members, who often draw from the organization a sense of belonging or spiritual identity. For this reason the ARE is listed in Melton's *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, along with many other organizations with similar reservations about their inclusion. It is amusing to note that the Logos Center is devoted to a set of perspectives which is nearly identical to that which the ARE sponsors, and yet does not shrink from identifying itself (or one of its components) as a church.

Much ARE literature, beginning with the readings themselves, encourages members to remain active within their own churches and synagogues, as Cayce did. (Cayce perhaps failed to anticipate that so many ARE members would not belong to any regular church.) One handout explains "Why the ARE is Not a Cult." Some of the reasons offered were:

- We encourage you to work in your own personally preferred church or religious organization. If it comes to a choice between ARE and your church, stay with your church.
- We do not encourage you to "identify with" ARE. Identify with the Christ principle.
- We encourage comparative study, not just the study of one source or perspective.

- Membership in the ARE is based upon a wish to work with this information and support this work-- not upon agreeing to a dogma or belief system.(127)

Some of Puryear's provisions seem to assume that if the ARE were a church, denomination, or religion, that would make it a "cult" in the popular pejorative sense. Is it automatically wrong to start a new church, denomination, or religion? Presumably Puryear no longer thinks so now that he has left the ARE to establish the aforementioned Logos Center.

Conceptions of religion formulated with mainstream Western Christian institutions in mind frequently prove inadequate when applied to movements from outside this tradition. While the task of defining the term "religion" is notoriously vexed, it seems clear enough that not all of what we normally take to be religious traditions demand the exclusive allegiance of their followers; expect adherence to a set of beliefs; conduct weddings or funerals; ordain clergy; organize rituals; or possess any other nameable characteristic that might serve to distinguish religions from non-religions. Thus, the ARE cannot legitimately avoid the label "religion" on any of these bases. Why, then, would the ARE object to being called a religion? The original reason seems to have been, to avoid offending members and prospective members who already belong to one of the many religious traditions which do expect exclusive allegiance from their adherents. Pursuant to this the ARE presents itself as something more similar to a parachurch organization (such as a prayer group or Bible study group) rather than an independent church 'in its own right. At the same time, much institutional resistance to the "religion" or "church" label seems to arise out of a widely-felt discomfort with the exclusivist positions of certain Christian groups, which ARE members are determined not to emulate. Some make the distinction between "religion" and "spirituality" in this connection. This may explain why the ARE can officially deny that it is a religion, but largely take it for granted that it is a "spiritual organization."

What kind of spirituality is the ARE devoted to? Cayce's type of spirituality, of course, but this leaves substantial room for interpretation. Today, a certain amount of culture conflict can be observed between the more conservative Cayceans who tend to see Cayce as more reliable than other psychics, and Christianity as closer to the truth than other religions; and the more liberal Cayceans who typically view the Cayce material as one of many equally helpful sources of guidance, and the various religions as equal paths to truth. These are not two distinct camps so much as extremes along a spectrum which appears to be closely correlated with age (the older, the more conservative) and geography (the closer to San Francisco, the more liberal). Conservatives control ARE periodicals and the study group program; liberals control conferences and most of the regions.

Christian language and practices have held a privileged position within the Cayce movement for two reasons: First, most participants are oriented towards Christianity at least by their upbringing. If a study group consists of six Christians and one Jew, it will probably have six Christian prayers for every Jewish one—a situation more hospitable to the Christians than to the Jew. Second, the Cayce readings themselves make frequent use of Christian imagery. Kevin Todeschi thinks that ARE leaders would "shoot themselves in the foot" if they tried to downplay the Christian elements owing to the large number of Christian references in the readings, but proposes reinterpreting them in terms of "oneness" in order to make them acceptable to people from other religions (an approach which he attributes to Cayce). Others profess to be open to the adoption of multireligious approaches but have never arranged for such approaches to be adopted. As a result Christian language has become the ARE's *lingua franca*. At the same time, since most Cayceans are also interested in other types of alternative spirituality, (128) the ARE has played host to everything from chanting Tibetan Buddhist monks to lecturers on UFO's (with whom Cayce writers enjoy a strange but friendly rivalry over matters Egyptological). Despite such variety, a certain perennialist outlook prevails in ARE circles which has it that all of these diverse ideologies at some level reflect the same truth. "Correlations" between Cayce and other systems are celebrated; serious conflicts minimized or regarded as something of an embarrassment. The same holds true for ARE-sponsored comparisons of Cayce and those whom I consider to be his sources. (129)

I have been examining the Cayce movement's attitude toward Christianity and other religions, but what about its attitude toward Cayce? Could the Cayce movement's veneration of Cayce be considered analogous to the reverence of "other religions" for their respective founders? Although Cayceans will

usually deny this interpretation (and some will find it offensive), it so happens that certain crucial roles within the ARE are officially limited to believing Cayceans. Periodically, the combined ARE/ECF board of trustees places an announcement in *Venture Inward* soliciting nominations for new board members:

ARE Life and Sponsoring members may recommend candidates. A nominee must have been a life or sponsoring member for at least three years; have a background of organizational leadership experience; demonstrated a character and personal life that represents spiritual ideals and purposes; is not, nor is their spouse, a paid employee; has received personal help from applying the Cayce readings; and, is nominated by five Life or Sponsoring members. (130)

While it makes sense for a church to limit board membership to believers in the religion or denomination in question, such a requirement seems wildly out of place with respect to a research society or a business. Interestingly, the ARF/ECF board has limited applicants not only to religious believers, but more specifically to those who are willing to affirm that they have "received personal help from applying the Cayce readings." While the board of Atlantic University has a similar requirement, the fact that it was not applied to AU presidential candidate Thomas Wallace was the proximate cause of the ARE/AU split. Ordinary ARE staff members do not seem to be officially subject to the requirement, except for counselors and cooks for the ARE camp, who according to the application forms must believe in a spiritual worldview "such as" that of the Cayce readings. The Glad Helpers have an implicit religious requirement for those who wish to serve as conduits for spiritual healing through the laying on of hands, since these must first apply to the group and be accepted before being allowed to take on this role during Glad Helpers prayer services. Again, Cayce must take the credit or blame for this situation—even rank-and-file members of the ANI were technically required to "have faith in the Divine, around the psychic manifestations of which the activities of the Association hinge." (131)

Skepticism toward the Cayce material has been articulated from time to time within ARE organs, but only on a limited basis. For example, Cayce's account of predynastic Egypt has often been criticized on archeological grounds; (132) his predictions of catastrophic earth changes have also been doubted, with at least four different strategies having been proposed for explaining how the Cayce material might still be considered reliable even if nothing happens as predicted 1998; (133) and the Christian content of the readings has been a point of considerable debate, with several articles devoted to the role and perspective of Jewish ARE members. (134) However, no serious dialogue ever arisen between believers and skeptics with respect to the Cayce material in general. When *The Skeptical Inquirer* printed an article purporting to debunk Cayce, (135) no Caycean organ took notice.

A. Robert Smith (editor of *Venture Inward* since 1984), Robert Grant (editor of *The New Millennium* from 1996 to 1997), and Rebecca Ghittino (former ARE conference director) all profess to be open to including more radical skeptical perspectives, but have never done so. (In all fairness, the question seems to have never come up before I raised it.) Kieth VonderOhe (the current conference director) correctly points out that skeptical speakers are simply not what conference attendees are looking for. The bookstore's mission statement dedicates it to promoting only books which are "based on or compatible with" the Cayce readings. The library contains a very good collection of metaphysical and esoteric literature, including books by skeptics and others whose perspective is opposed to that of the ARE. (As an extreme example, the catalogue lists Anton Szandor LaVey's *Satanic Bible*.) However, a book in the ARE library is much less likely to make an impact on Cayceans than a book sold through the bookstore (136) or published by the ARE Press. While the ARE Press has redesigned its publication criteria three times in the past five years and has not had a consistent policy as to whether a skeptical work might be considered, its books have invariably been supportive of the Cayce material.

Since many religions are more interested in the behavior than the beliefs of their followers, we should consider whether the Cayce movement prescribes any particular practices or lifestyle. As an open-membership organization the ARE cannot exclude anyone from membership on any such basis, but as we have seen there is much more to the ARE than mere membership. Study groups and the like will of course expect that attendees participate in whatever activities the group has chosen. Another good illustration is the ARE Camp, which requires (during the children's sessions) three main types of

observances of its campers and staff: meditation, dream analysis, and the Cayce diet. Of course, no Caycean would suggest that anyone has a religious obligation to attend study groups (let alone something like the ARE camp), or follow the various practices associated with them. Yet the ARE clearly favors and encourages certain practices to such an extent that those who are not religious, or whose religious views are markedly different from those prevailing within the Cayce movement, will find themselves in a subculture with hardly any place for them.

Discussion of the status of (the surely rare) nonbelievers within the ARE leads naturally to the question of whether the ARE can be considered a research organization, since genuine research presumes the admissibility of skepticism. "Research is our middle name," one spokesperson quipped, and this clearly represents an important institutional emphasis. At the same time, it is equally clear that the ARE's notion of "research" is greatly expanded from those of the relevant scientific or scholarly disciplines to which it aspires to contribute. For example, whenever ARE literature speaks of "researching" or "experimenting with" ideas from the Cayce material, by this is typically meant applying them in one's life to decide if they seem helpful, not evaluating them on a systematic basis by means of generally accepted methodologies. To take a particularly glaring example, for many years the ARE bookstore advertised computer-printed horoscopes by inviting readers to participate in a "research project," which apparently consisted solely of whatever studies the persons ordering the chart chose to undertake.

The ARE board of trustees has recently appointed a research committee to formulate a formal research policy for the organization. Charged with summarizing the committee's conclusions, board chairman C.K. Stan Khury explained that "research" could be interpreted as encompassing such varied activities as study groups (because they encourage attendees to explore Cayce's basic spiritual perspective as well as "dreams, astrological applications, healing touch, prayer, past-life regressions, the Bible, etc."): individuals engaged in meditation, dream analysis, or following Cayce's dietary recommendations; conferences and tours; publishing stories of people helped by the Cayce material; and even massotherapy. "Every activity of the ARE can be cast in this research context." he concluded(137)Khury's statement came in the context of controversy over the ARE mission statement, one draft of which omitted any mention of research. While his analysis raises obvious methodological concerns, it captures very well the reality that for better or worse, the AR-E is identified with a certain set of ideas and practices on which its institutional energies will probably always be focused.

Still, some ARE members (e.g. Edgar Evans Cayce) have been vocal in their support of actual research, and many ARE leaders (especially the doctorate-holders in psychology and the physical sciences) are presumably well aware that personal testimonials and the like do not provide good reasons for believing in the Cayce material. As a result, the ARE has recently begun sponsoring a limited amount of research which attempts to meet scientific standards. For example, the nonprofit Meridian Institute(138) has received an ARE grant to research Cayce's analysis of epilepsy using a thermographic camera (the readings mention a "cold spot" on the abdomen due to incoordination of the nerve plexuses), as well as his recommended treatments (castor oil poultices plus several types of therapeutic electrical appliances). The project is also intended to study "psoriasis ... schizophrenia, depression, and anemia." (139)Whether the study's results will pass muster with the wider scientific community remains to be seen. Independently of any ARE sponsorship, chiropractor John O.A. Pagano has experimented with the Cayce readings on psoriasis, apparently with great success. (140) William McGarey's earlier research on castor oil also deserves citation in this context, (141)especially in light of his influence on the alternative health movement in general.

Turning to Caycean research in fields other than medicine, during the 1960's and 1970's Hugh Lynn led ECF delegations to the island of Bimini in the Bahamas (where they attempted to locate archaeological remains of sunken Atlantis); Shustar, Iran (the site of some of the Persian readings); and Haifa, Israel (in search of evidence for Cayce's readings on the Essenes). These excursions are probably more accurately characterized as group vacations rather than serious research expeditions. In 1977 and 1978 the ECF sponsored work by the Stanford Research Institute to conduct a remote sensing survey of the Sphinx, at an expense of between USD 70,000 and 100,000. An excavation was conducted in front of the Sphinx temple as well. (142) The Cayce readings indicate the existence of a tunnel under its right paw which leads to the Hall of Records, where proof of the historicity of Atlantis

supposedly awaits. Mark Lehner, who has since become one of the top authorities on the Giza Plateau, represented the ECF's interests in the project. Lehner's graduate education at the American University in Cairo had been financed largely by the ECF at Hugh Lynn's behest, apparently because Hugh Lynn recognized him from a previous life. (143) From the ECF's standpoint the project was inconclusive, as were various attempts to reach the elusive tunnel by drilling. As for how Cayceans have managed to secure government permission to engage in such quixotic and destructive projects, a clue may be glimpsed in Hugh Lynn's assertion that a lie was arranged for the doctoral education of Zahi Hawass, now Egyptian Department of Antiquities director general for the Giza plateau, at the University of Pennsylvania. (144) (Hawass denies the allegation.) In 1984 the ECF sponsored carbon dating of the Great Pyramid, in hopes that the results would show it to have been built around 10,500 B.C. rather than the conventional Fourth Dynasty dating of around 2500 or 2600 B.C.. The results suggested a date of 2900 B.C., older than the standard view but far too young to be considered a confirmation of Cayce's account. (145) Lehner has since concluded that the evidence in favor of the Fourth Dynasty dating is overwhelming, and that Cayce's Egyptian readings should be considered mythical (in a positive, quasi-Jungian sense) rather than historical in nature. Some Cayceans regard his conversion as something of a betrayal, although Lehner himself denies any ill-will toward the Cayce movement. More recently *Venture Inward* has given attention to the claims of geologist Robert Schoch, who dates the construction of the Sphinx to 5000-9000 BC "or even older" (against a conventional age of about the same as the Great Pyramid) based on wind erosion patterns; but not to the counterarguments of Lehner or geologist James A. Harrell. (146) Worse yet, Schoch is a pillar of respectability compared to many of the speakers at the annual ARE "Atlantis/Egypt" conferences (e.g. Graham Hancock, Robert Bauval).

In the 1970's the four ARE executives with psychology Ph.D.'s published psychology papers based on ARE home-study projects. Herbert Puryear, Charles Thomas Cayce, and Mark Thurston co-authored "Anxiety reduction associated with meditation" (*Perceptual and Motor Skills*, Oct. 1976); while Henry Reed wrote "Improved dream recall associated with meditation" (*Journal of Clinical Psychology*, January 1978). Several doctoral dissertations in psychology have been written on Cayce including Cleveland Kent Evans's *Religion and Cognitive Style: An Exploration of Jung's Typology Among ARE Study Group Members* (University of Michigan, 1985), and John Zola Amoroso's *PastLife Therapy: An Integrated Transpersonal Psychotherapeutic Approach* (Union Institute, 1992).

Beyond these limited projects, the ECF and ARE deserve credit for making the Cayce readings available in the first place, since the process which led to their eventual publication on CD-ROM would have been impossible without a substantial commitment of labor and resources. Yet the mere dissemination of Cayce information should not in itself qualify the ARE as a research organization. Instead we should ask whether ARE culture embodies scholarly ideals and attitudes, and here the answer seems to be no. Basic ARE activities such as publications and conferences tend not to reflect well-reasoned, critical approaches—on the contrary, they typically play host to any number of dubious ideas for which criticism is kept muted. Almost any claim (whether medical, historical, or spiritual) may be given an audience provided it is sufficiently alternative or confirmatory of ARE beliefs; and that the speaker or writer at least hints at some privileged connection with the truth. The result is that ARE activities are closer to entertainment than to research or education, and the ARE admits as much in an apparent Freudian slip at the back of several books when it names as its goals "assisting spiritual growth and providing nourishing entertainment." (147) Even AiLentic University, which might be expected to cultivate a more critical attitude in its students, presently disappoints.

Like Alcoholics Anonymous and other twelve-step groups, the ARE might be considered primarily as a life-support system for the small groups meeting under its auspices, in which case its mission would presumably become one of changing its members' lives. In fact this language is incorporated into the current mission statement, in which the ARE aspires in part "to help people change their lives for better through the spiritual concepts in the Cayce readings." This would also explain why trustees have to affirm having been "helped" by the readings, as well as the emphasis on "application" over mere study—as if attempts to apply Cayce's suggestions, however uncritical or unsystematic, were something obviously worthy of encouragement. Again like Alcoholics Anonymous, ARE literature is heavily oriented toward personal testimonials, with little effort to include the voices of those who find concepts from the readings to be unhelpful. Bro finds it significant that the first study groups began

meeting within a few years of the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous, (148) although the latter may be traced through the Oxford Movement to evangelical Protestant roots similar to Cayce's.

Another possibility is to view the Cayce movement primarily as a source of alternative health care and health advice. Certainly it often functions as such. Cayce-recommended massages and colonic irrigation treatments are available through the Reilly School of Massotherapy, various services from the two Caycean clinics in Arizona and the Logos Center. Cayce-recommended products and electrical devices through Home Health Products and the Heritage Store. and healing prayer through the Glad Helpers. From the demand for health-related information and products it seems clear that Caycean therapy is often self-prescribed. Given the demographics of the Cayce movement, it is easy to see why health would be a major concern for many Cayce people. (149)

The suggestion that the Cayce movement could be considered a business consortium might be greeted either as libelous, since the ARE and its affiliates operate on a nonprofit basis (although this of course would not apply to commercial publishers or health care providers); or as tautological, since no organization, however lofty its goals, is exempt from economic reality. By invoking this model I mean to underscore the extent to which the Cayce movement centers around the sale of goods and services such as books, conferences, tours, health products, and medical treatment. Even ARE membership itself might be considered just another type of

product to be marketed. To put the issue in perspective, consider that the ARE at year's end 1996 had total assets of about \$10.7 million, and an annual budget of about \$7 million. Total annual sales income had been \$2.3 million, more than half of which was profit. Fees brought in nearly \$2 million. Memberships provided about \$1.5 million, and donations of various types totaled another \$1 million. Meanwhile operating expenses were \$5.6 million for program services and \$1.3 million for support services. Does the ARE's reliance on revenue from sales and fees compromise its ability to support critical approaches to Cayce? Certainly the (nonprofit) ARE bookstore and ARE Press must give a great deal of weight to the demands of the market, although these also purport to evaluate books according to quality. The magazine editors are somewhat less constrained since their periodicals are automatic member benefits, yet they too cater to the interests of the average Caycean. Cayce dissidents often complain that the task of maintaining ARE finances has tended to interfere with its stated spiritual or intellectual mission.

All told, the ARE "is" whatever its members and leaders make out of it. Inevitably not all of these will agree on what the ARE is or should be. Some leave when they do not find their vision reflected, complaining about the politics of Virginia Beach. Others accommodate themselves to a framework with which they are not entirely comfortable, or become outspoken in their attempts to change the organization. The ARE leadership presently incorporates a number of distinct visions--some complementary, some not. The organization is sufficiently decentralized to keep these visions in a sort of equilibrium based partially on inertia (once a given program is started it will probably be continued), and partially on the fact that most Cayceans have multiple interests with respect to the readings. Skeptical or scholarly approaches however are definitely a minority interest within the ARE, and are almost wholly unrepresented within those functions which have the greatest capacity for influencing the Caycean masses (e.g. study groups, publishing, or conferences). Despite the support of some board members (who however disagree on what "research" is and how much money the ARE can afford to devote to it), research is neither a major goal of the ARE in its own right nor an effective means to other ends. Rather it is variously an object of ARE charity, a public relations activity, a disguised form of product development, or an expression of a liberal theological identity (as against those Southern Protestant denominations which are perceived as anti-scientific). Inquiries into the source question have lacked the necessary connections for the first category, are not particularly well-suited to the second or third, and work at cross-purposes to the fourth by giving comfort to the ARE's enemies. The result is that Cayce research has proceeded for half a century now without much appreciation of the Cayce movement's forebears.

127. Herbert Puryear. "Why the ARE Is Not a Cult" (reprinting a July 1982 article in *ARE News*).

128. Harmon Bro in *Charisma of the Seer*, p. 164 reports that for earlier Cayceans this was not the case--not only was Cayce not interested in discovering parallels but "by and large his followers were not either, except as grounds for drawing the attention of others to them-selves and their message."

129. For example. articles have been written comparing the teachings of Cayce to those of Blavatsky (Kirk Nelson. "The fifth root race" in *Venture Inward* 10 no. 5. Sept./Oct. 1994. p.42 ff, also Violet M. Shelley. "What about Theosophy" in *Venture Inward* 2 no. 6. Nov./Dec. 1986. p. 48 ff.), Steiner (Richard H. Drummond, "Reflections on Rudolf Steiner" in *Venture Inward* 7 no. 3, May/June 1991, p. 20; also Eleanor Amidon, "Karma: Cayce and Steiner compared" in *Venture Inward* 7 no. 4. July/Aug. 1991, p.2 1). *The Aquarian Gospel* (Robert M. Grant, "The nature of Jesus' miracles-a comparison" in *The New Millennium* Ino. 1. Aug./Sept. 1996, p. 25 ff.). Spiritualism ("Early prophecies of earth changes and Atlantis" in *Venture Inward* 12 no. 1, Jan./Feb. 1996, p. 16 ff.), and several having to do with alternative medicine.

130. "Trustee nominations due by June 14."in *Venture Inward* II No. 2 (March/April 1995) p. 6.

131. From the ANI prospectus

132. See A. Robert Smith, "The Great Pyramid reveals her age" in *Venture Inward* 2 no. 3, May/June 1986,p. 12 ff.: also A. Robert Smith interviewing Mark Lehner, "The search for Ra Ta" In *Venture Inward* I no. 3. Jan./Feb. 1985, p. 6 ff.; continued in vol. I no. 4, March/April 1985; response by Richard H. Drummond *et al.*. "The search for Ra Ta: Truth is a growing thing". vol. I no. 5. May/June 1985.

133. See Kevin J. Todeschi. "Earth changes: Changing the planet or changing us?" in *Venture Inward* 10 no. 3. May/June 1994, p. 16: also W.H. Church, "The Hallaliel question" in *Venture Inward* 8 no. 3. May/June 1992, p. 32. also John Peterson. "Earth changes: An alternative view," p. 20 of the same issue. The "four excuses" are: (1) such events can be averted by turning to righteousness, (2) they are symbolic of inner transformation: (3) these readings were dictated by entities such as Hallaliel and are therefore untrustworthy: (4) Cayce accurately foresaw the events but not the dates. Thurston (1981: 22 ff.) answers that if (4) 'is true. then why did Cayce give specific dates" As for (2), Thurston protests that there is no evidence that Cayce meant these readings to be symbolic, let alone for what the symbols are held to mean: and wonders whether

Cayceans would be willing to apply the same approach to Cayce's teachings on reincarnation.

Christ, ESP, or the medical readings, (1) is the same excuse offered by the UFO cultists (actually the Sanandra group) in *When Prophecy Fails*. Thurston does not discuss (3).

134. For the Christian issue, see Timothy H. Wright, *et al.* "Is the ARE too cautious or too Christian?" in *Venture Inward* 4 no. 5. Sept./Oct. 1988,p 44, ff.. responding to D.D. Delaney. "is the ARE too cautious?". letter to the editor of vol. 4 no. 3. May/ June 1988. For the Jewish issue, see Sandy Koi, "The real truth is one", in *Venture Inward* 3 no. 2 (March/April 1987): also Rhonda J. Miller, "For Jewish members: the dilemma of the Christ-oriented readings," in *Venture Inward* 2 no. 6 (Nov.[Dec. 1986). p. 13 ff.

135. Dale Beyerstein, "Edgar Cayce: The 'Prophet' Who 'Slept' His Way To the Top."

136. The 1991, Member Survey indicates that out of 1.948 respondents, 9,1 % had borrowed books from the ARE library in the previous two years. Only a fraction of these are likely to represent skeptical literature.

137. "Research: Our Common Purpose," in *Venture Inward* II no. 4, (July/Aug. 1995), pp. 5-6.

138. The Meridian Institute consists of Douglas Richards (an Atlantic University professor who writes on electric medicine). Eric Mein (a physician who writes on Cayce's medical readings). John van Auken (an ARE executive with an 'interest in the chakras and kundalini). David McMillan (who writes on Cayce's medical readings), and Carl Nelson (a chiropractor). As its name suggests, the Institute is generally dedicated to discovering medical applications using vital energy within the human body.

139. Robert J. Grant, "Median research focuses on epilepsy, appliances," *Venture Inward* II no. 4 (July/Aug. 1995). p. 11.

140. John O.A. Pagano. *Healing Psoriasis: The Natural Alternative*.

141. William McGarey, *Edgar Cayce and the Palma Christi*.

142. A. Robert Smith, *About MyFather's Business*, p. 249.

143. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

144. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

145. A. Robert Smith, "The Great Pyramid reveals her age," in *Venture Inward* 2 no. 3 (May/June 1986), p. 12 ff.

146. This debate has been conducted mostly through the pages of KMT magazine. which is the Egyptological equivalent of *Biblical Archaeology Review* (i.e. a scholarly magazine for interested laypeople). See Robert M. Schoch, "Redating the Great Sphinx of Giza": James Harrell, "The Sphinx Controversy: Another Look At the Geological Evidence", and Mark Lehner, "Notes & Photographs On the West-Schoch Sphinx Hypothesis," The "West" in Lehner's title refers to John Anthony West, who belongs to the same general school of Egyptology as Schoch, Hancock, and Bauval.

147. e.g. in Mark Thurston, *The Great Teachings of Edgar Cayce*, after p. 153.

148. Harmon Bro, *Why Edgar Cayce Was Not a Psychic*, p. 35.

149. According to the 1991 Member Survey, at 1.948 respondents 6,2% have contacted an "ARE health care professional" in their area.

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 8

CAYCE'S SPIRITUAL MILIEU

So far I have been calling Cayce a "syncretizer" without specifying what I propose him to be syncretizing. We have seen how Cayce as a youth sought out churches and religious groups of all descriptions "seeking I knew not what." Once we eliminate from consideration all those religious traditions which were never really live options for him (e.g. Judaism, Catholicism), what does that leave us with? On one hand Cayce was surrounded by mainstream Protestant churches which were relatively well-established and seen as traditional choices for believers of his ethnic and class background. Fraternal organizations could also be grouped with these on the basis of their shared social niche and prevailing ideology, although lodges were not considered religious institutions per se. Cayce seems to have taken their legitimacy largely for granted. On the other hand Cayce was also exposed to a number of alternative religious movements, including various esoteric and occult groups (which had existed long before Cayce but continued to recombine in ever-changing ways) and breakaway movements within the Protestant fold such as Adventism and Christian Science. While Cayce never converted, he was very much open to their influence. Some of his borrowings from them consist only of odd details (such as the *Book of Mormon's* account of the Lost Tribes); in other cases he accepts their most important teachings (e.g. millennialism in the case of Adventism, spiritual healing in the case of Christian Science). Alternative health movements were part of much the same social milieu as alternative religious movements, whether Christian or occult/esoteric. At the turn of the century participation in several of these movements blurred together into what I like to refer to as a "proto-New Age," while others formed the mainstream religious background which the alternative movements inevitably reacted against or built upon.

A. The Disciples of Christ and American Protestantism

Cayce's religious affiliation is usually described in terms of his membership in the Christian church, which contrary to Kentucky custom I will henceforth refer to by its other name--the Disciples of Christ--in order to avoid confusion with Christianity in general. This affiliation is accurate with respect to his stays in Beverly, Hopkinsville, Louisville, Bowling Green, and Selma- In Dayton he and his family attended a Church of Christ. which at the time was just beginning to develop a separate identity from the Disciples. In Virginia Beach only three Protestant denominations were available: Baptist, Methodist. and Presbyterian. Cayce took his family to visit the Baptist church. and after the service asked the minister if they might join. The minister requested the Cayces to step outside while he discussed the matter with his congregation. Apparently not realizing that this was standard operating procedure among the Baptists, Cayce assumed that his psychic activities were at issue and offended. "stepped out onto the vestibule and kept right on going onto the sidewalk. and never came back" (as Hugh Lynn put it)(150) The following week the Cayces visited the Presbyterian church. which Cayce joined. Gertrude attended with him but for doctrinal reasons balked at formally joining. Cayce's children were raised Presbyterian, and his funeral was conducted by a Presbyterian minister.

The fact that Cayce could move from one Protestant denomination to another with relative ease illustrates the extent to which various Protestant denominations formed parts of a common church-oriented subculture. This is true not only in the sense that many mainline Protestants had come to regard their churches as varying "denominations" of a common religious currency (a perceived interchangeability which is even more widespread today), but also in that these churches had become accustomed to cooperating in pursuit of common social and political goals. Dwight L. Moody (whom Cayce met as a teenager) is a good representative of this pan-Protestant coalition, having been especially active in such interdenominational parachurch activities as revivals. the YMCA. and the Sunday school movement. (151) Again anticipating Cayce's policies. Moody did not did not attempt to

convert members of other denominations to Congregationalism (which he professed), but encouraged listeners to remain faithful to their own churches. Apparently inspired by Moody, Cayce's involvement with his religion went far beyond regular attendance at Sunday morning services—he taught Sunday school and adult Bible classes for much of his life, led meetings of Christian Endeavor (interdenominational youth groups which studied the Bible competitively), participated in a Glad Helpers society (a group devoted to intercessory prayer for the sick and troubled) in Louisville, and regularly engaged in prison outreach. It is therefore unsurprising to find the sleeping Cayce organizing the ARE and his study groups as if they were similar paradenominational groups. The *Search for God* books follow the topical pattern of turn-of-the-century devotional literature. The recommended study

group format emphasizes Bible study and Christian prayer. The sleeping Cayce led the ARE to conduct prison outreach, and even chose the name "Glad Helpers" for an ARE-affiliated intercessory prayer group. Bro writes that

In their tempo and quality of dynamic the Cayce associates frequently conformed to the fellowship of a church group, lodge (more fraternal than occult), or private social service institution like the YMCA or a college whose alumni they might be. (152)

Today the church atmosphere continues to be visible in some aspects of the ARE (e.g. Glad Helpers meetings), although it now competes with New Age elements.

The roots of this mainline Protestant subculture may be traced to the westward emigration of white North American settlers from the Atlantic seacoast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For a variety of reasons their traditional religious institutions did not immediately follow. When the resulting decline in religious involvement in the western areas was finally reversed with the Second Great Awakening at the turn of the nineteenth century, some churches were vastly more outgoing and effective at frontier missionary work than others: the Methodists, gifted with effective organization (for example, they stumbled upon the concept of circuit-riding preachers); the Baptists, for a number of reasons including their simple message and lax educational standards for preachers; the Presbyterians, owing to their ethnic ties with the numerous settlers of Scots ancestry as well as a strategic partnership with the Congregationalists; and the Christians or Disciples of Christ, a new, American-born movement. Despite doctrinal differences and competition for new believers, representatives of all these denominations often cooperated in organizing camp meetings and revivals, which were effective means of drawing support for more permanent churches.

Just as the English radical Reformers and German pietists had sought to bypass the authority of the state Protestant churches of Europe, so did doctrinal and cultural frictions often arise in American churches between denominational headquarters and their frontier congregations. The issues involved included the independence of local churches; the degree of democracy in church decisions; the desirability of a professional clergy; the appropriateness of emotional behavior during church services; the Arminian theology perceived to be implicit in revivalism (to Calvinists, one's status as saved or damned is pre-established and cannot be altered by a decision to convert); and the admission of unbaptized persons or persons outside the denomination to the Lord's Supper (an important consideration in an era when churches were scarce). A recurring theme in the radical Reformation to which American churches have often returned is that of Restorationism, i.e. the intent to revitalize Christianity by returning it to its original, pristine teachings and practices as recounted in the Bible. Details reinstated on this basis variously included the full-immersion baptism of adult believers, pacifism, the refusal to take oaths or acknowledge rank—faith-healing, millennialism, possession by the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, communal ownership of property, unconventional sexual and marital arrangements, a governance system modeled after that of the apostles, recognition of Friday/Saturday as the biblical Sabbath, foot-washing, prophecy, an insistence on the use of the divine name, and the rejection of belief in the Trinity or the immortality of the soul. Following Luther and Calvin American Protestants tended to assume that lack of education or good judgement would pose no essential bar to the ability of a believer to understand and interpret scripture, although church norms typically functioned as a safeguard against excessive creativity.

The group now known as the Disciples of Christ illustrates these tendencies well. The Disciples are the result of a merger between two movements, one led by Barton Stone in Kentucky beginning in 1801

or 1804 (the Christians, or less formally, "Stoneites") and the other led by Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander in Pennsylvania beginning in 1809 (the "Campbellites"). Both Stone (1772-1844) and the elder Campbell (1763-1854) (153) were dissident Presbyterian ministers who had left their respective presbyteries, the former over the issue of creedal requirements (which he regarded as unbiblical) and the latter over the issue of open communion. Stone led his congregation to secede along with him; the Campbells by contrast were

forced to preach in private homes. In 1809 Thomas Campbell called a series of meetings of his supporters for the purpose of organizing the Christian Association of Washington, open to Christians of all denominations (but consisting mainly of Presbyterians) who sought to restore the unity thought to have been current among the primitive Christians. Present-day Disciples regard the "Declaration and Address" adopted by the group as a founding document. The group also resolved to eschew the man-made labels corresponding to their old denominations, urging their followers to refer to themselves simply as "Christians." This move was felt to be in keeping with the principle that all church practice should be derived from the Bible--after all, the Bible refers to "Christians" (e.g. Acts 11:26), but never to "Methodists" or "Presbyterians." (The Stoneites and several other groups had independently reached the same conclusion.) Thomas Campbell denied intending to start another denomination--on the contrary, he saw the existence of divisions within Christianity as something shameful. Instead, he encouraged his followers to remain in their churches, working from within to bring them into conformity with New Testament principles. "Unity," which was conceived somewhat vaguely, would come as a result of the various denominations' returning to their common source, the Bible. As Campbell famously put it, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the scriptures are silent, we are silent." (154)

Cayce similarly urged members of the first *Search for God* study group not to turn their group into a primary religious body:

But DO NOT allow these [study group lessons] to become other than supplementary aids to individuals in their preparation for service in their OWN selected manner; that is, do not become a cism, an ism, laying down laws as to the morals or as to any set rules. For those as have been set have ONE-the Christ! [262-100]

While the Disciples are far from the only possible source for Cayce's ecumenicalism, Cayce's specific resistance to "schisms and isms" suggests something of their anti-creedalism, although he does not go so far as to reject creeds altogether:

For, in God, in the Son, in the Holy Spirit, there is NO creed; for creeds are only manmade. And remember that creeds are like those things that are done as In rote. However, to some rote becomes necessary.... [2420-1]

At one point the elder Campbell attempted to have his group recognized by a different Presbyterian synod, only to have his overtures spurned. Burned by the rejection, the Christian Association chose as their new leader Campbell's son Alexander (1788-1866), also a former Presbyterian preacher. The younger Campbell was more radical, even sharp-tongued, in his criticism of other religious movements. He rejected the use of creeds: advocated a congregational system of governance as the only system authorized by the Bible, and became convinced that contrary to the Presbyterian norm, baptism of adult believers by immersion was the method prescribed by the scriptures. The similarity with Baptist theology appeared overwhelming, leading the Campbellites to seek and win recognition as Baptists. Throughout the period of union with the Baptists (1813 to 1830) the Campbellites retained a somewhat different culture and agenda which led them to eventually leave the Baptist fold. Several theological controversies were cited at the time, among them the younger Campbell's contention that the New Testament is more authoritative than the Old, and his opposition to missionary societies as an unacceptable transfer of power away from the congregations. In 1832, two years after the split, the "Reformed Baptists" (as the Campbellites now called themselves) merged with the Stoneites as a result of spontaneous popular enthusiasm for the move on the part of their members. Their zeal appears to have been driven by the Campbellites' desire to meet in formal churches, which the Stonites (like the Baptists before them) possessed but the Campbellites lacked: and also by the Stonites' desire for an enlarged membership. Alexander Campbell, who might have objected to the new development, was essentially presented with a *fait accompli*. The name issue was avoided by allowing congregations to choose from among "the Christian Church" (favored by Stone),

"the Disciples of Christ" (favored by Alexander Campbell), and "the Church of Christ" (a name which was eventually informally ceded to the non-instrumental churches). This time the merger was a success. The combined movement attracted converts from across the West, growing from about eight thousand Stonites and five thousand Campbellites at the time of the merger to nearly 120,000 members of the combined movement in 1850. (155) Most of the increase is attributable to the efforts of traveling preachers. Besides Alexander Campbell, another influential evangelist for the Disciples was Walter Scott (not to be confused with the author of *Ivanhoe*). (156) The Great Revival of 1858-1859, in which most American Protestant denominations participated, brought a final growth spurt prior to the onset of the American Civil War.

Cayce alludes to this period of frontier evangelism in a 1944 reading in support of missionary work (a perennial concern of the waking Cayce as well). Missions were the subject of several controversies among American Protestants: Calvinist-oriented Baptists rejected its assumption of free will over predestination; Baptists and Disciples looked upon supracongregational missionary societies with suspicion; and liberal Protestants questioned whether converting the heathen was necessary to their salvation. Cayce says:

For if you can't spend a thousand dollars to preach the word, you can give ten cents and preach more in what you say and do to people ye meet every day. Yet it is true the entity has experienced, and may yet experience, that unless the missionary is sent, unless the missionary goes to others, those others may heathenize even America. For, to be sure, civilization again moves westward. (157) [5112-1]

Why would Cayce imagine "civilization" to be specifically Christian in character, and to be moving westward? The answer lies in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century efforts on the part of Protestant churches to mobilize their members in support of various benevolent causes, in an attempt to raise the moral and cultural level of American society. To that end a number of denominational and ecumenical voluntary societies were organized. Many of these were dedicated to essentially religious goals such as supporting missionary work at home or abroad (or among American Indians), distributing Bibles and religious tracts, or organizing Sunday schools. Other initiatives which transcended their religious origins included abolition, the temperance movement, prison reform, numerous aid and relief societies, the YTVICA and YWCA, universal primary education, the building of public hospitals, and the establishment of colleges and universities. At the turn of the century liberal clergy (in a movement known as the "social gospel") pushed various "progressive" labor measures including child labor legislation, minimum wage laws, and the eight-hour day. The turn-of-the-century strength of this pan-Protestant subculture is difficult to appreciate when judged by the present-day successors of its constituent churches.

Over the years the Disciples became less of an alternative movement protesting denominationalism than a traditional denomination in its own right. As the leader of a thriving movement which demanded sophisticated levels of organization and support, Alexander Campbell set aside many of his earlier misgivings about supracongregational institutions and decided that paid preachers, divinity schools, missionary societies, and national conventions were permissible after all. The irony was by no means lost on the Disciples, some of whom reacted to the trend with considerable rancor. These theological qualms were compounded (and quite possibly driven) by Civil War-era political disputes, notably Southern anger over a resolution of loyalty to the United States pushed through by Northern delegates. Lacking strong leadership after Alexander Campbell's death in 1866, the widening rift led to the first of several *de facto* schisms. Among the doctrinal issues cited were the emergent denominationalism as well as controversy over the use of instrumental music during church services. Remember that under a congregational system it is sometimes difficult to determine exactly when a schism has occurred. Some Christian congregations refused to participate in quasi-denominational structures without thereby ceasing to identify with the Disciples of Christ, while others only gradually developed a separate identity apart from the Disciples. With that caveat, in 1906 the non-instrumental churches (which were primarily Southern, rural, and conservative) began publishing a separate yearbook from the other Christian churches. In 1927 another schism resulted in the wake of the fundamentalist/modernist controversy when a group of conservative churches departed. Formal admission that the Disciples were in fact a denomination would not come until 1968, when another reorganization provoked still more defections.

Cayce's Disciples upbringing left him with a lens through which his interpretation of Christianity would forever be filtered. Whether awake or asleep he would turn to the Bible for guidance rather than to particular creeds, institutions, or authority figures. In this he follows a pattern set by the Disciples and other Restorationists. Even the Trinity, held by most Christians to be a central tenet of their faith despite its absence from the Bible, is interpreted cosmologically rather than personally in the Cayce readings (as we shall see in chapter five). Many Disciples denied the Trinity outright, though others accepted it. As for institutions, Cayce like the Disciples sought a truth which transcended them and served as a foundation for them all. Like the New Light Presbyterians from which elements of Disciples theology sprang, Cayce affirmed the role of transformative spiritual experience; at the same time, like the Disciples he did not insist that such experiences were necessary to salvation but saw them as useful sources of guidance, to be evaluated pragmatically. Yet Cayce was more than a Disciple. He was an enthusiastic participant in the pan-Protestant movement which was responsible for some of the most important social and intellectual achievements of his day.

Several factors conspired to bring about the decline of this coalition, as well as of many of component churches. In the face of scientific and scholarly evidence arguing against the literal truth of various biblical accounts, Christians disagreed as to how much accommodation to these new views was called for, with the resulting fundamentalist/modernist controversy first causing serious political division within Baptist and Presbyterian churches during the 1920's. That rift combined with controversy over social issues (e.g. women's suffrage, the race question) to further divide churches politically. In addition to these secular challenges, increasing religious pluralism made Protestantism appear somewhat smaller in the grand scheme of things. An influx of Catholic and Jewish immigration forced Protestants to concede legitimacy to these religions, and eventually to even speak of the United States as a "Judeo-Christian" nation rather than a Protestant commonwealth. Eastern religious ideas became popularized first by New England Transcendentalism, then by Theosophy, with representatives of Vedanta and Theravada Buddhism featured prominently at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Meanwhile, several Protestant offshoots such as the Mormons and Adventists overcame societal ridicule and suspicion to win converts, build enduring institutions, and in the process test the boundaries of Protestant identity. Perhaps the most serious setbacks for mainline Protestantism took the form of secular trends such as heightened geographic mobility, the decline of the extended family (and later of the nuclear family), and the increasing availability of popular entertainment capable of competing with church life. In this respect the fate of mainline Protestant churches has resembled the similar disappearance of indigenous cultural institutions elsewhere in the wake of global economic integration, consumerism, and mass media, although the full effect of these trends would not be felt until well after Cayce's death.

B. Fraternalism

Cayce's life coincided with the golden age of fraternalism in the United States, which lasted from the end of the Civil War until the Great Depression. In 1897, out of an adult male population of nineteen million, some 5.4 million were members of at least one of the hundred or so fraternal orders in existence at that time, the largest being the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (founded 1820: 810,000 members in 1897), the Masons (date of founding uncertain: 750,000 members in 1897), and the Knights of Pythias (475,000 members)(158) Fraternities and their ladies' and youth auxiliaries typically offered ritualism, social entertainment, networking opportunities, and charitable projects to support. The first college fraternities, which began to appear in the early nineteenth century, filled similar functions. Other fraternities were oriented toward politics, ranging from the reactionary Southern nationalism of the original Ku Klux Klan (founded 1866) to the populist agrarianism of the Patrons of Husbandry (the "Grange," founded 1867), although these also had ritual and dogmatic elements. Many appealed to minority groups, either out of ethnic or religious solidarity (e.g. B'nai B'rith, the Sons of Italy, the Knights of Columbus) or exclusion from the larger fraternities (e.g. Prince Hall Masonry). Charitable societies such as the Lions Club or the Rotary Club, though not fraternal in the sense of emphasizing ritual or secrecy, nevertheless deserve consideration in this context. Many distinctive elements of the Boy Scouts also stem from fraternalism including their use of a special handshake, uniforms and badges of rank, rituals, social-service emphasis, and half-mythical Scouting lore (which took on an American Indian flavor in the United States). Finally, one of the most important types of fraternity to arise was that of the benefit society formed specifically for the purpose of

offering 'insurance to its members. The first of these were the Ancient Order of United Workingmen (1868: since merged with the Woodmen of the World) and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (1868).

We have already seen that a Masonic Iodize was located in Beverly and that several of Cayce's relatives were members. While I doubt that either Cayce or his father were initiated Masons. (159) they would inevitably have been exposed to a certain amount of Masonic culture and tradition from those around them. (Many years later. Cayce's close friend David Kahn was an active Mason.) Fraternalism thrived in Hopkinsville. which boasted a number of orders in addition to the Masons. Turning to other fraternal orders. the annual Elks parade and carnival was a major fall social event. with various fraternities fielding brass bands or drill teams in elaborate historical costume. Both Cayce and his father were members of Woodmen of the World Lodge No. 5 (in Hopkinsville), which they joined in order to sell the fraternity's life insurance. Cayce remained a member for more than a decade, and even became a lodge treasurer while in Selma.

It seems appropriate to begin with Freemasonry, the oldest and best-known fraternity though not always the largest. Masonic tradition variously traces the origins of the fraternity to the teachings of Euclid in ancient Egypt. the construction of Solomon's Temple (the Hiram Abiff myth). lodges of medieval British stonemasons, remnants of the Knights Templar. or hidden masters in the Orient. All of these explanations are problematic, although of course not equally so. The stonemasonry theory has been the most commonly accepted among legitimate historians. although the Templar theory (a familiar topic among crackpot occultists and conspiracy enthusiasts) has been gaining respect recently. Yet another possibility is that the Masons' predecessors are to sought among the pre-Christian cults or *Männerbunde* of Scotland. It is generally agreed that the oldest documentary evidence of Freemasonry *per se* is the fourteenth-century Regius manuscript and the fifteenth-century Cooke manuscript, both of which belong to the genre known as "Old Charges" (i.e. lists of duties). In addition. Royal Society founder Elias Ashmole's diary indicates that he was initiated into a lodge of Freemasons in 1646. Before 1717 the Masons constituted a secret society in the full sense of the word. until their existence was finally made public with the formation of the Grand Lodge of London out of four constituent lodges. If their ranks ever 'included genuine stonemasons, by the time the Masons enter the historical record they consisted primarily if not exclusively of members of the nobility and intellegensia. From its roots in the British Isles Freemasonry spread to France, where it was organized and promoted by Andrew Michael Ramsay (known to Masonic tradition as Chevalier Ramsay in recognition of his knighthood in the Order of Saint Lazarus). Inspired by a chivalric revival. the French Masons began conducting elaborate initiation rites complete with ornate props and costumes. The result proved highly marketable. and numerous "higher grades" surfaced which claimed, some perhaps truthfully, to trace their pedigrees to the medieval period. These innovations found their way not only back to the British Isles, but were also incorporated into new lodges in Germany. Italy, Russia, Spain, Latin America, and especially the British Empire (including the United States). In the nineteenth century the higher degrees were harmonized somewhat, with the Memphis Rite. Scottish Rite, and York Rite (including the Masonic Knights Templar and Royal Arch Masonry) being organized separately from the three "symbolic" degrees (i.e. the first three degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason), though intimately related with them.

Those who wish to become Masons apply (or in the past were invited) to their local lodge, called the Blue Lodge in the United States, which evaluates candidates according to a black ball system. If a candidate is deemed worthy he is initiated into the first degree (for a fee) by means of a secret ritual. then introduced to the lodge members and officers. Freemasonry is intensely hierarchical. Masons may not reveal the rituals of any degree to those who have not been initiated into it (although realistically most Masonic "secrets" seem to have found their way into publication), and lodge officers are accorded considerable deference (e.g. the form of address, "Worshipful Master"). Over time a Mason may take on additional degrees and/or become an officer in his lodge; on the other hand he need not attend lodge meetings at all, so long as his dues are paid up. The highest authorities in Freemasonry proper are the Grand Masters of the Grand Lodges, who have jurisdiction over all the lodges within a certain area (e.g. a nation or a U.S. state). At the international level, recognition and agreements are established on a bilateral basis. Today the most important rift in mutual recognition exists between the Grand Lodge of France-which in 1877 ceased requiring that French Masons believe

in God--and the British and American lodges, which consider the Grand Lodge of France to have abandoned a "landmark" (i.e. fundamental tradition) of Freemasonry. In the United States Prince Hall Masonry, which is overwhelmingly black. has not been recognized by the main body of Masons owing (ostensibly) to concerns over whether its founders were legitimately initiated.

In some ways, Masonic lodges have historically functioned as upper-class men's clubs. In the British Empire the Masons have typically numbered among the most reliable members of the establishment. Elsewhere their elite membership has not prevented them from engaging in the occasional act of political subversion. For example Benito Juarez, Bolivar, Garibaldi, and many of the American Founding Fathers took advantage of their Masonic connections in the course of plotting their respective revolutions, although their enemies were often Masons as well, and French lodges have often figured prominently in anticlerical agitation. (In 1736 Pope Clement XII forbade Catholics from becoming Masons on pain of excommunication. although this ruling has since been relaxed.) Freemasonry's emphasis on ritual and symbolism suggests a connection with religion, and while Masons do not consider their fraternity to be a religion per se many of its rituals and practices assume the truth of God, the Bible. or Christianity. Whereas eighteenth-century American Masons favored symbols drawn from Hermeticism and Enlightenment Deism (hence the peculiar design of the Great Seal of the United States), in Cayce's day the prevailing Masonic ideology followed that of the American civil religion, which essentially consisted of the lowest common denominator from among the mainline Protestant denominations with a thick classical overlay. Despite the presence of a quasi-official operating theology, Masonic tradition respects non-Christian religions and admits members from various world religions (though not atheists, again except in France). Tolerance is prescribed, with disputes about religion or politics expressly forbidden at lodge meetings. Of course there is an enormous gap between the theory, which held that free adult males of any race or religion might join; and the reality, in which American lodges were at times strongly inclined to blackball those who were either non-white or non-Protestant. The exclusion of women, by contrast, is generally considered a landmark of Freemasonry and has been overturned only by a few dissident European groups (although American lodges have established a women's auxiliary, the Order of the Eastern Star).

Esotericism has long been a traditional minority interest within Masonic circles. In the eighteenth century Count Cagliostro sought support for an "Egyptian Rite" (based largely on biblical imagery. including symbols from the Book of Revelation) for which he claimed great antiquity. and which he hoped would provide the structure whereby the disparate rites of Freemasonry would be united. Cagliostro was thrown into prison by the Inquisition. where he died in 1795. His Egyptian Rite attracted attention, but ultimately failed to win general acceptance among Masons. Even so, ever since Freemasonry has witnessed periodic attempts. some successful. to introduce rites emphasizing esoteric or occult themes. Important writers from this tradition would have included Arthur Edward Waite and Albert Pike in the nineteenth century, and Manly Palmer Hall in the twentieth (although he became a Mason well after writing his main books on Freemasonry). Waite was a student of Kabbalah; Pike (who wrote the constitution for the nineteenth-century Ku Klux Klan) favored allegorical interpretations of the Bible to reveal doctrines first suggested by Eliphas Levi; while Hall (who wrote hundreds of books on occult or esoteric subjects) concentrated on neo-Platonism, Hermeticism, and Theosophy. Some occultists whose teachings were largely drawn from speculative Freemasonry ultimately formed separate movements. Among them were Joseph Smith. who incorporated many Masonic carryovers into the priestly order of Melchizedek within the Mormon church: Madame Blavatsky, whose Theosophical Society was at least partially inspired by Freemasonry: and S.L. MacGregor Mathers, founder of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and sponsor of Aleister Crowley. Another of Mathers' students was his fellow Mason Gerald Gardner. a major figure in the creation of twentieth-century Wicca or witchcraft. (160)

Cayce occasionally refers to Freemasonry by name, as in this remarkable 1931 reading:

For, with those changes that will be wrought, Americanism--the ism--with the universal thought that is expressed and manifested in the brotherhood of man into group thought, as expressed by the Masonic Order, will be the eventual rule in the settlement of affairs in the world. Not that the world is to become a Masonic order, but the principles that are embraced

in same will be the basis on which the new order of peace is to be established in '44 and '45.
[1152-11]

Apart from its high degree of accuracy, (161) this passage is noteworthy for its reflection of a belief common among American Masons and others to the effect that the United States is destined to provide spiritual leadership for the world. Dumenil points out that despite their international character. Masons during the 1920's took great pains to identify their order with "one-hundred-percent Americanism." (162) In practice this amounted to opposition to "Bolshevism" and immigration, along with (although this was a highly divisive issue within Masonry) considerable support for the Ku Klux Klan among rank-and-file Masons. Some Masons tried to identify a middle path between Communism and the capitalism of the Robber Barons. Many were led by the inadequacy of charity to advocate a more corporatist economic system in which various sectors of the economy would be planned and harmonized, a political vision which Cayce elsewhere seems to endorse (e.g. 3976-19).

The readings are full of Masonic allusions, although again this need not suggest that Cayce was an initiated Mason. For example. much speculative Masonic lore centers around allegorical interpretations of the Christian Bible. while a similar mixture of biblical and esoteric traditions is present in the Cayce readings. To begin with. Cayce refers to Jesus's initiation through a series of degrees in Egypt (e.g. 3) 15-5). Besides the obviously Masonic concepts of initiation and degrees. turn-of-the-century Freemasonry often wrapped biblical themes in ancient Egyptian motifs. following the pattern set by Cagliostro. In addition, Cayce sees geometry as containing deep spiritual insights (341-1), a quintessentially Masonic notion. The letter "G" in the Masonic symbol is sometimes said to stand for "geometry," although American Masons usually interpret it as standing for "God." The Royal Arch degree known as the "Knight of East and West" even uses the symbolism of the Book of Revelation in an initiatory context, as does Cayce.

One of the most interesting parallels between Cayce and speculative Masonic tradition is Cayce's interpretation of the groundplan of the Mosaic Tabernacle as symbolic of the three levels of human nature. namely body. mind. and spirit (2067-1). In Freemasonry. much speculation centers around the groundplan of Solomon's Temple. which like the Mosaic Tabernacle was divided into three courts. For example, Manly P. Hall links the three divisions of Temple with the three symbolic degrees, as well as with the three divisions of human nature (body, mind, and "heart" or soul). (163) MacBride writes of an "ideal Temple" which continues to exist even after the destruction of the physical Temple. (164) Cayce uses similar language about another temple, the Temple Beautiful:

Ye ask, where is this now? Disintegrated and in that sphere ye may enter, and some have entered, where these are sealed as with the seven seals of the law in that these experiences now become as those of thine activities among thy fellow man. [281-25]

While the Temple Beautiful was Egyptian rather than Palestinian, some Masonic historians (e.g. Mackey) do trace Solomon's Temple to an Egyptian prototype. (165)

Lest any doubt remain as to the presence of Masonic influences in the Cayce readings. let me direct attention to the symbolic "aura charts" which Cayce designed for about a dozen people. One of these includes "the letter G crossed by the compass ... and square" as well as a candalabrum (2072-7). Indeed. many of the aura charts resemble nothing so much as eighteenth-century designs for Masonic aprons. Another (404-1) features a cross with a brazen serpent. Cayce's own chart (294-206) depicts the all-seeing eye along with many astrological symbols.

If the Masons were Cayce's main source of speculative fraternal ideology. then the Woodmen of the World were his main source of actual lodge experience. Woodmen of the World was founded by Joshua Cullen Root (1844-1913) in Omaha, Nebraska in 1890, after Root had lost control of another fraternity which he founded, Modern Woodmen of America. (The history of the Woodmen of the World extends to several dozen other benefit societies which have merged with or split off from them; I will not recount this history here.) Root was also a Mason. an Odd Fellow, a Pythian, a member of the Ancient Order of United Workmen and Mechanics and of something called Vera Amicitia Sempiterna. The founding mythology of the Woodmen of the World posits an ancient code of brotherhood among woodmen. who are sworn to help one another in time of need. The myth additionally holds that woodmen worldwide have developed a body of wisdom more inspired by Woodcraft. much as the

Masons are inspired by operative masonry. Like most fraternities, the Woodmen sponsor or contribute to a multitude of charitable projects. and today are especially proud of their Patriotic Program (begun in 1946. though its roots are older) in which American flags and other nationalistic paraphernalia are donated. The Woodmen have three degrees--morning, noon, and night--but most members only undergo the first, consisting of a welcoming ritual in which new members are passed beneath a tunnel formed by the crossed axes of the existing members. In 1896 grassroots pressure from the lodges led to the creation of a "Uniform Rank" for the purpose of organizing military-type drill instruction, including distinctive Woodmen axe drills.

As a benefit society, Woodmen's main purpose has always been the provision of life insurance, although its ritual, social, and financial aspects are officially held to be coequal. Modern readers may wonder why fraternal organizations rather than public or private life insurance companies would have been formed for this purpose. The answer is, the practice of taking up collections on behalf of widows, orphans, and others in need had long been a practice of churches, lodges, and trade guilds, it sometimes happened that people would join such groups I made explicit the primarily for the sake of the benefits. Regular benefit societies mere y obligations and expectations of the participants. Given the limitations of communications technology, a social component was necessary to ensure that claims were honestly made and assessments paid. Indeed, state law often required those offering insurance to follow a fraternal format, by which was meant that it "must be solely for the benefit of their members and nonprofit, must have a lodge system, holding meetings in ritualistic form, must have a representative form of government, and must make provisions for the payment of insurance benefits." (166) Many states (including Nebraska) continue to grant privileges to fraternal insurance providers not enjoyed by their for profit counterparts.

Cayce and his father joined the Woodmen in 1900. The society was popular in Kentucky, with some 7,800 candidates being initiated in Louisville in 1910. In Cayce's day, membership in Woodmen of the World was open only to white males ages sixteen to fifty-two possessing sound health, habits, and morals. (167) (There was a ladies' auxiliary as well, the Supreme Forest Woodmen Circle, which in 1965 merged with the main body of Woodmen.) Members of certain dangerous or unhealthy occupations (e.g. coal miners) were automatically excluded, unless they agreed to waive any death benefits which might otherwise be payable. Besides payment of death benefits, members who died would have a marker in the shape of a tree stump (a perennial woodmen symbol) placed on their grave. Some of these can be seen to this day in Hopkinsville's Riverside Cemetery. Cayce's grave, however, lacks such a marker, probably because he and his father allowed their memberships to lapse at some point. That point is likely to have been 1919, the year that the fraternity (in common with numerous other benefit societies) was forced to institute rate adjustments in the process of converting to an actuarial system. The fact that the move was necessary to ensure financial stability did not assuage those whose ages would disadvantage them under an actuarial system, many of whom argued that the move represented a breach of contract. As a result of the controversy, the number of outstanding Woodmen policies declined from a peak of 962,000 policies in 1919 to 343,000 in 1933, although the number eventually climbed back to over a million in the 1940's.

The Cayce readings mention the name "Woodmen" only once (412-6), as one of several possible opportunities for service which that particular reading recipient was asked to consider. Elsewhere he urges that his teachings be evaluated according to whether we find them personally beneficial. That is,

... does such make them better parents, better children, better husbands, better wives, better neighbors, better friends, better citizens? And if and when it does NOT, LEAVE IT ALONE!" (1135-6) (168)

His language recalls that of the "Objectives of Woodcraft" (1903 version, since revised) which describe the fraternity's purpose:

Woodmen is to ennoble its membership; to minister to the afflicted; to relieve distress ... to so impress the grand doctrine of the brotherhood of man upon our membership as to make it an important factor in our daily lives; to encourage broad, charitable views; to make us more intelligent citizens, truer friends, gentler sons, more thoughtful brothers, more considerate husbands and more reasonable fathers.

It is not for the advancement of the interests of any denominational dogma....

Another possible Woodmen borrowing is Cayce's choice of a dove with an olive branch in its beak for the ARE's symbol. Ultimately drawn from the Genesis account of the Noachian deluge and popular with Christians (for whom it suggests the Holy Spirit) and peace activists (for whom it is a symbol of hope), the symbol was one of several in regular use by the Woodmen of the World.

150. Quoted in A. Robert Smith, *About My Father's Business*, pp. 62. 65-66.

151. Prior to the 1920's, Sunday schools were often independent of any denominational affiliation. and typically utilized a common curriculum and set of teaching materials developed by the International Sunday School Association. Thus. Cayce's Sunday school classes at the Ninth Street Christian Church in Hopkinsville drew members of other churches as well, and often hosted circuit-riding Methodist preachers. (cf. Hannon Bro. *A Seer Out of the Season*, p. 281)

152. Harmon Bro, *Charisma of the Seer*, p. 160.

153. If the Cayce readings are to be believed, Thomas Campbell was the reincarnation of Noah and Elisha. He incarnated yet again in the 1940's, when his new parents asked Cayce for a life reading.

154 Max Ward Randall, *The Great Awakenings and the Restoration Movement*, p.108.

155. Robert Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada*, p. 169.

156. Cayce told Harmon Bro (recounted in *A Seer Out of Season*, p. 271) that Scott's initial meeting with Campbell had taken place at Old Liberty--the church which Cayce attended during his childhood and youth in Beverly. According to the usual Hopkinsville authorities, however, the story is somewhat apocryphal.

157. The last line alludes to the sleeping Cayce's conviction that the center of the world's civilization is constantly moving westward--from Europe to the United States, then across the American continent, and perhaps now from the United States to Asia (3976-15 warns of "Mongolia"). Cayce appears to assume that "civilization" must be accompanied by Christianity. Accordingly, he predicts the gradual conversion of China's elites to Christianity (2834-3, 3976-29).

158. Dale E. Boudreau- "Sources of the Fraternal Spirit," in *Gnosis* 44, (Summer 1997), p. 32, 38.

159. Besides the absence of any Masonic records or family recollections suggesting this, if they *had* been Masons they probably would not have joined Woodmen of the World.

160. Although Wiccans today are more likely to describe their religion using language drawn from feminism. the environmental movement. and Jungian psychology. many Masonic elements have been preserved unrecognized--for example the use of the term "the craft" to refer to the religion. the emphasis on secrecy and initiation. the presence of three grades in Gardnerian Wicca: and the use of ceremonial swords. robes, and sacred drama. Any number of witches use the expression "So mote it be." unaware that they are quoting the last line of the Regius manuscript.

161. Cayce correctly associates 1944 and 1945 with the beginning of peace, at a time when the war in question was confined to Manchuria. As for "a new order of peace" based on "the brotherhood of man," several important transnational institutions were founded in the immediate postwar period including the IMF, the World Bank, GATT and the reorganized United Nations. Critics, however, will hasten to point out that these institutions are neither Masonic nor particularly benevolent.

162. Lynn Dumenil, *Freemasonry and American Culture 1880-1930*, p. 115.

163. Manly Palmer Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages.*, pp. lxxiv, clxxv.

164. A.S. MacBride, *Speculative Masonry*, p. 114.

165. Albert Mackey, *Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, entry for "Temple."

166 . Ernie May, "Lodge System Is Centerpiece of Fraternal, Social Activity." in *Woodmen* 100 no 6 (June 1990) p. 5.

167. According to the entry for "Woodmen" in Albert Stevens' *Cyclopedia of Fraternities*.

168. The similarly-worded 254-57 reading adds that the Cayce work will also make "thieves worse thieves, liars bigger liars--Its BOUND to! If it's Life itself 'it IS a growth, no matter in which direction it is turned it will GROW!"

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 9

C. Spiritualism and psychic research

Nineteenth-century Spiritualism introduced the world to séances, ouija boards, table tippings, mediums, spirit guides, and psychic powers. The field of parapsychology also has its roots in this movement, since organizations like the Society for Psychical Research grew out of a desire to test the spirits, as it were. While the relationship between these two camps was often adversarial, I propose to view them as symbiotic, since they served to popularize the same set of religious notions.

Although many of the phenomena associated with Spiritualism are quite ancient, modern Spiritualism represents the nineteenth-century convergence of several earlier occult strands. One of these strands is the career of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), a Swedish mining engineer and parliamentarian who published on such varied subjects as mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, physiology, mechanics, economics, and foreign policy. In 1744, Swedenborg began recording (in Latin) a series of theological works based on visions which had initially come to him during a lengthy coma. These describe the inhabitants of heaven, hell, and the spirit world: set forth an allegorical interpretation of the Bible: and give a detailed system of correspondences between the physical and spiritual realms. Swedenborg's revelations won him a following not so much within the Swedish Lutheran church (whose authorities were generally unreceptive) but in the Netherlands, England and the United States. The Church of the New Jerusalem, founded after Swedenborg's death, is based on his teachings. His influence is much wider than that- however, and extends not only to a long list of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century luminaries (e.g. Blake, Coleridge, Kant, Emerson, Henry James, Sr.) but essentially permeated the whole of the Mesmerist and Spiritualist movements. For example, Swedenborgianism appears to have been the most immediate inspiration for the central Spiritualist idea of peering into "the other side" and relaying information about it to people in this world.

Another strand was the work of Austrian physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), whose theory of *magnétisme animale* ("animating magnetism," but usually translated as "animal magnetism") led to the first experiments with hypnosis, hence the term "mesmerism." According to Mesmer, there exists a sort of subtle fluid or ether which permeates all space, and which serves as a medium for psychic communication. Through manipulation of this ether, it is possible to heal diseases or place a subject in a trance state. Mesmer accomplished this by use of hands or a special wand, with which he would make "magnetic passes" over the patient's supine body. Later he discovered that the technique could be used to make his subjects involuntarily dance or perform other amusing stunts while somnabulistic. Mesmer's patron, the Marquis de Puységur, found that a young shepherd named Victor, when "magnetized," was capable of speaking with a vastly greater intelligence than he possessed while awake. On being roused from the trance, however, Victor remembered nothing. Even more intriguingly, while entranced Victor could also respond to unspoken mental commands. After a halt in research necessitated by the French Revolution, nineteenth-century magnetists turned their attention to the "higher phenomena" made possible by their art- including telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis, stigmata, apportation, and prophecy. Of especial interest to students of Cayce are the phenomena of "traveling clairvoyance" (or remote seeing) and "medical clairvoyance" (in which the subject diagnoses ailments and prescribes cures, usually consisting of folk remedies). Under Swedenborgian influence, magnetists also made contact with disembodied spirits, both human and nonhuman, through their trance subjects. Mesmerism even came to be successfully employed in surgery, in lieu of anesthesia. It was at this point, around the 1830's, that Mesmerism gained a following in the United States through the lectures and demonstrations of Charles Poyen and his subject, Cynthia Gleason, in New England. Whereas in Europe, Mesmerism had been approached primarily as a scientific phenomenon, in the United States Poyen's showmanship transformed Mesmerism into a means of popular entertainment. Although the theoretical basis for Mesmer's work came to be superseded by psychological explanations by the turn of the century, magnetism and hypnosis remained connected in

the popular understanding well after the demise of Mesmerism *per se*. (Al Layne's card read "osteopath and magnetic healer".) The presumed occult properties of magnetism were echoed by the sleeping Cayce, who accordingly advised his waking counterpart to lie with his body oriented north-to-south while giving readings--Cayce's head would be pointed north for a physical reading, and south for a life reading (294- 133).

The origins of the American Spiritualist craze are usually traced to the 1846 poltergeist style "rappings" associated with the sisters Margaretta and Kate Fox of Hydesville. New York (near Newark). At the time the noises started. the sisters were fifteen and twelve. respectively. The Fox family began to hear mysterious pounding or knocking, whereupon the sisters contrived to communicate with the invisible source by means of a simple code. It then surfaced that their visitor was the unnamed spirit of a peddler who had supposedly been murdered by a previous occupant of the house. a blacksmith named John C. Bell. As more and more living humans turned up at the Fox household to observe the rappings (including Bell, who came to protest his innocence). the Foxes decided to separate their daughters. Kate was sent to live with a third sister. Leah. who was between marriages at the time. The rappings then shifted to Leah's house, with more and more spirits clamoring to speak to their living friends and relatives through the new "spiritual telegraph" (this only a few years after Morse had invented the real telegraph). The reunited Fox sisters--organized by Leah--began charging money for their séances, and even went on tour (so to speak) to other parts of New York. Repeated efforts to expose the phenomena as fraudulent were unsuccessful, until the girls themselves finally broke down and confessed to having made the mysterious noises themselves by snapping their toe joints. Still later, however, the confessions were retracted.

The Hydesville rappings were by no means the first American encounter with the spirit world. For example, between 1837 and 1844 a number of Shaker communities--whose founder. Mother Ann Lee, combined Swedenborgian metaphysics with communitarianism and millenarian expectations--experienced visitations from angels and spirits of the dead, which would cause them to whirl around and jerk their bodies wildly until they collapsed in a heap. (This behavior calls to mind similar practices from Christian revival meetings.) War parties of invisible Indians would whoop through the Shaker villages at night, and any humans possessed by them would behave in a manner befitting uncontrolled savages--even to the point of threatening to violate celibacy. a primary Shaker lifestyle requirement. Before the phenomena faded. Shaker communities from upstate New York to Kentucky were experiencing phenomena ranging from glossalalia to, demonic possession. and writing books dictated from the spirit world. Yet these phenomena failed to spread much beyond the Shaker communities. What is significant about the Hydesville rappings in contrast to other outbreaks of Spiritualist-type activity is not so much the phenomena themselves (which were unoriginal) or the resulting spiritual teachings (which were dreadfully pedestrian). but their fame. Whereas the Shaker phenomena disappeared spontaneously, the Hydesville visitations inspired mediums on several continents to begin conducting sances. These mediums would bring their own occult background to the table, hence the influence of Swedenborg and Mesmer. It is important to remember that Spiritualism is essentially an unorganized, grass-roots movement lacking any effective means of ensuring dogmatic conformity, so that mediums enjoy enormous freedom to say and do whatever their patrons will support.

Among the most immediately influential of these new mediums was the "Poughkeepsie seer" Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910). whose psychic career actually began slightly before the Hydesville rappings. That Cayce was aware of Davis is attested by Cayce's son Hugh Lynn. who notes extensive similarities between their methods.(169) In 1843 Davis, a poorly-educated teenage shoe store clerk, was inspired by the visit of "phrenomagnetist"(170) J. Stanley Grimes to try Mesmerism for himself. enlisting a local tailor named Levingston to act as conductor. Davis turned out to be quite gifted at traveling clairvoyance and medical clairvoyance. and the two men quit their regular jobs to follow this new calling. A few months later Davis underwent a powerful visionary experience in which the shades of Galen and Swedenborg appeared to him. as if to commission him for some great spiritual task. Shortly afterward, Davis announced while entranced that he would begin delivering a series of psychic revelations. These were published in 1847 as *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations and a Voice to Mankind*. Along the way Davis fired Levingston, replacing him with a professional magnetist named S. Silas Lyon. and engaged Universalist pastor William Fishbough to take dictation.

The book's long title merges the headings for its three parts. The first part (*The Principles of Nature*) describes the progressive evolution of the oceanic, luminous "Positive Mind" or "Great Forces"(171) to bring forth the universe, then life, then humanity. After death, humans are capable of continuing to advance until they reach the seventh celestial sphere, representing unity with the Divine Mind. The second part (*Nature's Divine Revelations*) constitutes a commentary on spiritual history from the Old Testament to the nineteenth century. Davis seeks to defend the Bible against those who would read superstition into it. (172) To that end he denies the divinity of Christ and rejects the sanctity of the Bible. The third part (*A Voice to Mankind*) consists of social criticism. Davis condemns the stratification of his society, preferring instead a more egalitarian, Fourieristic order. Lawyers, doctors, and clergymen come under particularly scathing treatment. Cooperatives and credit unions are favored, however, and Davis expresses sympathy for the plight of women.

A visiting biblical scholar named George Bush attested to the sleeping Davis' mastery of Hebrew, linguistics, geology, archaeology, mythology, and other subjects. His promotion of Davis' *Principles of Nature* was largely responsible for bringing it to the attention of literary reviewers, although Bush (who was a Swedenborgian) later criticized Davis for denying the existence of the Swedenborgian hell in favor of a Universalist scheme. Much of the attraction of the book stemmed from the fact that its author was supposedly semi-literate. (Davis had only read one book--a novel--that he would admit to). Less charitable minds have discerned in it literary influences from scientific books of the time, contemporary newspapers, and the writings of Swedenborg. (173)

Besides Davis, a number of other mediums became famous in the wake of the Hydesville rappings. For example, Daniel Dunglas Home (who was active in the 1850's) could produce rappings, relay messages from the departed, levitate tables, summon handwritten letters from the spirit world, hold hot coals in his bare hands, elongate his body by nearly a foot, and make invisible hands play tunes on a visible accordian. On one occasion Home floated out of a window seventy feet above street level, then returned by way of another window. More influential was his practice of emitting the spirit-substance "ectoplasm" from his body. (174) In the course of investigating Home's phenomena, the chemist William Crookes became convinced of its genuineness.

While initially Spiritualist communications came mainly from spirits of dead relatives, some mediums (perhaps responding to market stimuli) took to relaying messages from sources which were perceived as more exalted or exotic. Among these were American Indian princesses.

Hindu sages, and such worthies as George Washington or Socrates. One particularly ubiquitous spirit, John King, assisted mediums all over the country, including Madame Blavatsky at one point. When early Theosophists began claiming to communicate with a higher source of information(175) than the Spiritualists, namely the Masters of the Great White Brotherhood. Spiritualists were quick to add the Masters to their repertoire. By the 1920's, many Spiritualist mediums had even accepted reincarnation, although at first glance the two *afterlife theories* might appear to be incompatible. With the fresh example of *The Book of Mormon* (1827) before them, quite a few mediums began receiving messages from quasi-biblical sources. This resulted in such works as *The Oahspe Gospel* (1882). *A Dweller on Two Planes* (1899), and *The Aquarian Gospel* (1907). Another less biblical but equally successful dictated work was *The Berry Book* (1937). At present, Spiritualist mediums are often difficult to distinguish from trance-channelers, and are as likely to communicate with angels, space aliens, or other cosmic entities as with spirits of the dead. Although it often goes unrecognized, such syncretism has long been typical of Spiritualism.

The waking Cayce distanced himself from Spiritualism on the grounds that Spiritualist sources are less lofty than "universal" ones. In a 1933 lecture he put it this way:

Some people think that the information coming through me is given by some departed personality who wants to communicate with them, or some benevolent spirit or physician from the other side. This may sometimes be the case though in general I am not a "medium" in that sense of the term. However, if a person comes seeking that kind of contact and information, I believe he receives it...

So I believe that if the source is not wavered by the desires of the individual seeking the reading, it will be from the universal. Of course if an individual's desire is very intense to have a communication from Grandpa, Uncle, or some great soul, the contact is directed that way, and that becomes the source. Do not think that I am discrediting those who seek in that way. If you're willing to receive what Uncle Joe has to say. that's what you get. "What you ask you receive" is a two-edged sword. It cuts both Ways. (176)

The sleeping Cayce's attitude toward Spiritualism is more ambiguous. While the readings generally take the truth of Spiritualist phenomena for granted, seekers are usually warned not to become distracted from higher spiritual purposes. In that sense, mediumship represents an unhealthy fascination with phenomena as opposed to more exalted objects of religious devotion such as God, inspiring Cayce to characterize Spiritualism as "that which comprehends rather only the result, than the source" (5756-11). Even so, Cayce allows that communication between the living and the dead may often be spiritually beneficial (e.g. 136-48), although here he is thinking of communications received during dreams rather than seances.

During his lifetime, Cayce was widely assumed to have some connection with Spiritualism, as illustrated by this 1930 headline from the *Baltimore Sun*: "Spiritualist Research Aim of Atlantic University." (177) Observers of Cayce had good reason to associate him with Spiritualism, since Cayce's practice of medical clairvoyance was known from the Spiritualist movement. In addition, Cayce had many contacts with followers of Spiritualism, and even dabbled in it himself on occasion. Some aspects of his teachings suggest a Spiritualist influence. For example, the waking Cayce described his experiences while entranced as follows:

I see myself as a tiny dot out of my physical body, which lies inert before me. I find myself oppressed by darkness, and there is a feeling of terrific loneliness.... Suddenly, I am conscious of a white beam of light. As this tiny dot, I move upward following the light- knowing I must follow it or be lost.

As I move along this path of light, I gradually become conscious of various levels upon which there is movement. Upon the first levels there are vague, horrible shapes-grotesque forms such as one sees in nightmares. As I pass on, there begin to appear on either side misshapen forms of human beings. with some part of the body magnified.

Again there is a change, and I become conscious of gray hooded forms moving downward. Gradually these become lighter in color. Then the direction changes. and these forms move upward--and the color of the robes grows rapidly lighter.

Next, there begin to appear on either side vague outlines of houses, walls, trees, etc., but everything is motionless. As I pass on, there is more light and movement, in what appear to be normal cities and towns. With the growth of movement, I become conscious of sounds--at first indistinct rumblings, then music, laughter and the singing of birds. There is more and more light; the colors become very beautiful: and there is a blending of sound and color.

Quite suddenly, I come upon a hall of records. It is a hall without walls, without a ceiling; but I am conscious of seeing an old man who hands me a large book--a record of the individual for whom I seek Information. (178)

Several important Spiritualist themes are included within this passage. Cayce first describes what it is like to exit the physical body, a perennial Spiritualist concern, then alludes to phantasms and robed figures of various descriptions. The penultimate paragraph resembles Spiritualist accounts of Summerland, a heavenly paradise where some departed souls dwell.

While awake Cayce met a number of mediums, most notably Eileen Garrett (1893- 1970), whose spirit guide was an Arab with the unlikely name of Uvani (or Ouvani). In 1934 Cayce and Garrett exchanged readings. The sleeping Cayce cautiously praised Garrett's work (507- 1). Uvani for his part suggested

that Cayce would benefit from the assistance of a spirit guide of his own, and that a suitable guide (named Hallaliel) had volunteered his services. After consulting with his closest followers Cayce declined the offer, preferring instead to contact the divine without any intermediary except Christ. Nevertheless, the sleeping Cayce did relay a further message from Hallaliel, apparently spontaneously (3976-15). Other readings allude to the presence of disembodied entities including Ouspensky (136-59), a guardian angel named Demetrius (33 11-6), a student of Zoroaster named Zorain (311-10), George V of England (877-7), and "Lamech, Confucius, Tamah, Halaliel, Hebe, Ra, Ra Ta, John" (5756- 10).

Although Cayce did not usually allow discarnate entities to speak through him, there were exceptions. The following selection depicts Cayce's side of a conversation with spirits of the dead, which intruded--seemingly spontaneously-- into the course of an ordinary reading. No reason was ever offered as to why this occurred. Notice the marked change in style from Cayce's other readings.

EC: There are some here that would speak with those that are present, if they desire to so communicate with them.

GC [Gertrude Cayce]: We desire to have at this time that which would be given. (long pause)

EC: Don't all speak at once. [pause] Yes. I knew you would be waiting. though. Yes? Haven't found him before? All together now, huh? Uncle Porter, too? He was able to ease it right away, huh? Who? Dr. House? No. Oh, no--no. she is alright. Yes. LOTS better. Isn't giving any trouble now. Haven't seen her? Why, where have you been? Oh. She is in another change? How long will they stay there? Oh, they don't count time like that. Oh, you do have 'em. Well, those must be pretty now, if they are all growing like that. Yes? Yes. I'll tell her about'em. Tell Gertrude you are all together now. huh?

(5756-13)]

Sometimes Cayce channeled figures from the Bible--for example, "John" (5749-4), or "Michael, Lord of the Way" (presumably the archangel). Michael interrupted readings on several occasions to admonish Cayce's companions to cease their divisiveness and rally behind Cayce:

BOW THINE HEADS, YE CHILDREN OF MEN! FOR I, MICHAEL, LORD OF THE WAY, WOULD SPEAK WITH THEE! YE GENERATION OF VIPERS. YE ADULTEROUS GENERATION, BE WARNED!

THERE IS TODAY BEFORE THEE GOOD AND EVIL, CHOOSE THOU WHOM YE WILL SERVE!

WALK IN THE WAY OF THE LORD! OR ELSE THERE WILL COME THAT SUDDEN RECKONING, AS YE HAVE SEEN!

BOW THINE HEADS, YE WHO ARE UNGRACIOUS, UNREPENTANT! FOR THE GLORY OF THE LORD IS AT HAND!

THE OPPORTUNITY IS BEFORE THEE! ACCEPT OR REJECT!

But don't be PIGS! [294-208]

The most exalted being ever to be channeled by Cayce is apparently meant to be Jesus:

Q. Might I receive at this time a message from the Master?

A. Come, mine daughter, mine sister. In choosing me, as I have chosen you, there comes that beauty of oneness in knowing the way that brings to others peace, joy, happiness, in DOING HIS will; for he that seeks to do HIS will may IN me have that peace, that joy, that

understanding, that gives to each in their RESPECTIVE spheres their needs, their desires, as their desires are in me. Be faithful then, even as thou wert faithful THEN. [993]

The readings refer to Jesus in the first person on several other occasions, thereby implying that Jesus served as the trance source for these readings as well.

A number of scientists and scholars took it upon themselves to investigate Spiritualism. The London Society for Psychical Research (SPR) was founded in 1882, and its American counterpart shortly thereafter. William James, who served as president of the former branch and was an active member of the latter, investigated a medium named Lenora Piper beginning in 1885. Piper and her spirit control Phinuit, he discovered, were able to reveal information about people's dead relatives which Piper could not possibly have known through natural means. James' lifelong interest in psychic subjects informs much of the 1901 lectures published as *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (which focuses on the phenomenology of spiritual or mystical experiences). Bro reports that Rhine met Edgar Cayce at Duke, and that Rhine sent Lucien Warner to Virginia Beach to study him. (179)

The possibility of eliciting psychic abilities from a hypnotized subject continued to arouse popular and scholarly interest at the turn of the century. Thomson Jay Hudson, the author of *The Law of Psychic Phenomena* (1893), framed his explanation for the phenomenon as follows: The human mind consists of "objective" and "subjective" aspects. The objective mind is the part which makes use of reason, the senses, and materiality, and corresponds to the ordinary conscious state. The subjective mind, by contrast, is nonsensory, intuitive, not bound to the body, forgets nothing, and possesses amazing powers:

It sees without the use of the natural organs of vision, and in this, as in many other grades, or degrees, of the hypnotic state, can be made, apparently, to leave the body, and travel to distant lands and bring back intelligence, oftentimes of the most exact and truthful character. It also has the power to read the thoughts of others, even to the minutest details; to read the contents of sealed envelopes and closed books. In short, it is the subjective mind that possesses what is popularly designated as clairvoyant power, and the ability to apprehend the thoughts of others without the aid of the ordinary, objective means of communication. (180)

Elsewhere, Hudson identifies the subjective mind with soul or spirit, and sees it as "partaking of the nature and attributes of the Divine Mind." (181) The sleeping Cayce endorsed the views of Hudson's *Law of Psychic Phenomena* by name (254-48, 254-633, 5746-7), and elsewhere resorted to Hudson's terminology by way of explaining the nature of his gift.

In contrast to his cautious attitude toward Spiritualism, the sleeping Cayce supports parapsychological research without qualification, to the point of urging that the ARE engage in it (e.g. 257-20). At one point Morton Blumenthal led an ARE course which included Hudson's *Law of Psychic Phenomena*, James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum*, and Bergson's *Creative Evolution* and *Mind Energy* (report of 1800-15) on its reading list. At one point, Hugh Lynn contemplated studying parapsychology as a graduate student, and in the 1930's hosted a radio show on parapsychology called "Mysteries of the Mind" on which Lucien Warner appeared as a guest. (182) The allure of psychic powers has always been an important part of the ARE's appeal, although the organization stresses the cultivation of personal psychic experiences as guides along the spiritual path, rather than scientific research as it is ordinarily understood.

Nineteenth-century research into hypnosis and parapsychology was an important if generally unacknowledged influence on early psychoanalysis. Although Freud appears to have viewed such subjects with suspicion--perhaps as threats to the acceptance of psychology as a scientific discipline--Jung was fascinated by them, and reports a number of paranormal experiences in his writings. In 1931, at his hospital in Virginia Beach, the waking Cayce gave a lecture entitled "Psycho-Analysis." (In previous weeks he had spoken on mental healing and psychic phenomena.) The contents of this lecture suggest that Cayce knew little about Freud. Here Cayce criticizes Freud's interpretation of dream symbolism as too shallow, since it does not take into account the possibility that dreams might

represent past-life memories. Jung, too, criticized Freud's interpretation of symbolism from myths and dreams as too shallow. though not for the same reasons that Cayce cites. I see no good reason to suppose that Cayce was Influenced by Jung, who was then relatively obscure. The sleeping Cayce (e.g. 1402-2) makes the same distinction between "personality" and "individuality" that Jung does. but this by itself is not very strong evidence that Cayce was acquainted with Jung's work. (183) Also, there is no mention in the Cayce readings of archetypes (except as an alternate name for the aura charts of Nancy Lansdale, unless "patterns" are accepted as a functional equivalent as some suggest), alchemical symbolism. the individuation process, or other central Jungian notions. The case could be made that Cayce taught something like Jung's collective unconscious. While the idea of a universal mind is found in numerous nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theories. Cayce joins Jung in pointing to such unconscious activity as dreams as the primary gateway to experience of this realm. Jungians will also appreciate Cayce's description of God as both "within and without" (1158-12): his exhortion to "find self" (1401-1) or "crucify" the self (57492): and his description of Christ as the point where "extremes meet" (2449-1). Despite crucial differences between the two systems. (184) Jung has become quite influential among Cayce writers, and his ideas are probably better represented within the curriculum of Atlantic University than those of Cayce.

169. Thomas Sugrue, *There Is a River*, p. 289.

170. Following founder Franz Joseph Gall, phrenologists purport to analyze personality by measuring the bumps on a person's head. Phrenology was quite popular in the nineteenth century, and many practitioners of Mesmerism hastened to incorporate the new science into their theory and praxis-- hence the term "phrenomagnetism."

171. Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and A Voice To Mankind*, p. 40. par. 14.

172. *Ibid.*, p. 116. par. 42).

173. Slater Brown, *The Heyday of Spiritualism*, p. 100.

174. For those whose exposure to ectoplasm is limited to the *Ghostbusters* movies. It must be said that photographs of the substance make it look very much like white bedsheets. In fact. the modern depictions of sheet-draped ghosts in cartoons and Halloween costumes may be traced to the Spiritualist movement. in which white bedsheets appear to have served as rudimentary special-effects devices (unless Caspar is wearing a stylized shroud).

175. Theosophists did not condemn all Spiritualist activity as fraudulent (as one might expect given the difficulty of reconciling belief in ghosts with the theory of reincarnation). but denied that the entities with which Spiritualist mediums communicated were in fact human spirits. Instead, they were said to be the mere astral shells of the departed. discarded along with their physical bodies and hardly worthy of being contacted.

176. Edgar Cayce, "What is a Reading," in Jeffrey Furst, *Edgar Cayce's Story of Jesus*,p. 16.

177. Harmon Bro, *A Seer Out of Season*, p. 373.

178. In Jeffrey Furst, *Edgar Cayce's Story of Jesus*, pp. 53-54.

179. Harmon Bro, *A Seer Out of Season*, p. 398.

180. Thomason Jay Hudson, *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, pp. 29-30.

181. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

182. A. Robert Smith, *About My Father's Business*, p. 119.

183. For example, the distinction is found in Jung's "Die Beziehungen zwischen dem Ich und dem Unbewussten" ("The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious"), first published in 1928. However, it is also found in H.P. Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*, p. 134 ff. as well as Ernest Holmes' *Science of Mind*, pp.332-334.

184. For example, Cayce accepts that God, the soul, reincarnation, and psychic phenomena have a reality which is independent of our thoughts about them. Jung is ambiguous about such things, and in any case his system does not presuppose the literal, physical existence of any archetypal image. Despite superficial resemblances, Cayce's concept of "meeting self" (through karma) is very different from Jung's concept of integrating the shadow, and Cayce does not emphasize either a *conjunctio* of male and female elements or mandala imagery. Their respective approaches to myth are also worlds apart.

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 10

D. Theosophy and its heirs

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) was an outspoken, free-wheeling, cigar chomping Russian national who was raised in the Caucasus as a military dependent, and at the age of seventeen (i.e. in 1849) was married off to a general stationed in Armenia. A few months later she fled to Constantinople, where she found employment as a circus bareback rider, and spent the rest of her life traveling around the world. While Blavatsky's early itinerary is nearly as murky as her finances, she seems to have relocated first to Europe and the Near East (1849-1873), where she became involved in fringe Masonry; then to New York (1873-1878), where she encountered Spiritualism; and then to British India (1879-1885), where she came into contact with Hinduism, Buddhism, (185) and Sikhism. As the primary intellectual force behind the Theosophical movement, Blavatsky taught a mishmash of Eastern religions and Western occultism which was to influence nearly every occultist after her. Along the way, her activities won new respect for the civilizations of Asia on the part of the West as well as in the Indian subcontinent.

In 1875, while in New York, Blavatsky joined Henry Steele Olcott (1832-1907) in founding the Theosophical (186) Society, whose membership was drawn primarily from Spiritualist circles. The purposes of the Society were given as follows:

- 1 The formation of a universal human brotherhood without distinction of race, creed, caste, or colour,
- 2 The encouragement of studies in comparative religion, philosophy and science, and
- 3 The investigation of unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

In fact, the main impetus behind its founding was interest among a small group of people in messages which Madame Blavatsky claimed to have begun receiving from certain Oriental Masters, just as Spiritualist mediums received messages from their contacts in the spirit world. Blavatsky's Masters, however, were not dead, but existed physically in remote parts of the world. (187) At first these Masters boasted names like "Tuitit Bey," "Serapis Bey," and "Hilarion", and belonged to something called the "Brotherhood of Luxor" (essentially a quasi-Masonic fraternity devoted to helping worthy pupils advance on the spiritual path) with headquarters, appropriately enough, in Egypt. Much speculation has been aired as to Blavatsky's relationship with the real-life Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, a then-contemporary occult order based in Cairo. Later, the Masters evolved to take on more Indian (and then Tibetan) trappings, perhaps because Egypt (and then India) turned out not to be quite as remote as it must have seemed from New York.

At the same time as the founding of the Theosophical Society, Blavatsky wrote her first major work, *Isis Unveiled* (1877), which criticizes the prevailing attitudes of science and theology in answer to the raging question of Darwinian evolution. What is wrong with Darwinian evolution is that it does not go far enough since it fails to recognize that evolution embraces more than mere biology. Just as the physical world follows natural laws, so does the nonphysical world; and science and religion would benefit from studying these. Still, the bulk of *Isis Unveiled* is devoted to attacking existing belief systems rather than setting forth Blavatsky's own views. Interestingly, in light of her later writings, in *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky rejects reincarnation as superstition. (188)

Isis Unveiled was written at a time when Darwin's (and Wallace's) theory of evolution had widespread social consequences. Thomas Huxley's 1860 debate with Bishop Wilberforce--in which the latter came across as hidebound and reactionary--was something of a watershed event in this regard, pitting as it did science against established religion, with the issue of evolution as the deciding factor. In general,

the theory of evolution served as a catalyst for a social backlash against religion and religious values (in which category ethics was popularly included). For example, the popular reception of natural selection, which made the principle out to be violent and ruthless, inspired the Social Darwinism of Herbert Spencer and his sympathizers on the right as well as anarchist Nietzsche cults on the left. This in turn inspired various reactions from those who wished to salvage some aspect of religion. Some simply denied the truth of evolution, a view most famously championed by William Jennings Bryan in the 1925 Scopes Trial. Many religious people were willing to concede the reality of evolution, but felt that other, more important elements of their religions could be left as they were. Still others tried to reinterpret evolution itself so that it could be made to yield values similar to those championed by religions. This impulse provided the initial drive for the creation of "evolution of consciousness" theories such as those of Blavatsky, Henri Bergson, Ernst Cassirer, Jan Smuts, Erich Kahler, Jean Gebser, Erich Neumann, Aurobindo Ghose, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Julian Jaynes, and Ken Wilber. The question of the evolution of consciousness was by no means introduced by spiritually oriented writers, but has always been present in the mainstream of evolutionary biology. After all, Darwin wrote about the origin of human thought in *The Descent of Man* (1871) and *Origin, the Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872). The difficulty of explaining the gradual rise of complex structures (the eye being the stock example) led to the "emergent" evolutionary theories of C. Lloyd Morgan, Samuel Alexander, and others, which held that such structures emerge relatively suddenly, as if guided by some coordinating intelligence whose purpose is to guide life to increasingly higher "levels" (e.g. matter, life, mind, and spirit according to Morgan's enumeration). After Blavatsky, a certain breed of evolutionists of consciousness became convinced that religion and mythology can tell us something useful about the origins of human consciousness. For some, the significance of religion lies in its use of symbolism which reflects the actual, literal evolution of the human psyche; others point to its recognition of mystical states of awareness which anticipate the next phase of evolution; still others use otherwise improbable stories from religious and mythological sources as historical testimony to the thought processes of archaic peoples. Others posit some sort of teleological purpose or originating impulse to evolution to imbue it with meaning similar to that of religious myths of creation or eschatology. Blavatsky's genius was to interbreed evolutionary ideas from Samkhya with those of the West.

The Theosophical Society would not really come into its own until Blavatsky and Olcott set sail (with Olcott's money) to India, which they reached in 1879. The impetus behind their relocation was the lure of hidden Masters, who ostensibly directed their journey through messages delivered by various paranormal means. At this time, Blavatsky was in contact with at least one real Indian religious leader--Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the conservative Hindu renewal movement Arya Samaj. Leaders of the two groups agreed to establish the Theosophical Society as a branch of the Arya Samaj. Undoubtedly, neither side understood what it was getting into; and when their leaders finally met in person, bringing the Theosophical fantasy into a head-on collision with Indian reality, the deal fell through almost immediately. Still, for several years the "Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj," as Blavatsky's group continued to call itself until their formal break, retained loose ties with Dayananda's group.

Soon after its arrival, Theosophy gained adherents among the Anglo-Indian population, from which it spread throughout the English-speaking world. Like the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society attracted attention for its support of Indian culture, to the great consternation of British authorities. At the same time it spoke out against what it perceived as superstitions or distortions of the original religious teachings, such as the caste system. Blavatsky presented her teachings not as Hinduism or Buddhism *per se*, but as the core of truth behind all world religions and science to boot. The most memorable of Theosophy's political stances came in 1880, when Blavatsky and Olcott traveled to Ceylon. At the time, Ceylon was experiencing a resurgence of Buddhist identity as a backlash against abuses by Christian missionaries. (For example, the missionaries had persuaded Raj officials to recognize only Christian marriages, and to block the Buddhist equivalents of their church-run schools from forming.) Adding their voices to the fray, Blavatsky and Olcott arranged publicly to receive *pancha sila* ("the five precepts")--in effect, to declare their belief in Buddhism. They appear to have been the first white people to do so in modern times. While in retrospect Buddhism was never really the primary source of their spiritual beliefs, the gesture was much appreciated: and Olcott in particular went on to become an active if idiosyncratic participant in the Buddhist renaissance. For example, he

organized Buddhist-run schools in Ceylon, won the approval of various sects for a Buddhist creed of his own devising, wrote a Buddhist catechism, and designed a Buddhist flag which is still widely used.

As in America, the main source of Blavatsky's fame in India lay in her presumed contacts with the Masters (also known as Adepts, Initiates, Brothers, Mahatmas, and Secret Chiefs). By this point, their order was referred to as the Himalayan Brotherhood or the Great White Lodge. The putative director of the Theosophical Society was not Blavatsky but the Master Morya, (189) described as a Rajput prince. His colleague Koot Hoomi (or Kuthumi) was said to be a Kashmiri Brahmin. Other Masters from Blavatsky's Indian period include Djwal Khool (or Djwal Kul), the Maha Chohan, and Sanat Kumara. It must be admitted that none of their names or descriptions sound terribly convincing, especially since the Masters were now said to reside in Tibet. (190) Accordingly, Blavatsky claimed to have actually studied in Tibet for several years, where she was supposedly given advanced occult training. (In reality, she is unlikely to have made it any further than Ladakh, Sikkim, or Daijeeling from the Indian side or Astrakhan from the Russian side.) Gradually, the Masters' powers of telepathy and teleportation made the question of their physical residence academic, and they began to be conceived as incorporeal beings, like their Spiritualist counterparts. This opened the way for deceased or mythical religious figures such as Jesus, Buddha, Manu, and Maitreya to be gradually assimilated into the Theosophical pantheon.

Johnson points out that there is an alternative to either accepting Blavatsky's accounts of the Masters or dismissing them as fabrications, and suggests that they are disguised (or perhaps fantasized) accounts of her meetings with real people. For example, Johnson identifies Koot Hoomi with the Sikh activist Sirdar Thakar Singh Sandhanwalia, and Morya with Ranbir Singh, Maharaja of Kashmir. Such distortions make sense in view of the fact that the British authorities would have disapproved of native princes and religious leaders making common cause with one another (or with a Russian!) in favor of Indian self-assertion. Johnson further speculates that Blavatsky's followers invariably misunderstood this, supposing the Masters to be essentially magical beings. Their enthusiasm for the concept of the Masters inspired Blavatsky to elaborate on their stories, to the point where disguised fact was transformed into pure fiction. (191) My own view is that Johnson is probably right in tracing the inspiration for Blavatsky's Masters to real Asian religious and political leaders, but overly polite in supposing her to be in any way reluctant to make up details about them or forge letters from them. After all, the first letters appeared 1875, while Blavatsky was still in New York. (Johnson now agrees with this assessment.)

Sometimes the Masters communicated with their followers by appearing before them in person, as Morya had supposedly done before Blavatsky at London's Great Exhibition of 1851. Later, Cayce too would report being visited by a being wearing white robes and a turban. (192) The Masters were also capable of mental telepathy, through which means they assisted with the composition of *Isis Unveiled*. Most famously, they could precipitate written messages. Early Theosophists received letters from the Masters, which would miraculously materialize in unlikely places. Here is a sample courtesy of the Master Koot Hoomi (whose name, as usual, has been reduced to initials in imitation of the "pundits" who surreptitiously mapped Central Asia for the British):

The "friend" of whom the Lord Lindsay speaks in his letter to you, is, I am sorry to say, a true skunk *mephitus*, who managed to perfume himself with ess-bouquet ... and so avoided being recognized by his natural stench.... Though a poor sickly cripple, a paralyzed wretch, his mental faculties are as fresh and alive as ever to mischief... So-beware! --K.H. (193)

The information contained in these letters was compiled into a number of classic expositions of Theosophy, among them *The Occult World* (1881) and *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883), both by A.P. Sinnett. A scandal ensued when examples of plagiarism were discovered in the former, apparently drawn from a Spiritualist newspaper called *The Banner of Light*. Worse yet, in 1884 Richard Hodgson of the London Society for Psychical Research was called upon to investigate the phenomenon of letter precipitation. Hodgson based his scathing conclusions on the testimony of two disgruntled former employees. Emma and Alexis Coulomb, who accused Blavatsky of having authored the letters herself. Soon afterward a false back was discovered in a special shrine in which letters were wont to materialize. In the face of this evidence, many leading Theosophists (most notably Olcott, whom she

never forgave) conspicuously failed to rally to their founder's defense. Blavatsky left India in a huff in 1885, and settled in London in 1887, where she would remain until her death in 1891.

There she assembled her *magnum opus*, *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). The title was probably inspired by a term from Eliphas Levi, whose system similarly invokes the adepts of Eastern religions and Western occultism. Blavatsky's work consists of the cryptic *Stanzas of Dzyan*, interspersed with voluminous commentary. The *Stanzas* are purportedly based on a set of ancient Tibetan manuscripts, otherwise unknown to orientalists, written in the likewise unknown (but allegedly ancient and sacerdotal) language of "Senzar." Blavatsky claimed to have memorized the text during her novitiate in Tibet, and scholars have accused her of cribbing them from a wide variety of sources. Her prose is extraordinarily dense and difficult to read even for readers who are not bothered by the profusion of untranslated Sanskrit and Tibetan terms. While the work almost defies description, it basically describes the origins of the universe (Part One, "Cosmogogenesis") and humanity (Part Two, "Anthropogenesis"), as reflected in esoteric symbolism from India and the West. Blavatsky planned a third volume (on the lives of great occultists) as well as a fourth (giving instructions for the spiritual path), but died before these could be written. Additional volumes were eventually published, but Theosophical scholars disagree to what extent these contain authentic Blavatskian material or faithfully reflect her intended project.

Many themes of *The Secret Doctrine* are anticipated in *The Occult World* or *Esoteric Buddhism*. As in classical Hindu cosmology, *The Secret Doctrine* describes the universe as eternally oscillating between cycles of repose (*pralaya*) and activity (*manvantara*). *Manvantara* includes involution and evolution. Involution occurs when the unitary supreme spiritual reality (*Parabrahman*) brings forth plurality and materiality out of itself. This process is divided into seven aeons called "rounds," each lasting billions of years, of which we are living in the fourth. Evolution is the process whereby everything in the universe--from rocks to plants to animals to humans to the angelic planetary spirits--becomes aware of progressively higher planes, culminating in conscious unity with the divine. Reincarnation is the mechanism by which this is accomplished. Like involution, evolution is similarly divided into units and subunits of seven, so that we are living in the fifth subrace of the fifth race.

The universe is divided into units of seven not only diachronically but also synchronically, in the form of seven levels or planes of existence. In this system, the top three planes are named (highest to lowest) *atma* (which Blavatsky translates as the "divine"), *buddhi* ("spiritual"), and *manas* ("monadic"), borrowing terms mainly from the Samkhya system. (194) Below the Triad is the Quaternary, the part of the universe which participates in involution and evolution. Blavatsky gives the four lower levels (top to bottom) as *kama rupa* ("desire body"), *pranha rupa* or *jiva* ("energy body"), *linga sarira* ("astral body," borrowing a Hermetic term as a presumed functional equivalent), and *sthula sarira* (i.e. the physical body), with other sets of terms employed as well. The lower Quaternary suggests Aristotle's classification of mineral, vegetable, animal, and rational faculties in man, a gradation which was carried over into Iranian Sufism. (195) For Blavatsky, these seven levels encompass human nature as well as the nature of the universe. Like all existence, humans are in the process of evolving from the lower planes to the higher ones. Somewhere ahead of us in this grand scheme are the Masters, who are responsible not only for guiding individual seekers, but also for directing the course of human evolution in conformity with this cosmic design.

A few choice examples will serve to convey a sense of Blavatsky's influence. Many of the founders of the Indian National Congress were Theosophists, or at least influenced by Theosophy. Gandhi, as a young law student in England, had never read the *Bhagavad-Gita* before a Theosophist presented him with a copy of Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Song Celestial*. In Europe, poets such as Yeats and A.E., and painters like Kandinsky and Mondrian, made use of Theosophical themes. Many elements of the present-day New Age movement were first assembled by Theosophy. For example, it was a Theosophical revival of astrology that led to the newspaper horoscopes of the twentieth century. Furthermore, if today we speak of "consciousness raising", "good vibrations", or "reincarnation" (as opposed to "transmigration" or "metempsychosis"), we make use of language and ideas first popularized by Theosophy. So if Cayce was indeed influenced by Madame Blavatsky, as I argue, he is certainly in good company.

As recounted before, several of Cayce's friends had an interest in Theosophy, including Arthur Lammers and Morton Blumenthal; and while awake Cayce spoke before at least one Theosophical Society meeting (in Birmingham, Alabama). The sleeping Cayce is ambiguous as to whether Theosophy is a worthwhile spiritual path—although he seems to approve of those who study it as a part of their spiritual search. He tends to assume that the end of the search should be Christianity. In one place he says.

In seeking through all understandings, all interpretations, there may be gained something: if ye will not become confused by those who say, "Here! This way!" [262-89]

In another reading, he warns an inquirer with interests in Buddhism and Theosophy of an image depicted in his life's seal, namely Peter fleeing from the cross (3054-4). And when yet another person asked, "On which of the Masters of Wisdom should I meditate for spiritual guidance?", Cayce replied, "There's only one Master" (3545-1).

The Cayce readings refer to *The Secret Doctrine* just once by name, when an inquirer asks whether it would be beneficial to study the book, Cayce replies,

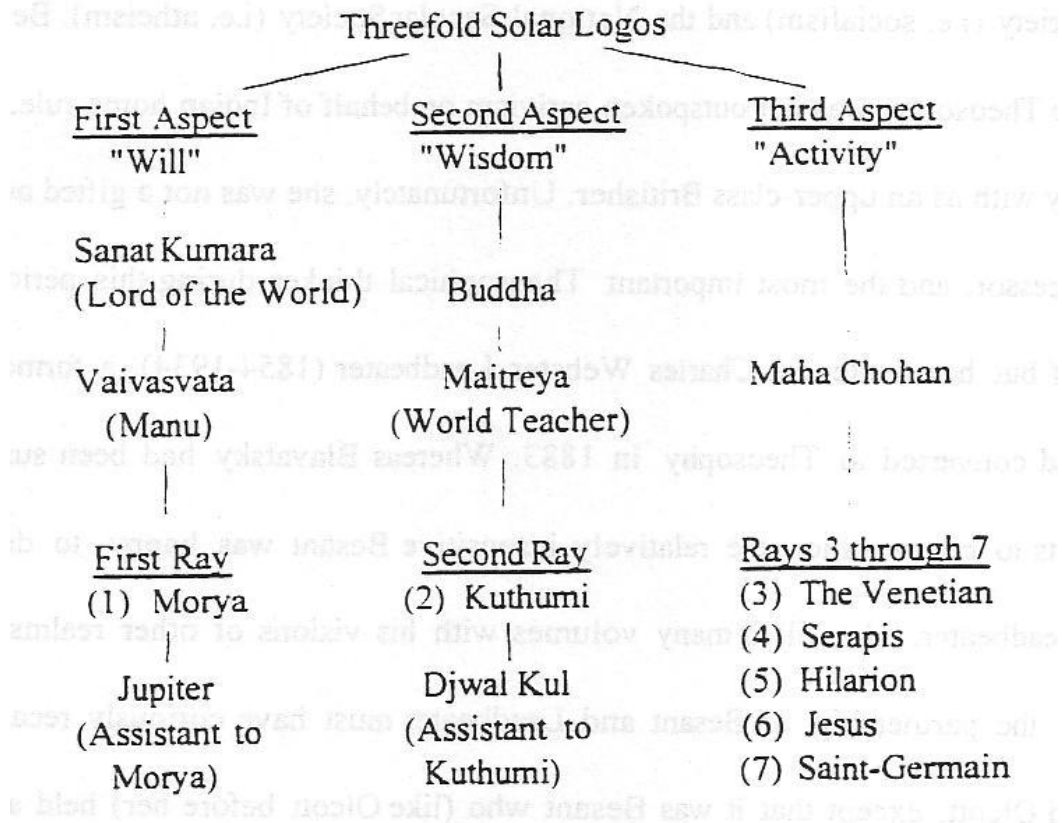
The study of any portion of same is of benefit, but only in so far as it will enable the self to open for that which may be given in its meditation. Commence, and then we may aid!

[470-10]

While his attitude is favorable, this extract does not indicate whether the sleeping Cayce was actually familiar with the work. Yet, as we will see in succeeding chapters, other aspects of the readings—especially their account of archaic human history—betray a dependence on either *The Secret Doctrine* or some other book containing the same ideas.

After Blavatsky's death in 1891 and Olcott's in 1907, leadership of the Theosophical Society passed on to Annie Besant (1847-1933), who prior to her conversion had been active in the Fabian Society (i.e. socialism) and the National Secular Society (i.e. atheism). Besant's great contribution to Theosophy was her outspoken activism on behalf of Indian home-rule, which she could get away with as an upper-class Britisher. Unfortunately, she was not a gifted occult writer like her predecessor, and the most important Theosophical thinker during this period was not Besant herself but her lieutenant Charles Webster Leadbeater (1854-1934), a former Anglican priest who had converted to Theosophy in 1883. Whereas Blavatsky had been suspicious of other claimants to clairvoyance, the relatively insensitive Besant was happy to delegate this function to Leadbeater, who filled many volumes with his visions of other realms. To many Theosophists, the partnership of Besant and Leadbeater must have curiously recalled that of Blavatsky and Olcott, except that it was Besant who (like Olcott before her) held authority in temporal matters while Leadbeater (like Blavatsky) possessed spiritual expertise. Leadbeater additionally drew upon his clerical background to organize something called the Liberal Catholic Church, which gave an esoteric spin to its Catholic liturgy. Scandal arose when Leadbeater was accused of molesting several boys in his charge, including young Krishnamurti. Leadbeater tried to explain that he had only been trying to teach the boys how to masturbate. The parents were unmoved, but their demands for Besant to punish Leadbeater resulted only in his temporary banishment.

It was Leadbeater who first worked out the details of the hierarchy of the Masters, in such works as *The Inner Life* (1910) and *The Masters and the Path* (1925). The divine organization chart looks something like this: (196)



The Solar Logos is the closest thing Theosophy has to a God, since it is omnipresent and supreme. (Its three aspects are identified with what Blavatsky calls *aima*, *buddhi*, and *manas*; or *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda*.) The Solar Logos is surrounded by seven planetary logoi, angelic beings who correspond to the "seven spirits which are before his throne" from Revelation 1:4. A more personal God-like being is Sanat Kumara, a "Lord of the Flame" who came to earth many aeons ago from the planet Venus. He resides at Shambhala in the Gobi Desert (formerly the Gobi Sea), from which he directs the course of human evolution. A number of Masters serve under him in various capacities. In answer to the question of whether there are any female Masters (Mistresses?), Leadbeater gives us the World Mother, whose position on the hierarchy is unclear. She was once Mary the mother of Jesus, and has also revealed herself as Kuan Yin. (197)

The seven rays are seven distinct channels by which the infinite spirit is expressed in matter. In the human realm, they respectively stand for (1) strength of will, (2) spiritual wisdom, (3) service to humanity, (4) harmony and beauty, (5) science and scholarship, (6) religious devotion, and (7) ceremonial activity. Over each presides the Chohan, or "Lord," whose name is given above. (The Maha Chohan has authority over five such Chohans.) These offices are somewhat fluid, so that as a Master evolves spiritually he may be promoted to positions of progressively greater responsibility. For example, Gautama Buddha once served as Bodhisattva or World-Teacher before yielding that position to Maitreya; while the sixth-ray office formerly occupied by Jesus has passed on to the soul known to us as Apollonius of Tyana and as Ramanuja. As for the soul known to us as Jesus, Leadbeater tells us that he has risen to become one with the Second Aspect of the Logos, and that Jesus was one of the incarnations of Maitreya. (198) (I am not sure how to reconcile these apparently conflicting descriptions.)

A number of talented Theosophists left the movement or were expelled, resulting in a fragmentation of the Theosophical movement. Most of the American lodges seceded from the Indian headquarters in 1895 at the behest of their leader, William Quan Judge, although they continued to consider

themselves Theosophists. Judge's successor was Katherine Tingley, who organized a utopian community at Point Loma, California.

In 1912, Austrian educator/occultist/agronomist/Goethe scholar Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) broke with the Theosophical Society, taking most of the German-speaking lodges with him. The most immediate causes of this split were Besant's displeasure with Steiner's emphasis on mystical Christianity(199) rather than the Eastern religions which she favored, coupled with widespread German frustration with Besant's promotion of young Krishnamurti as the long-awaited world messiah. In any case, the result was the formation of the Anthroposophical Society under Steiner's direction. The outbreak of World War I further polarized matters, ensuring that the rift would remain permanent.

The waking Cayce knew at least one Anthroposophical couple, Helene and Ernest Zentgraf of Staten Island, with whom the Cayces and Gladys Davis stayed while in New York in 1932. Carter adds that the Cayces "once went to visit the Steiner Threefold Farm, at Spring Valley, New York as guests of Ralph Courtney. (200) Cayce is asked about Steiner in several readings (e.g. 311-6, 3976-24), although these particular answers do not suggest that Cayce actually knew anything about Anthroposophy. In response to a question about the prospects for Steiner's threefold social order, (201) for example, Cayce explains that "there's only one Name given whereby man shall be directed" (3976-24). More recently, several prominent Cayceans (Mark Thurson, Edwin Johnson) have been involved with Steiner groups, and at one point Atlantic University officials held discussions with Steiner editor Robert McDermott about the possibility of his taking over as AU president.

Many similarities between Cayce and Steiner can be identified, although a comparison of the dates of Cayce's readings with those of Steiner's translations into English discourages the idea that Cayce could have been influenced by Steiner prior to the 1930's. Like Cayce but unlike Blavatsky. Steiner sees the life of Christ as the focal point of human evolution- an event for which the Essenes (and for Steiner, other mystery religions as well) had been preparing. Cayce's system of karmic astrology is remarkably suggestive of Steiner's cosmology. in which human souls spend time on other planets between incarnations. (In this case, both Cayce and Steiner may have been influenced by the writings of British Theosophical astrologers.) Like Cayce, Steiner places great emphasis on the role of the archangel Michael in guiding human evolution.(202)

Also, in a commentary on Revelation 13. Steiner gives the year 1933 as the time when Christ and Antichrist will return. (203) The intensity of their conflict, he says, will peak in 1998, a year which Cayce identifies with the conclusion of his predicted earth changes and the beginnings of the Second Coming of Christ (5748-5).

In 1919, Alice Bailey (1880-1949) was visited by the Master Djwal Kul, who assisted her with her first book, *Initiation, Human and Solar*. The following year, Bailey found herself ousted from the Theosophical Society, probably because Besant would not tolerate her claim to have received independent revelations. In 1923, Bailey founded her Arcane School, and established full moon meditation groups as its main practice. (The timing of group meditations to fall under the full moon is intended to recall not lycanthropy, but the Tibetan custom of conducting bimonthly temple ceremonies according to a lunar calendar.) Bailey emphasized the imminent return of the World Teacher known as Christ and Maitreya. The waking Cayce knew at least one person associated with the Arcane School, George M. Wolfe, who gave a talk on symbols at an early ARE Congress. (204) The sleeping Cayce was once asked about the Arcane School, and while his comments do not suggest that he actually knew anything about Bailey's movement. he nevertheless appears less than enthusiastic:

This [question] can be best answered in self when those suggestions here indicated are determined within self. This is not meant to be a finding of fault--with any: but rather that self KNOWS within self those that are the best channels. God is God of ALL, not just a chosen few who may appear to have more intellectual or physical or mental abilities than others... [2402-2]

According to correspondence attached to 2329-3, shortly before Cayce's death Bailey expressed an interest in meeting him.

The I AM movement was not a Theosophical offshoot *per se*, since neither of its early leaders appear to have belonged to the Theosophical Society; but its theology is clearly inspired by that of Blavatsky and Leadbeater. The movement's founder, Guy W. Ballard (1878-1939)--who later took the pen name of Godfre Ray King--reportedly met the legendary eighteenth-century alchemist, the Comte de Saint-Germain, at Mount Shasta. The I AM movement emphasizes "decreeing" (i.e. command-like prayers which make use of the holy name, "I AM"), the use of colors associated with the seven rays (especially violet), and the special role of Saint-Germain in the new dispensation. In addition, the I AM movement has a conservative, patriotic political outlook which sees America as a divinely-constituted civilization. Prior to World War II, Ballard supported the Silver Shirts, the American Nazi movement. In 1939, a minor scandal ensued when Ballard died without ascending bodily to heaven-- His widow, Edna Ballard, took over the role of messenger from the Masters, who now included the newly-minted Master Godfre (i.e. Ballard). In 1941, the I AM movement was convicted of mail fraud, on no other grounds than the fact that it was using the mails to solicit financial support for a religion which appeared obviously false to the postmaster. The decision was finally overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court. Even so, the I AM movement has kept a low profile ever since.

The sleeping Cayce sometimes makes use of the divine name "I AM" on his own initiative, for example when he says that "the I AM that seeks may gain, then, that access to the I AM that brought, brings, holds the worlds in their place" (254-85). Still, it is quite possible that he encountered this language through some movement other than the I AM movement. As in Ballard's theology, Cayce places the I AM presence within the human heart as well as 'in the heavens. The I AM movement's emphasis on the violet ray, however, is not shared by Cayce, whose remarks on color give emphasis rather to the color blue. While more than nine hundred of his health readings do recommend something called a Violet Ray device to treat everything from poor circulation to baldness to demonic possession, the name has nothing to do with the seven rays of Ballard or Leadbeater, but was inspired by the color of its electrical discharge. (205)

The I AM movement is mentioned by name in several readings. In answer to one inquirer who is wondering whether to join an I AM group, Cayce challenges,

Does this answer to that within which assures thee of those tenets that were the promptings in thy developing years? No,--turn to Him who ALONE is the way, the truth, the light! [2035-1]

Another inquirer, however, is told that

The 'I AM' movement is well, provided these are not imposed upon others. For it is the spirit of the Christ in which, through which we may obtain mercy and judgement. Hold fast to same!" [4055-2]

Yet another is told that although the I AM presence is indeed "the all-knowing within self between Ballard's system and the teachings of the Gospel of John as confirmed by our inner experience, "there is a slight variation" (1158-12). As for the Comte de Saint Germain (regarded by the I AM movement as equal in status with Christ). Cayce is characteristically ambivalent: while Saint Germain does take part in the activities of the Great White Brotherhood "when needed," their work is directed not by Saint Germain, but by "the Master of masters" (254-83).

185. Actually, since she lived among Kalmyck Mongols for a few years during her childhood, her encounter with Buddhism in India would not have been her first exposure to that religion.

186. H.P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, vol. I, p. 351

187. The term "theosophy" or its equivalents has been used by the neo-Platonist Ammonius Saccas, Rosicrucian author Johann Valentin Andreae (in his *Christianopolis*), and the Protestant mystic Jakob Boehme. In the early 1800's one Robert Hindmarsh even founded a "Theosophical Society" based on

Swedenborgianism, Mesmerism, and homeopathy. The word "theosophical" is also used of a certain species of Kabbalists.

188 . Blavatsky's idea of a secret society devoted to esotericism and the betterment of humanity owes much to the body of lore surrounding the Rosicrucians, a legendary order whose name first appeared in several early seventeenth-century tracts. These tracts claimed to be announcements from a secret knightly order following one Christian Rosenkreuz, who had brought back esoteric wisdom from the Islamic world. The announcements inspired much interest, and some aspirants circulated public replies petitioning for admission to the order. The title character of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's popular novel *Zanoni* (1842) is one of two surviving members of an occult order similar to the Rosicrucians, whose members are gifted with prolonged life and mastery of the Hermetic arts. In 1865, French Masons incorporated a "Rosicrucian" degree as the eighteenth grade of the Scottish Rite. Another possible source for the myth of the Masters is Strict Observance Freemasonry, which had a following in Russia prior to the 1780's (when Catherine the Great suppressed the order), and whose members owed allegiance to certain "unknown superiors" located in Egypt, India, and other farflung places. According to K. Paul Johnson (*The Masters Revealed*, pp. 20-22), Blavatsky's grandfather was a member of this order, and Blavatsky herself alludes to a clearly-related Masonic myth, identified as Russian, which places the Masters in Tibet.

189. Cayce refers to this Mahatma without admitting his existence in 2441-2, in which the inquirer "saw some very penetrating 'eyes' whom at the time I thought was the Christ. Since I believe they were the eyes of the Master M. Is this true?" To which Cayce replied, "Rather the indication of the abilities that lie within self to raise the vibration to such an extent as to bring light to the inner self. They were rather the eyes of the Master,--not of Mora or Marhi." (A note from Cayce's secretary, Gladys Davis, is appended which explains that she did not know how to spell these names.)

190. Whereas Egypt and India turned out to be fairly accessible to Theosophists, hardly any Westerners had been to Tibet. Not only were the Tibetan authorities often hostile to foreigners, all of the surrounding countries had compelling reasons for keeping one another out. China claimed authority over Tibet as a Chinese dependency, while Russia and British India vied for control of Central Asia in what became known as "the Great Game." Lurid accounts of Tibetan Lamaism including secret tantric rituals, magical powers, and the adoration of demons heightened the curiosity of Westerners. Otherwise, Tibet might have seemed no more inherently magical than (say) Iran.

191. K. Paul Johnson, *The Masters Revealed*, pp. 8-9.

192. e.g. Harmon Bro, *A Seer Out of Season*, p. 391.

193. A.T. Barker (transcriber), *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnet*, p. 37.

194. In the *Samkhyakarikas* of Ishvarakrishna *manas* and *buddhi* are two of twenty-five *tattvas* (i.e. principles of the universe). Samkhyha emphasizes the evolution of matter (*prakrti*) in the direction of consciousness (*purusha*) and back again during the stage known as *pralaya* or involution, in great cosmic cycles lasting many aeons. However, in Samkhya theory, *prakrti* is of an utterly different nature from *purusha* and can never reach it. The fact that Blavatsky replaces *purusha* with the Upanishadic and Vedantin *atma* or *atman* is consistent with her ultimately monistic worldview. Blavatsky holds that her Triad corresponds to the wellknown sets of three in other religious traditions, e.g. the Vedantin *sat* "reality", *chit* ("consciousness"), and *ananda* ("bliss"): the first three *sephirot* of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life: and the Christian Trinity.

195. Islam inherited from the Hellenistic world not only Aristotle but a fondness for septenary metaphysical schemes corresponding to the seven planetary spheres. As a result. a widespread Sufi classification scheme added to Aristotle's four levels. three higher. spiritual states culminating in union with God. For the Isma'ilis (and by extension, the Druze), the number seven has additional religious connotations. K. Paul Johnson (*Initiates of Theosophical Masters*, pp. 149-153) speculates that Blavatsky might have picked up the rudiments of the Isma'ili system either from Jamal-ad-Din "al-

Afghani" or from Druze informants in Lebanon. Another possible source for Blavatsky's septenary system is the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, in which the ten *sephiroth* occupy seven levels. Yet another would be those tantric systems which identify seven chakras.

196. After C.W. Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path*, p. 227 ff.

197. Ibid., pp. 251-253.

198. Ibid., pp. 259-260: 278.

199. After Blavatsky, Steiner's cosmology owes most to the angelic hierarchy of Pseudo-Dionysius, and to the *Mystical Chronology* of Trithemius, Abbot of Sponheim. The latter work divides human history into periods of several centuries each, with each successive period ruled by one of the planets and its corresponding archangel. The age of the sun, ruled by Michael, would begin in 1879, Steiner agrees that we are now living in the aeon of Michael, whose station is closest of all the angels to that of Christ. However, Steiner lengthens Trithemius' periods considerably, so that each planetary reign is made to correspond to one of Blavatsky's "rounds." Also, he changes the order of the planets so that earth is given fourth place (the mid-point.)

200. Mary Ellen Carter, *My Years With Edgar Cayce*, p. 108.

201. According to Geoffrey Ahern, *Sun At Midnight*, p. 64, the three components of Steiner's intended world commonwealth are: (1) a spiritual/cultural organization. (2) a human rights body, and (3) an alliance of producers, distributors, and consumers for the purpose of economic harmonization.

202 . At the same time, Michael is emphasized in other religious traditions as well. For example, the Mormon view of Michael makes him the third son of Jehovah (after Jesus Christ and Lucifer) and hold that he incarnated into the flesh as Adam.

203. As recorded in the preface of Emil Bock, *The Apocalypse of St. John*.

204. Mary Ellen Carter, *My Years With Edgar Cayce*, p. 115.

205. Gladys Davis Turner, *An Edgar Cayce Home Medicine Guide*, p. 110 ff.: also Reba Ann Karp, *Edgar Cayce Encyclopedia of Healing*, p. 517 ff. The Violet Ray was the popular name for what is now generally known as a high frequency device. i.e. high voltage (50.000 volts)/low amperage (only a few milliamperes) source of static electricity. The appliance was commonly available in hardware stores during the first few decades of the twentieth century, and thought by some to have medical benefits when applied topically or along the spine.

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 11

E. The Metaphysical movement

The Metaphysical movement is traditionally conceived as encompassing Phineas Quimby, Christian Science, and the various New Thought churches. However, the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), whose writings predate them all, is an inescapable part of the movement. Under neo-Platonist and Swedenborgian inspiration, Emerson (a lapsed Unitarian minister) taught an "idealistic", "Transcendentalist" worldview (both names were then in current use in German philosophy in the wake of Kant and Hegel) in which spirit or mind enjoys primacy over the world of matter or appearance. (206) Emerson also taught the existence of the "over-soul" (in the eponymous essay), a universal level underlying and uniting all human minds, a concept which seems to have been inspired by the neo-Platonic *anima mundi* in combination with the Upanishadic *Brahman*. Other important themes include Emerson's exaltation of nature as divine (or a reflection of the divine), (207) and his admiration of Asian religions. In the late nineteenth century, Emerson's writings were highly influential, so much so that even very moderately educated Americans could hardly have avoided his ideas. However, Emerson did not attempt to use his philosophy to heal people of their diseases or help them solve other types of problems, as the Metaphysicians were famous for doing.

The Metaphysical movement is more usually traced to Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802-1866), who worked as a Maine clockmaker before becoming a metaphysical healer. Quimby began his career by magnetizing one Lucius Burkmar and instructing him psychically to diagnose illnesses, much like Cayce a century later (or Victor with de Puysegur earlier). Later Quimby discovered that he could direct Burkmar silently, through mental commands. So far Quimby's approach differed little from that of other Mesmerists. By 1862, however, Quimby realized that the specifics of Burkmar's prescriptions were not the cause of the patient's recovery—since

Burkmar on one occasion substituted a simple homeopathic remedy for a medical one which the patient in question could not afford—but that the patient's faith in the treatment was the crucial factor. Homeopathy was effective for patients who believed in it, and the same was true of every other type of medicine. When Burkmar temporarily ran off with another Mesmerist, Quimby changed his technique. The prodigal Burkmar soon returned, complaining of a number of ailments which Quimby proceeded to heal by suggestion, assisted by the laying on of hands. Over time, Quimby came exclusively to perform spiritual healing:

To illustrate: suppose a patient calls on Dr. Q. for examination. No questions are asked on either side. They sit down together. He has no knowledge of the patient's feelings through his natural senses, till after having placed his mind upon them. Then he becomes perfectly passive, and the patient's mind being troubled [this] puts him into a clairvoyant state, thus [he is in] two places at once; when he takes their feelings, accompanied by their state of mind and thoughts. A history of all their troubles thus learned, together with the name of the disease, he relates [this] to the patient. (208)

(This passage was written by Quimby, despite its use of the third person.) Quimby eventually discovered that the patient's physical presence was in fact unnecessary, and accordingly began his lucrative but controversial practice of healing through the mail.

Quimby views God and the Christ spirit in Impersonal terms, as a kind of infinite source of goodness, and sees Jesus primarily as a faithful human exemplar of what he at one point actually refers to as "Christian science." (209) While Quimby is never specific about the afterlife, he does speak of a "next world" and refer to belief in death as "error." (210) Quimby often contrasts his spiritual "Science" with the materialist perspective, calling the former "Truth" and the latter "error." Similar language had

been used by Andrew Jackson Davis, who urged his readers to "Fear not, for Error is mortal and can not live, and truth is immortal and cannot die." (211) For Quimby, belief in the reality of disease is an error perpetuated by the religious, educational, and medical establishments, none of which he approves of. This aspect of his perspective set the dominant tone of the teachings of his pupil. Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910).

Quimby never established a movement or institution on his own, and trained relatively few practitioners. Besides Eddy. Quimby's other students (most memorably. Warren Felt Evans and Julius and Annetta Dresser) saw their work as that of healers. not of clergymen or clergywomen. By contrast, Eddy's healing career brought her enough followers for her to now be remembered as the "Founder" and "Leader" of the Church of Jesus Christ. Scientist. (In her lifetime she was referred to as "Mother," hence the name of the Mother Church 'in Boston.) Christian Scientists tend to downplay Quimby's influence on Eddy. preferring instead to view their founder's writings as the exclusive product of her own genius coupled with divine inspiration. In any case. after being miraculously cured by Quimby in 1862. Eddy studied under him for three months. Her essential insight into Christian Science came in 1866, according to her recollection. In 1875 she wrote *Science and Health* (with further revisions until 1910). to which was later appended a new section called *Key To the Scriptures*. The work was heavily, though not exclusively. influenced by Quimby's ideas. Later, in the face of competition from other students of Quimby's. Eddy would distance herself from Quimby, claiming to have discovered the central truths of Christian Science on her own. Thus, the issue of Eddy's borrowings from Quimby has inspired ceaseless debate between their respective partisans. Contributing to the uncertainty was the fact that the Quimby manuscripts were not published until 1921, so that until that time neither side could be certain of what Quimby had actually taught without engaging in substantial research.

The basis of Eddy's theology is her assumption that an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God would not permit evil to occur. Therefore no evil can possibly exist, despite our apparent experiences to the contrary. Evil, including disease, is an illusion which will disappear when we finally manage to accept the truth that the world is perfect. Our persistent refusal to do so is not so much "evil" as "error." Christian Science is therefore capable of striking at the root cause of disease by replacing error with truth. A somewhat different formulation of Eddy's theology is to say that all matter--and by extension. disease--is unreal. Therefore, if the mind refuses to believe in disease, it will go away. A crucial difference between Eddy's theology and other Metaphysical writers is that Quimby and most other New Thought figures see thought as capable of creating anything, good or evil (since matter is a mere shadow of the mind), and consequently focus on persuading people to change their attitude. Eddy, by contrast, sees goodness as something which is already present as an inherent part of the universe, and evil as illusory. Accordingly, she instructs patients not to pay any heed to their illusory complaints. but to simply have faith in the inherent flawlessness of God's creation. This, she promises, will result in the stripping away of all obscurations to our recognition of our own God-given health, Harkening back to Emerson's over-soul. Eddy taught that there is no difference between "soul" and "spirit," (212) or between the human "spirit" and the Holy "Spirit," Just as God is one and indivisible, so are we. Furthermore, just as God is infinite and omnipotent, so are we when we rightly understand our true nature. Illness occurs when we lose sight of this: the purpose of Christian Science is to remind us of it.

The procedure taught by Eddy requires the assistance of a certified Christian Science practitioner, whose role is to guide patients back to a correct view of their true nature. At this point the illness will be revealed to be illusory. or so the theory goes. Eddy discouraged her followers from resorting to *materia medica* on the principle that such action only serves to affirm the existence of the illusory disease. "If Mind is foremost and superior." she writes. "let us rely upon Mind. which needs no cooperation from lower powers. even if these so-called powers are real." (213) A common misconception among outsiders is that Christian Scientists are expected to abstain from all types of medical attention other than spiritual healing. However. Christian Scientists are allowed to visit dentists, ophthalmologists, and the like, and if necessary may undergo surgery. Anesthetics are permissible, on the theory that without them the patient may be unable to concentrate on prayer in order to overcome belief in pain. Eddy herself wore glasses and dentures, and even accepted shots of morphine. (214) Eddy's healing method consists of "affirmations". in which the patient affirms the

existence of a healthy state (e.g. "I have a perfect liver"), along with "denials", in which the patient rejects the illness in question as nonexistent (e.g. "This disease has no power over me"). Eddy seems to have personally made use of physical manipulation as well as the laying on of hands. (215) Sometimes the practitioner attempts orally to persuade the patient of the unreality of the illness in question, while sometimes the practitioner directs herself silently to the problem. The theoretical basis for this is unclear. Who is the practitioner trying to convince, herself or the patient? And what is the medium--telepathy? Intercessory prayer? The practice raises the disturbing possibility of using the technique to harm rather than heal; and sure enough, we find Eddy complaining of "mental malpractice" on the part of her enemies. (216)

At first Eddy simply taught students on an individual basis, like Quimby before her. During the 1870's and 1880's she experimented with a wide variety of organizational structures for her work, culminating in the 1892 establishment of the Church of Christ, Scientist under a board of directors chosen by her. Eddy retained strict control of the organization, retaining for herself the power to approve all appointments. While technically Christian Science churches were organized according to a congregational system, all officers had to be members in good standing of the Mother Church- which was controlled by a self-perpetuating Board of Directors with power to strip dissidents of their membership. Eddy also regulated the training of Christian Science practitioners to a high degree, with many prominent teachers having been expelled over the years.

Ever since its inception, Christian Scientists have been forced to defend their views in court—practitioners, for practicing medicine without a license; ordinary believers, for refusing medical attention for themselves or their children. In 1918, two bodies within Christian Science (the Board of Trustees of the Publishing Society and the Board of Directors of the Mother Church) concluded what became known as "the Great Litigation," over control of Christian Science publications. The point at issue was whether the Directors had the right to remove Trustees from office, when the trust by which the Trustees operated had allowed such action only under circumstances which could no longer technically be fulfilled due to a reorganization of the church. The Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts decided in favor of the Mother Church.

One other noteworthy aspect of Eddy's theology is her use of the expression "Father-Mother God," language which probably originated with another sect with a female founder, the Shakers. From Eddy it spread to some New Thought groups, where it aroused controversy at the turn of the century (although by now it is commonplace and has spread to many other denominations). The fact that Christian Science practitioners were overwhelmingly female was one of the most noticeable features of the new movement, and this demographic tendency was carried over into most of the New Thought denominations. It is often suggested that the church's interest in affirming the femininity of God is related to the preponderance of women among its leaders. Cayce uses the phrase "Father-Mother-God" nine times, mostly in prayers or affirmations.

Like Quimby and Eddy, Cayce accepts the primacy of mind over matter, and recommends the practice of spiritual healing,

There are in truth no incurable conditions ... for the condition is the breaking of a law, and the healing forces will of necessity become the compliance with other laws that meet the needs of the condition. The healing depends upon the individual, and the attitude taken toward conditions... [3744-1]

In places, Cayce even attributes illness to "error," as Davis, Quimby, and Eddy do. He asks, "When there are rebellions of body or mind against such [Christ], is there any wonder that the atoms of the body cause high blood pressure or cause itching, or cause running sores, or cause a rash, or cause indigestion?" [3174-1]

At the same time, while admitting the possibility of dramatic healing as a result of changed spiritual attitudes, Cayce's emphasis on karma means that such healing cannot be taken for granted. While it is true that in Cayce's system karma is thought to be no longer applicable once its lessons are learned, the process of changing spiritual attitudes is assumed to be rather lengthy. Instantaneous transformation is the exception, not the rule. Cayce is less dismissive of the constraints of the material

world, which he sees as existing for a reason. Consequently, he does not join Eddy in her rejection of *materia medica*.

A number of people were attracted to Eddy's theology, but grew uncomfortable either with her personal style or with the strictures of the church which she founded. Among them was one of Eddy's own students, Emma Curtis Hopkins (1855-1925), who served as editor of the *Christian Science Journal* until 1885. The ultimate root of the falling-out between Eddy and Hopkins remains unclear, but was probably based on personal conflicts rather than theological differences. In any case, Hopkins left Eddy to found the Christian Science Theological Seminary (an independent institution). Many of Hopkins' students--or in some cases, her students' students--would go on to found most of the important New Thought denominations. Her students included Charles and Myrtle Fillmore (Unity School of Christianity); Ernest Holmes (Religious Science); Annie Rix Millitt (Homes of Truth); Malinda Cramer (Divine Science), and Kate Bingham, teacher of Nona Brooks (Divine Science). This is not to suggest that Hopkins' teachings were invariably the primary influence on her students' thought, however. At first, the name "Christian Science" was extended to all of these movements (over Eddy's vigorous objections), but by the 1890's the name "New Thought" came to be used instead. "New Thought" is actually a collective name for the movement as a whole, and is not generally used in the names of its constituent denominations.

Hopkins's students would have made a formidable denomination had they cooperated more closely. Instead, New Thought teachers in different cities tended to start their own organizations, often limited to one or two cities. The most successful movements were the Unity School of Christianity, Religious Science (now divided into two independent bodies), and Divine Science. However, the New Thought movement has always been home to many more ephemeral denominations, as well as independent churches with no denominational affiliation. (A contemporary example would be the ministry of Robert Schuller.) In addition, New Thought ideas were adopted by a number of individual teachers who nevertheless chose to remain within their old churches (e.g. Norman Vincent Peale, a Reformed minister). Rabbi Morris Lichtenstein started a Jewish Science synagogue in New York City, partly in order to lessen the number of Jews defecting to Christian Science. Perhaps the farthest-flung New Thought offshoot is Japan's Seichono Iye, founded by Masahara Taniguchi in 1921.

The Unity School of Christianity was founded by Myrtle Page Fillmore (1845-1931) of Kansas City, Missouri and her husband, real-estate agent Charles Fillmore (1854-1948). In 1886 Myrtle was healed of tuberculosis by one of Hopkins's students, who convinced her that "I am a child of God and therefore do not inherit sickness." (217) As a result, Myrtle and later Charles decided to dedicate their lives to God, trusting in him for their health and prosperity. Over the 1880's they attended lectures by a number of Hopkins's students and eventually enrolled in Hopkins's Christian Science Theological Seminary, culminating in their 1891 ordination at her hands as ministers of "Christian Science." That same year the Fillmores ceased using the name "Christian Science" to refer to their own work--not because they recognized Eddy's exclusive claim to the name, but in order to avoid confusion. "Unity" first arose as the name of a magazine (previously known as *Christian Science Thought*), then in 1903 as the name of a building fund ("the Unity Society of Practical Christianity"). The word refers to what the founders perceived as the common teaching of all religions, namely oneness with God. (218)

In 1890, Myrtle organized the Society for Silent Help (later Silent Unity), whose members prayed for all those who requested it. Silent Unity has existed continuously ever since, and today the organization receives millions of prayer requests annually by mail or telephone. Other prayer groups as well as study groups came to be formed elsewhere, many of which were ultimately organized as independent churches in their own right. In 1906, the Fillmores had themselves and a number of others ordained as Unity ministers (as opposed to Christian Science ministers). That same year Unity built its first church building at Lee's summit, Missouri, a suburb of Kansas City. (Their land is now separately incorporated as Unity Village, Missouri.) The Unity School of Christianity's formal existence began in 1914, as a union of the Unity Tract Society and Silent Unity. Governance was established on a congregational basis, but ministers had to receive training at Unity headquarters and be approved by the field department, a division of Unity formed for the purpose of evaluating the theological integrity of would-be Unity churches. Ultimate authority lay with a centralized, self-perpetuating board. Leadership of Unity has so far been retained by descendants of the founders.

A number of pamphlets, texts, and other material were prepared, and in 1910 a group called Silent Seventy was formed to arrange for their free distribution. Besides *Unity*, the most noteworthy among these are the magazines *Daily Word* (since 1924), the children's magazine *Wee Wisdom* (1893-1991), and a basic Unity text, Emilie H. Cady's *Lessons in Truth* (first published in installments 1894-1896). Unity's refusal to charge for this literature is in keeping with its philosophy of trusting that God will provide for all needs. (Intriguingly, the same principle prevents the denomination from operating according to an annual budget.) In addition to printed material, Unity has also arranged for its radio ministry to be broadcast nationwide, and from 1924 to 1934 even operated its own radio station (WOQ in Kansas City). Cayce could very easily have listened to Unity programs over the radio had he been so inclined.

Today, Unity churches vary greatly in tone and demographics, with the quality of the minister being the single most important determinant. Ministers appear to come in several main varieties: the slick car-salesman type, the aged spiritual theoretician type; the alpha female type (these often turn to spirituality in mid-life); and the couple. The younger, more upbeat churches will engage in such unsolemn observances as the Hug of Peace, or the singing of "Happy Birthday" to everyone who is having a birthday that month. Hymns range in solemnity from the signature anthem, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me" to something called "New Thought, New Thought" (sung to the tune of "New York, New York"). At this writing, many Unity churches host study groups devoted to *A Course in Miracles*, *The Celestine Prophecy*, *Conversations With God*, or other New Age literature.

Unity and the ARE resemble one another in that they both emphasize Christ but affirm the validity of other religions; encourage the same type of meditation; and allow (or encourage, in the case of the ARE) belief in reincarnation. Organizationally, for many years both were led by descendants of the founders (for Unity this is still true) and denied being a church or religion (as the ARE still does). Cayce was aware of Unity and favorably disposed towards it. In 1932, the waking Cayce wrote Mrs. 2110 that

Unity is doing a very wonderful work, I think. For many years I have been in touch with some of their leaders and teachers. We gave some information once for Mr. Fillmore. [2155-2 correspondence]

No further information or confirmation is available regarding this rather intriguing statement by Cayce.

Religious Science was founded by Ernest Shurtleff Holmes (1887-1960), a Maine native who had been influenced primarily by the writings of Emerson and Thomas Troward (1847-1916), an English judge in the Punjab who became an influential spokesperson for New Thought after his retirement. In 1917, Holmes joined his older brother Fenwicke in Los Angeles, where they began their respective careers as New Thought teachers. In 1925, the brothers split up in order for Fenwicke to take advantage of an upsurge of Metaphysical interest on the east coast. In Los Angeles, Ernest Holmes studied under Emma Curtis Hopkins. Later he wrote his most influential work, *Science of Mind* (1926) under what he felt was divine inspiration. This was by no means the limit of his paranormal involvement—according to Braden, (219) Holmes occasionally diagnosed illnesses clairvoyantly, as did his wife Hazel Foster Holmes. In 1927, Holmes organized an "Institute of Religious Science and Philosophy" and arranged for the publication of *Science of Mind* magazine. A permanent building was finally acquired ten years later, in 1937. While Holmes is seldom mentioned in the readings (e.g. 2138-1), Melton names him as the primary avenue of New Thought influence on the readings. (220)

At first, Holmes objected to attempts by his students to form Churches of Religious Science, but he had little effective control over them. By the time Holmes was won over to the social and tax benefits, a number of such churches were already in operation, and had banded together as the International Association of Religious Science Churches. Holmes presented his own proposal for a denominational structure resembling that of Unity, in which outlying churches were subject to a centralized field department, and ultimate authority lay with the Institute's board of trustees. However many of the new churches were unwilling to yield their independence to what some took derisively to referring to as "the Mother Church," after the Christian Science institution. The result was a 1953 schism in which approximately forty-seven churches joined the newly-organized Church of Religious Science, and

nineteen remained with what is now called Religious Science International. Still others remained independent of both sides.

Divine Science is a fusion of two movements founded respectively by Nona Brooks (1861-1945), a Pueblo, Colorado schoolteacher who was healed of a throat condition by one of Hopkins's students: and Malinda Cramer of San Francisco, who had been an invalid before learning what she came to refer to as "Divine Science." In 1892, Cramer organized the International Divine Science Association, which despite the name was ecumenical across the various New Thought groups. Her emerging reputation as a New Thought teacher encouraged Brooks's sister, Fannie James, to correspond with her. In 1898, after Cramer and Brooks had conducted unrelated healing ministries and classes for many years. Brooks had herself ordained by Cramer and returned to Colorado to found the first Divine Science Church (in Denver). The church also offered home-study courses and a prayer ministry similar to Silent Unity. Other churches formed over succeeding decades. and in 1957 these formed the loose-knit Divine Science Federation for the purpose of arranging for book publication and ministerial education. Apart from the founders. the most influential Divine Scientist is Emmet Fox (1886-1951). who shopped around for a denominational affiliation only after building a thriving congregation.

The International New Thought Alliance (INTA) is not so much a denomination as a loose confederation of usually like-minded religious groups who nevertheless insist on retaining full autonomy. INTA grew out of meetings of the more localized New Thought Federation and the International Metaphysical League around the turn of the century, with the former finally absorbing the latter in 1904. The name "New Thought Alliance" was adopted in 1916. Most but not all of the New Thought churches maintain membership in INTA. The main exception is Unity, whose founders disapproved of many of the Spiritualist or occult ideas of other New Thought leaders. Even so, the Fillmores did participate in several exploratory congresses in 1903

and 1904; Unity briefly joined INTA during 1919-1922, and many individual Unity churches hold INTA membership. (Individuals, congregations, or denominations may join.) More recently, in the wake of late-1980's era conflict over what was sometimes seen as New Age encroachment, one group (Teachings of the Inner Christ, Inc.) was actually expelled from INTA for the trance-channeling practice of its leader, Ann Meyer McKeavor.

To go into the theological differences between the various New Thought groups would be far too tedious-after all, few of them were particularly creative (although there are important stylistic differences), and all the main groups seem to have been influenced by one another's writings. While diversity certainly exists within the New Thought movement. this is not primarily a function of group, affiliation. Here I will venture a few general observations.

Whereas Christian Science focuses on healing as the primary result of a changed spiritual attitude, many New Thought teachers extend the principle to other areas of life. As Holmes puts it,

When we use our creative imagination in strong faith, it will create for us, out of the One Substance, whatever we have formed in thought. In this way man becomes a Co-Creator with God. (221)

Mental events are by no means private and inconsequential, but possess considerable independence from the mind which gives rise to them, and possess the power to shape the material world. (This calls to mind the Theosophical doctrine of thought-forms, in which thought patterns can take on a life of their own separate from the thinker.) Again, as Holmes writes. "Thoughts are things." (222) One is therefore enjoined to banish negative thinking from one's mind not only with respect to health, but in all things--otherwise the mind may proceed to create the event that was imagined. Cayce similarly holds that "Mind is the builder and that which we think upon may become crimes or miracles. For thoughts are things..." (906-3). Each human soul is thus a "co-creator with God" (5259-1). However, the conclusion which Cayce draws is not so much that we should strive to banish fear from our thoughts, but that we should choose spirituality and selflessness over materiality and selfishness.

New Thought writers identify a number of universal spiritual laws for seekers to apply in their lives. For example, Holmes refers to the Law of Attraction, (223) the Law of Faith, the Law of Consciousness, and the Law of Cause and Effect. (224) These all refer essentially to the same process in which the universe brings to us that which our consciousness attracts. The first person to identify spiritual laws as such appears to have been Andrew Jackson Davis, who refers to the "Universal Law of Cause and Effect." (225) The conviction that these spiritual laws are every bit as dependable as scientific ones is the reason why several Metaphysical denominations incorporate the word "science" into their names. Meanwhile, the Cayce readings identify by name the Law of Attraction (2410-1), the Law of Cause and Effect (288-29), the Law of Love (3744-4), the Law of Relativity (900-24), and the Law of One (1010-12), among others. Since it rarely happens that the reading in which a law is named will also be a reading in which that law is satisfactorily explained, I am unable to match these laws with their descriptions, such as: "Like attracts like" (349-17); "As ye sow so shall ye reap" (1650-1); "What ye expect, ye receive" (945-5); "Nothing happens by chance" (136-2); "Knock and it will be opened unto you" (294-183); "Ask and ye shall receive" (254-55); and "As ye aid others, more help comes to thee" (1709-7). (I presume that the reader will recognize the biblical allusions: in fact this sort of exegesis is an important aspect of New Thought writing.) For Cayce, fulfillment of these laws need not necessarily occur in this lifetime, but may be delayed over the course of multiple incarnations.

One particularly important area in which universal law may be applied is the financial. The idea of "supply" or "prosperity consciousness" was a major innovation of New Thought writers. Although the concept is present in Christian Science, it has always suffered neglect compared to that denomination's emphasis on healing. Charles Fillmore bravely adapts the Twenty-Third Psalm to express this principle:

The Lord is my banker; my credit is good.
He maketh me to lie down in the consciousness of omnipresent abundance....
Thy silver and thy gold, they secure me.
Thou preparest a way before me in the presence of the collector;
Thou fillest my wallet with plenty ... (226)

The idea of prosperity consciousness spread well beyond New Thought circles, and Cayce (in common with innumerable television evangelists) endorses it in a number of readings. A distinction should be made between the principle that as one uses what one has "then MORE may be GIVEN thee. Remember the talents!" (2254-1); or that one's financial situation will improve if only one can muster enough faith or finer receptivity; that one should mentally visualize the desired riches (e.g. 11-6); or that one should give more in order to receive more (e.g. 1532-1).

The New Thought movement popularized the use of thought-for-the-day(227) style "affirmations" or "meditations" in order to attune oneself to the divine. The justification is that since mind controls matter, by mentally affirming something to be true in spite of any evidence to the contrary, one can make it true. Here is an example of an affirmation, in this case composed by Hopkins and circulated widely by her students:

O countenance! Beholding me, looking toward me through the ages. Breath of the everlasting life in me, and manna to my fadeless substance, Thy name, which folds me round with tenderness, is Jesus Christ. (228)

In the same tradition, each chapter of *A Search for God* begins with an "affirmation" composed by Cayce, although in the study group readings he variously refers to them as affirmations, meditations, or prayers. Meditation as a devotional practice is also common in New Thought circles, e.g. in church services (often with soft organ music playing in the background). The most typical methods involve contemplation of a scriptural passage or affirmation, or else a mental opening-up to God.

Many New Thought writers have been influenced by ideas from Eastern religions and other non-Christian sources, often through the medium of Transcendentalism or Theosophy. For example, both of the Fillmores as well as Emmet Fox accept reincarnation and karma. (229) although the idea has remained controversial in those denominations. The first chapter of Emma Curtis Hopkins's *Twelve*

Studies In High Mysticism manages to cite a Vedic hymn, two Upanishads, the *Bhagavadgita*, the *Tao Te Ching*, the *Zend-Avesta*, the *Vendidad*, Buddha, Hermes Trismegistus, Appolonius of Tyana, Plato twice, and "Amen-Ra," in addition to eight church fathers and a dozen books of the Bible. Malinda Cramer quotes from the *Bhagavadgita* and mentions Kabbalah and Hermeticism. (230) Charles Fillmore included articles by Spiritualists and Theosophists in his magazine. (231) Ernest Holmes was an avid reader of Aurobindo. Two important early figures in the development of New Thought were Swami Abhedananda of the Vedanta Society, who spoke at several New Thought congresses; and "Swami Ramacharaka" (nee William Walker Atkinson), the author of a number of Metaphysical books published by the Yogi Publication Society of Chicago in the 1920's and 1930's.

Today, some New Thought organizations (representing the vast majority of believers) emphasize Christian elements, some do not. INITA dropped all references to Christ in its Common Statement of Belief in 1957. Within the Christian-oriented New Thought groups as well as others who allude to Christ from time to time, a distinction is usually made between the principle of Christhood and the human being known as Jesus who achieved, revealed, or exemplified it. Warren Felt Evans, for example, writes that Jesus "was not born Christ any more than Abraham Lincoln was born president of the United States."(232) In this view, Christ consciousness is not something unique to Jesus, but is present within all of us. In place of the traditional concept of "atonement" through the blood of Christ, the standard New Thought interpretation is to parse the English word so that it yields "at-one-ment,"(233) referring to the goal of becoming aware of this inherent unity. Cayce also uses the expression "at-one-ment" (e.g. 2174-3), and in general follows the usual New Thought Christology quite closely. Another Christological pattern popular in New Thought views Christ as "the Fulfilling of the Law"(234) meaning that he demonstrated mastery of universal laws such as those mentioned above. Cayce accepts this teaching as well.

The Religious Science and Divine Science bodies appoint practitioners who are authorized to conduct spiritual healing and other prayer-based services, somewhat like their counterparts in Christian Science. Unity has never recognized practitioners *per se*, but requires would-be Unity teachers to take courses at Unity Village and receive a license in an entirely separate track from ministerial training. The ARE has no official means of licensing teachers or practitioners except perhaps by hiring them or featuring them at conferences, although at one point a system of teacher certification was contemplated.

The Cayce readings refer to New Thought denominations from time to time, 3063-1 recommends "Divine Science, Unity, or Christian Science; provided they do not require that the body be kept from making those administrations for the physical and mental self." Except for Christian Science, Cayce appears to regard these movements favorably, without any of the qualifications which inevitably accompany his praise of other religious movements such as Spiritualism or Theosophy. Today, ARE functions bear more than a passing resemblance to New Thought services, and many ARE conferences and retreats are held in Unity churches and the like. A retreat jointly-sponsored by Unity and ARE was held at Unity Village in 1996, after a number of previous ARE events held there. (Charles Thomas Cayce met his eventual wife, Leslie Goodman Cayce, at just such an occasion.) The ARE Library has acquired the collection of the Metaphysical Society of San Francisco, established by Homes of Truth founder Annie Rix Militz.

206. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature." parts VI and VII: also "The Transcendentalist."

207. Cayce joins Emerson in his celebration of nature. For example. 5747-1 asks "How is the best way to explain God to a child under twelve years of age?" Cayce answers. "In nature. As the unfolding of that that is seen ABOUT the child itself, whether in the grasses, the flowers, the birds, or what: for each are an expression of the Creative Energies in its activity, and the sooner EVERY SOUL would learn that they themselves are a portion of everything about same. with the ability within self to make one's self WITH that that brought ALL into being, the change is as that of service in its NATURALNESS."

208. Horatio Dresser (ed.). *The Quimby Manuscripts*, p. t 9 t.
209. Ibid., pp. 272, 388.
210. Ibid., pp. 136, 407.
211. Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Principles of Nature*.... p. I.
212. Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health*, ch. 14.
213. Ibid.. ch. 6.
214. Charles S. Braden, *Spirits In Rebellion*, pp. 37-38.
215. Ibid., p. 337.
216. Ibid.. p. 343.
217. Thomas Witherspoon, *Myrtle Fillmore*, p. 38.
218. Ibid.. P. 49).
219. Charles S. Braden, *Spirits In Rebellion*, p. 296.
220. J. Gordon Melton, telephone conversation, 1997.
221. Ernest Holmes, *Science of Mind*, p. 157.
222. Ibid., p. 114.
223. Ibid., p. 264.
224. The last three in Ernest Holmes, *Dictionary of New Thought Terms*.
225. Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Principles of Nature*, p. 116. par. 42.
226. In Martin A. Larson, *New Thought Religion*, p. 352.
227. In fact, the very concept of a "thought for the day" appears to have originated in New Thought circles. The earliest reference to it that I have come across is attributed to Alice Ritchie of Divine Science, in magazines beginning in 1902 (mentioned in Charles S. Braden, *Spirits In Rebellion*, p. 275).
228. Thomas Witherspoon, *Myrtle Fillmore*, p. 56.
229. See Martin A. Larson, *New Thought Religion*, p. 353 for Charles: Thomas Witherspoon, *Myrtle Fillmore*, pp.231-232 for Myrtle), and Emmet Fox, *Reincarnation Described and E-rplained* for that teacher's view.
230. Charles S. Braden, *Spirits In Rebellion*, p. 270.
231. Thomas Witherspoon, *Myrtle Fillmore*, p. 47.
232. Martin A. Larson, *New Thought Religion*, p. 12 1.

233. Of course this is not the true etymology of the English word "atonement," which is derived from the Greek *ton* ("to do") with an alpha negative, hence "to undo."

234. Thomas Troward, *Edinburgh and Dore Lectures on Mental Science*, p. 167: cf. Matthew 5:17

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F. Alternative health and medicine

Cayce's medical philosophy constitutes a special category in the search for Cayce's sources, since Cayceans generally accept that Cayce was influenced by the medical theories and practices of his day. After all, he would have been forced to choose among the medical resources which were actually available to his patients. Thus little of this section should strike Cayceans as particularly controversial, with the main points of debate being whether Cayce could have acquired medical knowledge through some natural means (e.g. from medical books, or from the physicians of various traditions with whom he worked), and to what extent his cures were actually effective.

The United States has long been home to a variety of medical philosophies and approaches, although their political status has changed markedly. Abraham Flexner's epochal 1910 report on North American medical education led not only to stricter standards, but also to the ascendancy of the medical model of health over competing models which coincidentally lacked the political support of the pharmaceutical industry. In the wake of the Flexner Report, medical schools sought to affiliate themselves with research universities and hospitals; licensing requirements for physicians grew increasingly strict; and medical doctors succeeded in dominating the licensing boards, thereby ensuring the adoption of standards that favored their own. Up to the turn of the century, however, the precursors of today's medical doctors competed on a more-or-less equal footing with practitioners of osteopathy, homeopathy, naturopathy, and a wide variety of other systems. The expression "alternative medicine" exaggerates the existence of a mainstream, while "complimentary medicine" glosses over the heartfelt rivalry between the competing philosophies.

In order to understand the situation of nineteenth-century medicine, several facts have to be borne in mind. First, allopathy or scientific medicine was not nearly as good then as now. Educational standards were low, and many physicians acquired their training solely through apprenticeship to another physician. Antibiotics and sulfa drugs would not be available until the 1940's. Mercury-based drugs were popular. Patent medicines were widely accepted, while narcotics such as heroin and morphine were prescribed without much recognition of their addictive qualities. Blood-letting with lances or leeches was a common remedy prior to the general acceptance of the germ theory of disease. Some patients were encouraged to remain in bed for months or even years. Purging, starvation, and electric shocks were employed therapeutically in ways that would never be tolerated today. Early suggestions to the effect that hands be washed prior to performing surgery or delivering babies met with fierce resistance from doctors. In this environment it is not difficult to see how a dissatisfied physician (whether formally trained or self-appointed) might seize on some alternative medical theory with all the fervor of a religious convert. Even if the new system utterly lacked merit, it could at least expect success rates not very different from that of allopathy. After all, most people will eventually get well on their own, while others will die no matter what the doctor does (and still others, we may assume, would have recovered had they not been sent to an allopath).

A second factor is that as we took back further in history, an increasing percentage of the U.S. population consisted of rural dwellers who often had little choice in their selection of physicians, if they did not lack access to them entirely. Such people would be that much more likely to turn to folk remedies, self-prescribed medicines, health fads, and the like. If a geographically isolated doctor invented his own ideosyncratic medical system (or having invented such a system, moved to a geographically isolated area), he stood a good chance of getting away with it. And if he trained enough new physicians to follow in his footsteps, his theory might easily have continued to find adherents down to the present day.

Osteopathy (founded in the late 1870's by Andrew Taylor Still) and chiropractic (founded in the 1890's by Daniel David Palmer) are the most familiar non-allopathic medical philosophies which flourished in the United States at the turn of the century, since osteopaths have managed to retain similar privileges as medical doctors, and chiropractors have won more limited recognition. Both emphasize spinal manipulation as a basic form of therapy. In osteopathy, this is said to affect the rest of the body through the circulatory, glandular, and nervous systems (Cayce agrees--902- 1): whereas chiropractic focuses specifically on the nervous system as the intermediary. Osteopaths explain their use of skeletal manipulation by saying that structure and function are linked. so that by initiating changes in the body's structure. other seemingly unrelated medical changes (e.g. the cure of a disease) may be brought about. Chiropractors. meanwhile. view their work as the removal of "subluxations" of the spine, in which misalignment of the spine prevents the unrestricted operation of the spinal cord. thereby resulting in other health problems. Chiropractic adjustments tend to be much briefer and more abrupt than osteopathic ones. Within the Cayce readings, osteopathy's emphasis on the spine appears to have meshed with Theosophical and neo-Rosicrucian descriptions of esoteric human anatomy.

While Cayce does not follow Still in rejecting drug-based therapies, the Cayce readings frequently call for osteopathic--not chiropractic--treatments. The following passage may indicate why:

Then, the SCIENCE of osteopathy is not merely the punching in a certain segment or the cracking of the bones, but it is the keeping of a BALANCE-by the touch-between the sympathetic and cerebrospinal system. THAT is real osteopathy! [1158-24]

Elsewhere Cayce says that "As a SYSTEM of treating human ills, osteopathy-- WE would give-is more beneficial than most measures that may be given" (902- 1). J. Gall Cayce's *Osteopathy: Comparative Concepts--A. T Still and Edgar Cayce* identifies a number of parallels between Still's system and Cayce's. among them their "triune" view of human nature as consisting of body, mind, and spirit and as a "miniature universe". the homeostatic principle that the role of the physician is to encourage the body to adjust itself and thereby return to health: their view of electricity as a vital biological and spiritual force; and of the human body as an electric battery: and the necessity of achieving coordination between the sympathetic and cerebrospinal nervous systems.(235) In addition Cayce's diagnostic style follows a traditional osteopathic order proceeding from the circulatory to the nervous and lymphatic systems.

Homeopathy (founded by Samuel Hahnemann in the 1790's, under the influence of Swedenborg) was popular in the United States at the turn of the century and still thrives in England, although in the wake of the Flexner Report it failed to win official recognition for its U.S.-based practitioners and institutions. In contrast to allopathy (which literally refers to medical practice of prescribing remedies whose effects oppose those of the patient's symptoms), the essential insight of homeopathy is that "like cures like"--i.e. that a remedy which produces symptoms of the disease in question in healthy people, will alleviate them in sick people. (Hippocrates recognizes the principle of homeopathy alongside that of allopathy, while Jenner's use of a cowpox-based vaccine for smallpox represents a modern application of the homeopathic principle.) The homeopathic "law of similars" and the "single remedy" principle further specify that the optimum cure will be that one, and only one, remedy whose effects are most similar to the symptoms of the patient's disease. Prospective homeopathic remedies are tested by "provings" in which healthy experimental subjects consume the substance in question. then carefully note its effects. After the results are recorded. the substance may be prescribed to future homeopathic patients showing the same set of symptoms. Homeopaths further believe in the principles of the "minimum dose." which provides for the curative substance to be diluted to an extreme degree. According to homeopathic theory, the pattern or vital force of that substance will linger on in the water or sugar pill long after the substance itself is no longer discernable even by chemists. Cayce often recommended homeopathic treatments, but the readings show no allegiance to any of the special ideological principles of homeopathy. In fact the notion of generic, mass-marketed remedies (whether "homeopathic" or not) runs counter to the "single remedy" principle, which stipulates that the one remedy be selected whose effects most closely approximate the patient's entire range of symptoms, not merely the primary complaints. This is typical of eclecticism's treatment of homeopathy.

Nineteenth-century medical eclecticism (the name then used for the medical philosophy now called naturopathy) incorporated a loose constellation of health practices including diet, exercise, and hydrotherapy. Famous nineteenth-century exemplars include Sebastian Kneipp and Vincent Preisnitz, pioneering hydrotherapists; Sylvester Graham, who popularized a type of whole wheat cracker (not to be confused with the familiar refined variety now using his name); Elizabeth Bloomer, dress-reform activist who lent her name to "bloomers"; and John Harvey Kellogg, eccentric inventor of the cornflake (unfrosted, to be sure) and founder of the Battle Creek Sanitarium. Religious figures who endorsed this perspective include Ellen White of Seventh-Day Adventism, Myrtle and Charles Fillmore of the Unity School of Christianity, and Dr. Otoman Zar-Adusht Hanish of the Mazdaznan (*faux-Zoroastrian*) movement which was active at the turn of the century.

The basic insight of eclecticism is that humans are subject to certain laws of nature which will increase life and health if we follow them, and decrease them if we do not. Since the body is naturally healthy, sickness must be the result of some deviation from natural practices on our part. While the details of these laws varied according to the lawgiver, common stipulations included vegetarianism (or "Pythagoreanism"); abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, or sex; regular eliminations, enemas, fasting, and purgation; reliance on raw foods and whole wheat bread, and after their discovery, an emphasis on vitamins (which Cayce often discusses). The emphasis is on the retention of health rather than the treatment of disease. At the turn of the century, eclectic physicians Heinrich Lindlahr (author of *Physiology of Natural Therapeutics*) and Benedict Lust (founder of an eclectic medical school in 1900) popularized the name "naturopathy" for essentially the same views, although with a generous admixture of additional therapies drawn from botanical remedies and herbalism, homeopathy, nutrition, psychology, massage, and manipulative therapies such as osteopathy and chiropractic. I see the sleeping Cayce essentially as a naturopath, since his health readings not only affirm the basic naturopathic perspective, but also emphasize popular naturopathic practices in the details of his prescriptions. At the same time, the contribution of osteopathy to Cayce's perspective is too great to be ascribed solely to the medical ecumenicalism prevailing among naturopaths.

Cayce's dietary recommendations can be summarized as follows: Do not eat or drink when you are tired, worried, or angry (4124-1). All food should be thoroughly masticated (311-4). Drink six to eight glasses of water a day (1111-2). Red wine is fine in moderation (462-6), but avoid beer and hard liquor (578-5). Coca-Cola syrup is recommended, but not when mixed with carbonated water (5097-1). Coffee has nutritional value, but should not be drunk with cream or sugar (816-3). Cayce is ambivalent about milk, with some readings positive and some negative. Fruit juice is recommended, but not for the same meal as milk (274-9) or in combination with cereals or starches other than whole wheat (416-9). Eschew white bread (1724-1) in favor of whole wheat or barley (865-1). Do not eat combinations of starches (2732-1). Eat plenty of locally-grown fresh vegetables (3542-1). At least one meal a day should consist largely of raw vegetables (2602-1). Raw vegetables in combination with gelatin are recommended (5031-1). If vegetables are cooked, cook each type in its own juice (3823-3). Maintain an eighty percent/twenty percent balance between alkaline and acidic foods (1568-2). Aim for a three-to-one ratio of above-ground to below-ground vegetables (2602-1), a two-to-one ratio of leafy to pod vegetables, and three-to-one of leafy to tuberous (1183-2) in your total diet. Raw fruits in

general are recommended except apples, which should be eaten cooked (5622-3), unless you are eating them by themselves as a special three-day purgative diet (820-2). Tomatoes should be canned, then eaten (608-1). Avoid red meat and greasy or fried foods (710-1) as well as most pork (303-11). Instead, choose fish, fowl, lamb, or--occasionally--crisp bacon (1710-4). Cayce promises that "those who would eat two to three almonds each day need never fear cancer" (1158-33 1). Beet sugar and non-refined cane sugars are the preferred sweeteners (1131-2), and sweets should not be combined with starches (1125-2) or proteins (404-4). Cayce additionally

endorses cooking or seasoning with olive oil (846-1), sea-salt or iodized salt (1586-1). Cooking

vegetables in Patapar paper is recommended (457-9). Pots should be made of enameled ironware (1196-7) or stainless steel (379-10), not aluminum (2423-1). It must be admitted that, despite its quirks, the diet described by the sleeping Cayce is for the most part quite a healthy one. (Incidentally, the waking Cayce did not follow it.)

As for other perennial naturopathic preoccupations, exercise was a regular component of Cayce's prescriptions. "Walking or rowing" were named as the best general exercises (277-1), with many patients encouraged to follow a daily morning routine of stretching and breathing exercises. Other exercises were targeted at specific health complaints. For example, a patient with hemorrhoids was told to stand on tiptoe, raising the arms above the head: then to bend forward, bringing the hands toward the floor. This was to be done three times per session, mornings and evenings, without quitting (2832-2). Cayce often prescribes massage, especially with olive oil or peanut oil: "Those who would take a peanut oil rub each week need never fear arthritis" (1158-31). The ARE has since set up the (Harold) Reilly School of Massotherapy, devoted to the special kind of massage that Cayce endorsed. Besides drinking-water, Cayce's appropriation of hydrotherapy included

... bubble baths; Epson-salt baths; Finnish baths; foot baths; fume baths ... hot mustard (foot) baths; pineneedle-oil baths; salt-water baths; sand baths; sitz baths: bicarbonate-of-soda baths, sponge baths; steam baths; sun baths, Scotch douche; and Turkish and sal-soda baths, among the hundred-odd baths that we featured at the institute.(236)

Cayce recommends with equal enthusiasm a variety of douches, enemas, and colonics: "Take a colonic irrigation occasionally. or have one administered, scientifically. One colonic irrigation will be worth about four to six enemas" (3570-1).

Many of Cayce's health recommendations do not fall readily into any particular school of medical thought, but are nevertheless characteristic of turn-of-the-century health fads. Cayce was quite impressed with patent medicines such as Atomidine, Glyco-Thymoline, and Kellogg's charcoal tablets; folk remedies such as poultices, castor oil and the fumes of a charred oak keg: and various electrical contraptions such as the "RadioActive Appliance" or "Impedance Device", the "Violet Ray Device", the "B-Battery" or "Dry Cell", and the "Wet Cell Appliance"(237)

G. Syncretic figures

Although today Spiritualism, Theosophy, and New Thought have little to do with one another, in Cayce's day there was a substantial overlap between them. The situation could be considered roughly analogous to that of today's New Age movement- in which spiritual seekers typically alternate among or combine teachings drawn from Eastern religions, Western esoteric traditions, and alternative social philosophies. Something similar was true in Cayce's day, except that different spiritual movements were then in vogue. One particularly inquisitive seeker indicated in a letter to Cayce that she had studied the teachings of Alice Bailey, Blavatsky, Leadbeater, Besant, Emmet Fox (whom she met), Joel Goldsmith, Manly Palmer Hall, Krishnamurti, A.K. Mozumdar (whom she met), Roenich, Steiner, and unspecified varieties of yoga (report of 2799-1). This syncretic tendency was even more pronounced among the writers and leaders associated with alternative spiritual movements. Indeed, some of these were so syncretic that it is hard to say whether they were Theosophists writing under the influence of New Thought, Metaphysicians writing under the influence of Spiritualism, or Masons writing under the influence of Theosophy. As a result of these cross-influences, we are left with a number of movements and teachers, including Cayce, who agreed on a wide range of basic spiritual ideas.

A relatively early syncretic figure is Frederick Spencer Oliver (1866-1899), who purportedly took dictation from a disembodied entity named "Phylos the Tibetan" while in the vicinity of Mount Shasta between 1883 and 1884. The result was *ADweller on Two Planets* (1899), which describes Phylos' life in doomed Atlantis thousands of years ago. In addition to elements characteristic of Theosophy (e.g. Tibetan Masters, Atlantis) and Spiritualism (i.e. the manner in which the text was revealed), Oliver's book contains a number of references to Jesus

and universal law (including the Law of One described by Cayce) which are consistent with New Thought theology. In 19-35 we find Cayce telling 7110 that he had seen "two or three of these manuscripts" on Atlantis, of which "One of the best ones, I understand, is "A Dweller on Two Planets" by Phylos. I suppose you have read this?" (813-1 correspondence). The sleeping Cayce is asked about *A Dweller on Two Planets* in 364-1, but his answer does not volunteer any information that suggests that he had knowledge of the book's contents. He says:

As we recognize, there has been considerable given respecting such a lost continent by these channels such as the writer of *Two Planets*, or *Atlantis and Lemuria* [Scott-Elliott's *Story of Atlantis & Lost Lemuria*, or Steiner's *Atlantis and Lemuria?*]--that has been published through some of the Theosophical literature. As to whether this information is true or not. depends upon the credence individuals give to this class of information.

[364-1]

The book title of *A Dweller on Two Planets* is also mentioned in 282-5. Interestingly, "Phylos" and its phonetic equivalents turn up several times in the life readings (e.g. 478-1, 1175-1), although never as the name of an Atlantean or a Tibetan.

Another synthesizer is Levi H. Dowling (1844-1911) of Belleville, Ohio, trance-author of *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* (1907) and author of *Self-Culture* (1912) and *Biopneuma: The True Science of the Great Breath* (1921). According to the publishers' preface to the first book, Dowling served as a Disciples of Christ minister from 1860-1864, became a military chaplain during the Civil War, and worked for the causes of Sunday school and prohibition. During the latter part of his life he practiced medicine. Intriguingly, Dowling has substantial connections with most of the movements mentioned above. Besides his background as a Disciples of Christ minister.(238) he has ties with Spiritualism in the manner in which *The Aquarian Gospel* was revealed (and the book continues to be revered by many Spiritualist groups); with Freemasonry in his references to a secret brotherhood with degrees and occult initiations; with Theosophy for his use of Asian religions and locales; and with New Thought for his Christology and pneumatology. The waking Cayce was given at least two copies of *The Aquarian Gospel*. one in 1936 (correspondence for 877 includes a thank-you letter) and another in 1944, (another thank-you letter. this time for Dr. and Mrs. 3514). The sleeping Cayce is asked about *The Aquarian Gospel* in 2067-2, but again his answer is too general to indicate whether he was familiar with the book:

Q. We are told that the Aquarian Gospel of Jesus Christ is taken directly from the akashic records. Is it historically true, and should I use the facts in my book?

A. It is the experience of an individual, or of Levi, who was in that experience and wrote from his own experience. To him it was actual fact. [2067-2]

Despite Cayce's reluctance to endorse it, the teachings of *The Aquarian Gospel* resemble those of Cayce quite strongly, and we will have occasion to return to it again and again.

A third synthesizer is Baird T. Spalding who, according to his publisher, died in the 1950's. In his five-volume series entitled *Life and Teaching of the Masters of the Far East*, Spalding claimed to have traveled for three and one-half years in India and Central Asia. where he and his party met "Emil", Jesus, Buddha, and other masters. No matter what their background.

Spalding's masters invariably seem to be preaching a New Thought version of Christianity. Spalding explains that "even the coolies in India recognize Him as Jesus of Nazareth." (239) As we shall see, many of Cayce's most important ideas--such the role of ideals in three-dimensional consciousness. or the connection between the chakras and the seven ductless glands--are anticipated in Spalding. The waking Cayce indicated his awareness of Spalding in a 1929 or 1930 lecture entitled "What Is Truth?":

A few days ago I was talking to some people and they told me about a book that had been written by some of the masters from the Far East. I had never seen the book before. but when I opened it to read it. I knew what was in it before I read it. I don't know how. nor why--but I knew the experiences I was goina to encounter. Within the first four or five pages. I found that in this book one thought was stressed: what you hold before yourself, to create that image you worship--that is what will develop you always upward. and will continue to enable you to know truth. (240)

Although the waking Cayce apparently familiarized himself with Spalding's books. he makes clear in a 1938 letter that he does not approve of Spalding's views: "Yes, know Mr. Spaulding all to well.--glad you were not taken with his lectures." The sleeping Cayce mentions "Spaulding" just once. long

enough to describe him as "not authentic" (2067-4), at least with respect to the archaic Gobi civilization.

Several neo-Rosicrucian groups were active in Cayce's day, including the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC) of San Jose, California (H. Spencer Lewis); the Rosicrucian Fellowship of Oceanside, California (Max Heindel); and the Fraternitas Rosae Crucis of Quakertown, Pennsylvania (R. Swinburne Clymer). A good case could be made for treating the Hermetic groups as a separate lineage, on a par with Spiritualism, Theosophy, and so on: however, I see them as essentially syncretic since their Hermetic elements are often drawn from Theosophical lore, and in any case are usually found mixed with non-Hermetic teachings. Lewis based his teachings around a Westernized version of Theosophy with some New Thought admixture. He accepted reincarnation and taught the existence of a Great White Brotherhood including Zoroaster, "Chrishna", and "Moria" along with Christ as members. Heindel incorporated many Steinerian details into his philosophy, including references to the age of Saturn, seven-year cycles within the human body, and the mystery of Golgotha. Cayce and the neo-Rosicrucians have much in common aside from their common allegiance to Christ, interpreted esoterically. Lewis and Heindel each affirm the spiritual importance of good nutrition as understood by natureopathy.(241) Both Lewis and Clymer give an account of the life of Jesus which resembles Cayce's in key respects. (242) All three accept reincarnation and emphasize ESP. In a single volume, Clymer discusses reincarnation, Atlantis, ancient Egypt, ancient Persia, the Essenes, and Christianity -- familiar Caycean topics all. (243)

One of the most ubiquitous synthesizers is Manly Palmer Hall (1901-1990), a thirty-three degree Mason with wide interests in Western philosophy and esoteric traditions. Eastern religions, and psychology. Hall began his career as a writer and public speaker while a teenager in California during the 1920's. Along the way he found the opportunity to travel extensively in Europe, Asia- and Egypt. In 1934, he founded the Philosophical Research Society in Los Angeles, devoted to the study of the world's wisdom traditions. To that end, the Society sponsors lectures and classes, and maintains an impressive esoteric library. Neo-Platonism. Renaissance Hermeticism. Rosicrucian lore, and nineteenth-century Theosophy are especially strong influences on both the Society and Hall's own philosophy, which is found scattered throughout hundreds of lectures, books, articles, and pamphlets. (244) From his citations it is clear that Hall was extremely well-read in nearly all of the esoteric literature that I discuss in this work. Like Cayce, Hall taught an esoteric interpretation of Christianity, including such things as reincarnation, astrology, and respect for other world religions. One of Hall's books, *Man, the Grand Symbol of the Mysteries* (1932), includes such characteristic Caycean teachings as the seven *chakras* and kundalini, the esoteric significance of the seven ductless glands, including the pineal gland; the desirability of equilibrium between the sympathetic and cerebrospinal nervous systems: the recognition of blood as (in Hall's words) "the universal Proteus," and of human nature as a unity of microcosm and macrocosm, and the division of human nature into spirit, "soul or mind", and body. (245) While Hall's name is not mentioned in the readings, Cayce writes in a letter. "To be sure have heard Mr. Hall lecture and we have several of his books in the library here" (3650-1 correspondence).

Another synthesizer is William Walker Atkinson. alias "Yogi Ramacharaka-" a New Thought writer with Theosophical leanings. His works--published through the Yogi Publication Society in Chicago--combine such quintessential Caycean themes as reincarnation and karma. Jesus' Essene heritage, Jesus' journey to India and Persia, auras, and psychic powers. Cayce gave several readings for a never-published book with the working title, *Psychic Phenomena from the Subliminal*, which was to have been submitted to the Yogi Publication Society.

Yet another is William Dudley Pelley, who began teaching in 1928 and in 1931 formed the League for the Liberation in occult-oriented spiritual support of the Silver Shirts, the prewar American Nazi group. Pelley's writings attribute his information to certain "intelligences" or "mentors," heard clairaudiently.(246) His teaching is a blend of Spiritualism (one of his books is entitled *Why I Believe The Dead Are Alive*), Theosophy and the I AM movement, and New Thought. Reincarnation and karma, and the view of Christ as an exemplar also feature in his teaching. Illuminating catch-phrases of Pelley's include "the Great Teacher speaks" (meaning himself) and "These are my pronouncements." Racism was an integral part of his teaching. since the various races of the world

are said to lie along a spectrum corresponding to the evolution of their consciousness. As for which race is superior, "the Nordic American white man is operating at the highest demonstrable rate of vibration also distinguishing the strictly human."(247) The link between Pelley study groups and Cayce study groups is indicated in the notes to the first study group reading (262-1 background), which names the example of the former as having inspired the formation of the latter. The sleeping Cayce said of Pelley, "He that gathereth not with us may still be of us, yet not of this present fold" (294- 13)6).

Yet another is the Great School of Natural Science, also known as the Great Work in America. In its present form, this group claims existence from 1883, and its pamphlets were later published in book form during the 1950's as The Harmonic Series. Most of the volumes in this series were written by John Emmett Richardson, called "TK" in imitation of the Theosophical mahatmas. The frontispieces of the books included among his qualifications thirteen months of study under "a great master" from India, as well as in the "Central Temple, Tibet." Richardson traced the roots of the Great Work to "a parent school in India" which was responsible for Freemasonry, Buddhism, the builders of the Great Pyramid, the Essenes, Primitive Christianity, and the Protestant Reformation. On the negative side was an evil lineage consisting of paganism, Islam, Roman Catholicism, and the Eastern Orthodox Church.(248) The Harmonic Series hinted at the possibility of a secret personal instruction, which attracted a number of people to the work. While "membership" in the Great School was reserved for the legendary masters, ordinary people might reasonably aspire to be admitted to the level variously referred to as the Department of Personal Instruction, the Ethical Section (ES), or the Technical Work. (Thus, the "Great School" and the "Ethical Section" are the functional equivalents of the Theosophical Great White Lodge and Esoteric Section, respectively.) A scandal emerged when the Edgewood Sanatorium of Chicago, organized by Richardson, went out of business without warning in 1916, leading to a division in the group. Caycean parallels include reincarnation, dreamwork, Atlantis and Lemuria, and the "Law of Evolution" which aims at the Brotherhood of Man as its ideal. (249) Citing Roenich and Notovitch, Richardson holds that Jesus went to India.(250) In one reading, Cayce mentions, the Great School's publishing wing, the Indo-American Book Company (900-88).

The outlines of the "proto-New Age" should be clear enough now. Around the turn of the century, there appeared a number of spiritual leaders and movements whose teachings mixed together themes from Spiritualism, Theosophy, New Thought, and alternative health. Although generally oriented towards Christianity, representatives of this "proto-New Age" simultaneously accepted the legitimacy of Eastern religions, and denied the doctrine of vicarious atonement in favor of a view of Jesus as one who became the Christ as an example for others. They spoke of ideals, universal spiritual laws, and the trinity of body, mind, and spirit. They supplemented prayer with meditation, and interpreted God as a kind of universal mind or spirit which is somehow present within each individual. They emphasized reincarnation, astrology, and psychic phenomena, and spoke of Atlantis, ancient Egypt, the Essenes- and Jesus's Journey to India. They endorsed alternative health practices (often naturopathic ones), and accepted a view of human anatomy which merged the *chakras* and *nadis* of Indian lore with the glandular and nervous systems of Western fore. Many (though by no means all) 'incorporated racist or anti-Semitic beliefs into their spiritual systems. It is here that we should look for Cayce's closest theological relatives.

235. J. Gall Cayce, *Osteopathy: Comparative Concepts--A.T. Still and Edgar Cayce*.pp. 2, 3-4 (cf. 2072-12), 9 (cf. 2519-3), 9 (cf. 2828-4), 25 (cf. 4007- 1), and 15, respectively.

236. Harold J. Reilly and Ruth Hag Brod. *The Edgar Cayce Handbook For Health Through Drugless Therapy*, p. 210.

237. Consult Gladys Davis Turner, *An Edgar Cayce Home Medicine Guide* for descriptions and applications for these various remedies.

238. The fact that both Cayce and Dowling belonged to the Disciples of Christ may cause some to wonder whether there was something in the water, so to speak, that had the effect of turning

Disciples into psychic enthusiasts. While I doubt that this is the case, the example of Jesse B. Ferguson (1819-1870) may be relevant. Ferguson was a Disciples of Christ minister from Nashville who preached briefly at Ninth Street Christian (Cayce's church in Hopkinsville) in 1848. He left the ministry after quarreling with Alexander Campbell, found himself ostracized by other Disciples as a result, and eventually became a believer in Spiritualism. Arthur Ford was another Disciples of Christ minister who turned to Spiritualist practices.

239. Baird T. Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, vol V., p. 106.

240. In Hugh Lynn Cayce, *Venture Inward*, p. 33.

241. H. Spencer Lewis wrote a 1935 pamphlet on *The Spiritual Property of Food* which includes reference to the ductless glands. His *Rosicrucian Essays* (also 1935) follow naturopathic views. Meanwhile, Max Heindel discusses the "science of nutrition" in *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*, p 441 ff.

242. H. Spencer Lewis discusses Jesus in his *Mystical Life of Jesus* and *Mystical Christianity*, the latter of which affirms Jesus's trip to India (p. 70 ff), his membership in the Essenes (p. 5 ff.), and the distinction between Jesus the man and the "Christ principle" (p. 102). R. Swinburne Clymer in *The Philosophy of Fire* agrees that Jesus was an Essene (p.207 ff.) and denies the doctrine of the vicarious atonement in favor of a New Thought Christology (pp. 128-129).

243. R. Swinburne Clymer in *The Philosophy of Fire* discusses reincarnation (p. 127), Atlantis (p. 3), ancient Egypt (p. 183 ff.), ancient Persia (p. 199 ff.) and the Essenes (p. 207 ff.).

244. For a nearly complete itemization, see the appendix to Manly Palmer Hall, *Great Books On Religion and Esoteric Philosophy*.

245. Manly Palmer Hall, *Man, the Grand Symbol of the Mysteries*, chs. 14 and 17, 12, 4, and p. 47, respectively.

246. William Dudley Pelley, *Earth Comes*, p. 187.

247. William Dudley Pelley, Soulcraft series vol. 7 no. 80, p. 15.

248. John Emmett Richardson, *The Great Message*, p. 15 ff

249. Richardson affirms reincarnation (*The Great Known*, p. 309 ff.), dreamwork (ibid., p. 187 ff), Atlantis and Lemuria (*The Great Message*, pp. 331 ff, and 353 ff.), and the mystical significance of the Great Pyramid (*The Great Known*, p. 16).

250. John Emmett Richardson, *Questions and Answers*, p. 107.

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 13

This chapter covers Cayce's distinctive descriptions of the universe and human nature, especially those concerning the hidden depths which underlie them both.

A. The akashic: plane

The word *akasha* is actually Sanskrit for "space," for example the space within an empty pot. In several classical Indian metaphysical systems, *akasha* was conceived as a kind of ether or substance in its own right, and listed as a fifth element along with fire, earth, air, and water. References to the infinite and primordial nature of *akasha* in the *Brihadaranyaca Upanishad* (5, 1, 1) and elsewhere inspired much elaboration in the pages of *The Secret Doctrine*, where Madame Blavatsky views it as both the "*noumenon* of Ether," which serves as a medium for vibrations of various sorts (similar to the supposed role of phlogiston—viz. heat energy as a vacuous space, so that material particles turn out to be mere impurities within the pure, infinite void.)⁽²⁵¹⁾ The Masters in their letters⁽²⁵²⁾ treat the "akashic records" as a sort of spiritual realm where all our thoughts and actions leave indelible impressions, which can then be read by sensitives—precisely the concept found in the Cayce readings. After Blavatsky's death, other Theosophists paid more attention to the akashic plane. For example, Leadbeater tapped into the akashic plane in order to research the past lives of other Theosophists for his *Lives of Alcyone* (Alcyone being the esoteric name of young Krishnamurti, around whom everyone else's past lives inevitably revolved). Steiner also claimed to receive information from the akashic records, whose operations he describes in some detail. ⁽²⁵³⁾

At least some New Thought writers (e.g. Ernest Holmes) ⁽²⁵⁴⁾ picked up the idea of *akasha* through the intermediary of Theosophy. The *Aquarian Gospel* claims to have been transcribed from the akashic plane, which is described as follows:

This Akashic, or primary substance, is of exquisite fineness and is so sensitive that the slightest vibrations of an ether any place in the universe registers an indelible impression upon it.

This primal substance is not relegated to any particular part of the universe, but is everywhere present. It is in fact the very "Universal Mind" of which our metaphysicians speak.

When the mind of man is in exact accord with the Universal Mind man enters into a conscious recognition of these Akashic impressions, and may collect and translate them into any language of earth with which he is familiar. ⁽²⁵⁵⁾

Like the Cayce readings (e.g. 523- 1), *The Aquarian Gospel* (7:25-26) likens the akashic records to the Book of Life. ⁽²⁵⁶⁾

The idea of tapping into information from the distant past calls to mind Spalding's claim that past events are "...all in a certain band of frequency. Everything that you say, your voice and words, goes right into a band of vibratory frequency and it goes on and on." ⁽²⁵⁷⁾ Spalding claims to have used this principle to build a camera that could photograph historical events. His first subjects were George Washington's inaugural address and the Sermon on the Mount. During his travels in India, Jesus showed him a similar device, but with moving pictures which could be directed by thought. ⁽²⁵⁸⁾

B. The primacy of ideals

The term "idealism" has been associated with a venerable but diverse collection of philosophers beginning with Plato and his followers. It originally referred to Plato's theory of Ideas (from the Greek

idea) or Forms (from *eidos*). Just as we perceive a mental image of horseness separate from any actual horses--an image which, unlike actual horses, is flawless and unchanging--so (says Plato) do similar templates exist for other things in the universe. Our true home lies in the world of the Forms, and not this world, which is only a dim reflection of it. Although Plato never formulates a principle for deciding which things or qualities correspond to Forms and which do not (and admits as much in the *Parmenides*), values such as Justice or Beauty are clearly meant to be included-- Christian neo-Platonists found it natural to identify the Forms with traditional divine attributes, which God possesses fully while his creatures only manifest them imperfectly. Cayce's concept of ideals as intermediate points of contact between human souls and God clearly reflects this basic Platonic structure.

Outside of Plato and his followers, the term "idealism" came to encompass other philosophers who resembled Plato in viewing the mental or spiritual world as somehow dominant over the physical world. For example, Berkeley's subjective version of idealism argues for a mind-centered world-view in which seemingly physical events (e.g. the tree falling in the forest) have no reality apart from their being perceived (at least by God, if not always by humans, in order to account for the regularity and continuity of the physical world). The nineteenth-century Metaphysical movement continued Berkeley's distinctive theoretical perspective, if not his intellectual rigor. Kant, Hegel, and other German idealists followed Plato in attempting to create grand metaphysical systems emphasizing the mental side of the physical/mental divide. Since Kant doubted that certain knowledge could ever be obtained for nonpsychic events, this had the effect of internalizing the concept of Ideas, so that the word "Idea" took on its present popular meaning. Emerson was a prominent nineteenth-century idealist in the Platonic tradition, and his exuberance and natural optimism gave the word "idealism" many of its modern popular connotations.

With the New Thought movement, "ideas" or "Ideals" (the terms are not consistently distinguished) took on the meaning which we find in Cayce, as aspects of the divine mind within us which we may focus on as a part of the spiritual path.(259) Spalding holds a view of ideals which is quite consistent with New Thought, as well as with Cayce:

10. Our everyday life is a concrete application of this fact in that our statements conform to the One Principle or One Mind. We vision or project an ideal. Let us say that the ideal is for perfection. We immediately come into direct accord with the One Mind control or Principle. We project an ideal for ourselves to accomplish. If it is a high ideal that Power immediately becomes active and brings that ideal into existence. The moment that ideal is projected and the force back of it becomes active through it, that ideal is complete (260)

Note that like Cayce, Spalding teaches that ideals are a source of spiritual energy, a point of connection between humans and the divine, and the central concern of spiritual activity. Also, Spalding's explanation of the mechanics of idealism--in which acting upon ideals has an effect similar to that of completing an electrical circuit--is also found in Cayce (e.g. 5091-3). Cayce's instructions for meditation have the meditator focus on an ideal. This is anticipated in Leadbeater, who gives as the purposes of meditation,

1. To ensure that, however deeply we may be immersed in the affairs of the world, we shall devote at least some time each day to the thought of an ideal.

2. To draw us nearer to the Master and to the Logos, so that from Them strength may be poured upon us and through us to benefit the world.

3. To train our higher bodies, so that they may have constant practice in responding to the highest vibrations. (261)

In fact, nothing in this passage sounds out of place with respect to the Cayce readings, provided we acknowledge that Leadbeater and Cayce mean very different things by "the Master."

C. The body/mind/spirit trichotomy

Although Cayce's division of human nature and the universe into three levels seems a natural one, it represents a departure from most other Western esoteric traditions. Spiritualists tended to assume a dualistic world-view consisting of matter and spirit, whereas Theosophists followed Blavatsky in dividing everything into seven levels. While there is certainly no dearth of trinitarian theories, these generally teach different trinities than Cayce did. For example, Plato and his followers propose a number of tripartite theories of human nature, but none of the various models that I have been able to discover specifically name body, mind, and spirit (or their close equivalents) as the three parts. Similarly, a number of Christian writers (e.g. Steiner) follow Saint Paul in viewing human nature in terms of "spirit and soul [*psyche*] and body" (I Thessalonians 5:23), a trinity which was widespread during the ancient and medieval periods.

Speculative Freemasonry incorporates numerous trinitarian schemes from Christianity and neo-Platonism, some of which resemble Cayce's division. I have already alluded to Manly Palmer Hall's body/mind/heart-or-soul division (262) as well as to his citation of spirit, "soul or mind" and body, (263) although this is only one of many different models which Hall discusses. Cayce's division may also be found in the New Thought movement, although again it is one of many other models in common use. For example, Holmes's dictionary contains entries for "One Body, One Spirit, One Mind" as well as for "Physical body", "Psychic body", and "Spiritual body." Also, his entry for "Holy Trinity" reads "Spirit as Absolute Intelligence/ Mind as Law / Form as Manifestation." Cayce, too, links the trinity in man with the Trinity in God (e.g. 1747-5). Another possible source is Andrew Jackson Davis, who divides the universe into levels of matter, mind, and spirit. (264) Yet another is Andrew Taylor Still, the founder of osteopathy, who writes that "man is triune when complete." i.e. "First the material body, second the spiritual being, third a being of mind which is far superior to all vital motions and material forms....." (265)

Spalding accepts the body/mind/spirit trichotomy as the basic structure of his metaphysical system:

If, in thinking of man as a trinity of spirit, mind, and body, we consider him principally from the standpoint of mind, or soul, we shall see that he occupies a position between two great extremes of mental activity, the lower of which is the body, and the higher, the Spirit. (266)

Like Cayce, Spalding goes on to draw a connection between the trinity in man and the Trinity in God. Spirit corresponds to the Holy Spirit (naturally enough); mind to the Christ (since it is here that the decision is made to "crucify" the self on the ideal, or not); and the physical body to the Father (who created the universe).

Cayce also links the body/mind/spirit trichotomy with the conscious, subconscious, and superconscious minds, respectively although his proposed link is rather tenuous. For example, where one would assume the conscious mind to fall under the category of mind, Cayce mysteriously has it correspond to the body (e.g. 900-31). My suspicion is that Cayce's system represents an adaptation of Hudson's distinction between the objective and subjective minds. (This distinction was taken up by the New Thought lecturer Thomas Troward; Holmes's dictionary contains entries for these terms as well). The objective mind corresponds very well to ordinary consciousness or "mind"; whereas the subjective mind possesses many of the traditional attributes of "spirit." Cayce's difficulty appears to arise from his attempt to substitute the trinitarian scheme of conscious, subconscious, and superconscious levels of mind, for the dual system of Hudson- Interestingly, Charles Fillmore distinguishes between conscious, subconscious, and superconscious levels of mind, (267) as do several other Metaphysical writers.

Cayce identifies many more trinitarian sets, notably that of spirit, mind, and will as three aspects of the human soul. Unlike the physical/mental/spiritual grouping this triad may be described as horizontal rather than vertical, in that it designates attributes which are all present within the soul (as opposed to the mind or the body). The idea is similar to Andrew Jackson Davis's naming of wisdom, love, and will as three aspects of the soul. (268) The fact that these are also traditional divine attributes is no coincidence, and Davis goes so far as to write that "a trinity is now discovered in every department of Nature," including man. (269)

D. The subtle body

The idea of resorting to maps of esoteric human anatomy for medical and spiritual purposes is common to Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan thought, with the Indian systems having had the most influence on Western esoteric traditions. The concepts of *chakras* (which Cayce usually calls "spiritual centers") and *kundalini* (sometimes referred to as "kundaline" forces in the readings) in particular have traveled widely, and are featured prominently in Cayce's system. *Chakra* is Sanskrit for "wheel," and here refers to certain lotus-shaped structures said by a number of Indian traditions to exist within the human body. These are typically associated with particular Sanskrit letters and deities, and boast varying numbers of petals. Many tantric practices are devoted to awakening some or all of the *chakras* by arousing the *kundalini* forces, called *chandali* in Buddhist texts. *Kundalini* (from *kundala*, meaning "serpent", plus a feminine ending) is conceived as a manifestation of *shakti* (the primordial feminine source of divine power) and symbolized as a coiled serpent lying at the base of the spine. Through concentration, the *kundalini* can be encouraged to rise up through the *nadis* or esoteric channels located along the spine, resulting in psychic powers and/or spiritual attainments. Hindu and Buddhist lore is full of warnings to the effect that this is potentially a highly dangerous affair which should only be undertaken under the direction of a qualified guru.

The concepts of the *chakras* and *kundalini* were introduced to a popular Western readership through several Theosophical works by Leadbeater, especially *The Chakras* (1927). Among Leadbeater's innovations—which he made on the basis of his own psychic observations of the subtle body—were his abandonment of the traditional depiction of *chakras* as stylized lotuses in favor of colorful circular patterns with varying numbers of spokes (instead of petals), and his conflation into the Indian system of foreign notions of "rays" and "auras." Leadbeater's depiction of the *chakras* themselves, and also of their arrangement through the body, became widespread. If history had been a little different, then occultists might have seized on a different map featuring four, six, or nine *chakras*, or (if the Chinese systems are considered) three *dan tian* ("cinnebar fields"). The thirteenth-century Iranian Sufi Semnani proposes seven *latifa* as an Islamicized functional equivalent, and this may well be the source for Theosophy's septenary model. Within Kabbalistic circles, the idea of mapping the ten *sephirot* onto the human body is a traditional one, although none of the various versions of this (for example, sometimes *Malkuth* is linked with the feet, sometimes with the knees, sometimes with the foreskin) precisely matches the familiar map of the *chakras* as given by Leadbeater. (270) Also, as in the Cayce readings, there are Kabbalistic traditions linking the various *sephirot* with different colors, or with the different levels of consciousness at which particular sacred texts were written. Cayce gives the idea of the *chakras* his characteristic Christian twist. For example, the readings interpret the entire Book of Revelation as symbolic of the *kundalini* experience (281-5 1). This idea is found in Leadbeater, who joins Cayce in explaining the "four and twenty elders" before the throne (Revelation 4) as rays from the crown *chakra* which appear in an enlightened being who is in communion with God. (271)

Cayce's linking of the seven *chakras* with the seven ductless glands has a number of precedents. Descartes famously names the pineal gland as the point of connection between mind and body. Swedenborg, defending Descartes' more general theory under the name of "spiritual influx," elaborately describes the currents of spirit as it enters into the physical body through the ductless glands (e.g. in *Regnum Animale* or *Kingdom of the Soul; Intercourse of the Mind and Body*), thereby enshrining medieval physiology in Western esoteric lore. Leadbeater mentions the pituitary and pineal glands as the physical counterparts of the sixth and seventh *chakras*: (272) and Spalding discusses the effects of *pranah yoga* exercises on the thyroid, parathyroid, adrenal, and pituitary glands. The entire endocrine system, he says, is controlled by the pineal gland. (273) Hall gives Cayce's list of seven ductless glands, linking them with the *chakras* and *kundalini*, and also follows Cayce in emphasizing the esoteric importance of achieving balance between the sympathetic and cerebrospinal nervous systems. (274)

Today, New Agers often assume that the subtle body is composed of some sort of "energy," without always realizing that this is a twentieth-century interpretation rather than a traditional teaching from any of the Asian systems, which rather tend to see the subtle body as a kind of wind or breath. The sleeping Cayce believes that the soul is "electro-spiritual" in nature: "Know then that the force in nature that is called electrical or electricity is that same force ye worship as Creative or God in action" (1299-1). "Not that God is an electric light or an electric machine, but that vibration that is creative is of the same energy as life Itself" (2828-4). Cayce's idea has a number of precedents, especially in the area of alternative medicine. For example, Andrew Taylor Still taught that "electricity" is "the highest known order of force. which submits to the voluntary and involuntary commands of life and mind, by which worlds are driven and beings move." (275) Another possible source is Marie Corelli, a turn-of-the-century Irish writer of quirky Christian novels. The Cayce readings mention *A Romance of Two Worlds* (440-7), which contains something called "The Electric Creed." God, we are told, is "a shape of pure Electric Radiance" who created within us

His '*likeness*' in the form of an *electric flame* or *germ* of spiritual existence with its companion working force of *Will-power*.... Like all flames, this electric spark can either be fanned into a flame or it can be allowed to escape in air--*it can never be destroyed*. (276)

This kind of electricity, she says, is also capable of explaining Jesus' miracles: "It can be proved from the statements of the New Testament that Christ was an embodied Electric Spirit. From first to last His career was attended by *electric phenomena*..."(277) Whereas today, electricity strikes us as quite mundane, it would appear that at the turn of the century it was more than a little mysterious, and was glossed by occultists in much the same way that their New Age successors have glossed quantum mechanics and so on.

If the subtle body is composed of energy of some sort, then why can't we detect it using scientific instruments? One possibility is that its frequency lies outside the range of conventional instruments; another is that the voltage is too low to be detected. However, this type of language is practically never used in esoteric circles--perhaps out of a suspicion that even very sensitive instruments would fail to detect anything like the subtle body, or out of discomfort with the notion that a saint could be distinguished from a sinner using a voltmeter or whatnot. Cayce follows Theosophy in speaking of higher and lower "vibrations," a term which is never satisfactorily defined. Prior to Blavatsky, the Kashmir Shaiva schools of Hindu tantra taught that the absolute consciousness emits "vibrations" (*spanda*) which set into motion the myriad events of the phenomenal world. Here, however, the "vibrations" are as much psychological as physical. Ironically, in light of the usual tendencies of occultists, Cayce and Theosophy find themselves insisting on a literal, physical interpretation of the *chakras* and *kundalini*. A more mechanistic precursor to the Theosophical model would be Swedenborg, who (in *On Tremulation, or, the Anatomy of Our First Nature*) likens the soul's animation of the physical body by means of its vital fluids to "tremulations" or vibrations in a stretched membrane.

E. Reincarnation and karmic astrology

Reincarnation and karma ("action") are of course ancient beliefs which are attested all over the world. Cayce's version of these ideas, however, differs in important respects from any of the various Indian, Greek, Jewish, or Middle Eastern systems whose teachings would have been available to him. For example, following Theosophical teaching, he denies that humans and animals can intercarneate. In Blavatsky's system, spiritual evolution occurs at the level of the species as a whole (although these will inevitably include members who are more or less advanced than the majority of the species). While less advanced species are slowly evolving into more advanced ones, for species at widely different evolutionary levels to intercarneate would serve no good purpose. Besant agrees that "the human ego does not reincarnate in an animal," although it may be associated with an animal form which it does not control as a type of penal servitude. (278) For many Theosophists, human-animal intercarneation represented a debased superstition for which Theosophical teaching provided the underlying core of truth. This denial was later adopted or implicitly assumed by a number of post-Theosophical teachers, including several New Thought writers as well as all of the syncretic figures

mentioned here. Spalding, for example, says that the cycle of birth and death will continue "until the lesson is learned." He continues:

To such a race [of believers] death does not exist nor can it again exist; therefore, Karma does not exist. Karma is but retribution for bringing into manifestation, discord, and inharmony. Substitute renunciation for retribution and you correct the cause for Karma, as it exists only in the thoughts of those determined to manifest Karma. Remove the cause or substitute it by a higher condition and the lower condition is erased. You have elevated the vibrations of your body above those which allowed Karma to exist.(279)

Cayce interprets a number of ideas from traditional Christian theology in light of reincarnation. For example, the distinction between the law and grace (respectively identified with the Old and New Testaments) was one of the topics that inspired the proto-Disciples of Christ to depart from the Baptist fold. In the Cayce readings, karma is likened to justice as opposed to mercy, and to the law as opposed to grace (5224-1, 5209- 1). Whether we are judged according to karma or grace depends on how we judge others. For Cayce, karma is not a blind, impersonal law like gravity, but a loving, intellegent force which acts purposefully. Karma is lawful, yes--but when its lessons have been learned, then the purpose of the law is fulfilled, and the law no longer applies. The purpose of karma is to lead us to unity with God. Thus, Cayce disagrees with Buddhist teaching in that he denies the possibility of karma ever working *against* one's spiritual progress (as would happen in the case of rebirth as an animal).

Cayce's claim that Christhood is the goal of reincarnation is anticipated in Rudolf Steiner--in fact, this point was one of the factors that led to the latter's break with Theosophy. Steiner taught that the example of Christ inaugurated a new era in human spiritual evolution (for which reincarnation is the mechanism), and that the efforts of the world's mystery schools had accordingly been focused on making preparations for his coming. This spiritual evolution is guided by the archangel Michael, whom Cayce channeled on several occasions. Note, however, that Cayce usually sees Christhood as an inner, individual event rather than a sea change in humanity as a whole, as in Steiner. This reflects an important shift of emphasis from Theosophy's evolutionary speculation to the more psychological orientation of the New Thought movement.

Cayce's system of karmic astrology represents an adaptation of the Theosophical system. According to Blavatsky, our spiritual evolution does not take place only on the earth, but may also be traced to other spheres prior to the creation of the earth and after its dissolution. Her account calls to mind the Kabbalistic notion of the successive creation and destruction of four worlds or universes (*olamot*) prior to this one. Blavatsky's "chains of worlds" also exist synchronically, and "correspond to that which we call 'the Principles in Man'." (280) That is to say, worlds--like humans--have seven levels. When we look at Venus or Mars, we see only the physical worlds. Yet there are other levels as well, corresponding to the astral plane, spirit, and so on. Her system confusingly incorporates two different spectra, so to speak: the different "bodies" (physical, astral, etc.) of a single planet, and the different qualities of the various physical planets. Blavatsky attempts to solve this problem by shuffling planets around so that evolution carries us from sphere to sphere. Accordingly, the earth is said to have once been sun-like, and the moon earth-like.

Steiner elaborates on Blavatsky's system so that human souls are said to travel these other planetary spheres between incarnations. As in Renaissance Hermeticism, Steiner holds that macrocosm and microcosm mirror each other so that the arrangement of the planets corresponds to features of the soul; hence the efficacy of astrology. (Although Anthroposophists have developed something called "astrosophy", relatively little of this system was originated with Steiner himself.) Steiner writes, "One part of his [man's] soul-substance is striving toward Mercury, another part towards Jupiter, and so forth." We visit these planets during sleep, and thereby "bring our karma down to earth. ",(281) While the respective dates for Steiner's English translations and the Cayce readings discourage the idea that Cayce copied from Steiner, the two systems are clearly closely related, with the turn-of-the-century British Theosophical astrologers as possible common ancestors.

Cayce refers to "planetary sojourns" in which human souls spend time on other planets between lives. He writes:

In giving that which may be helpful to this entity in the present experience, respecting the sojourns in the earth, it is well that the planetary or astrological aspects also be given.

It should be understood, then, that the sojourning of the soul in that environ, rather than the position, makes for the greater influence in the experience of an entity or body, in any given plane. This is not belittling that which has been the study of the ancients, but rather it is giving the UNDERSTANDING of same. [630-2]

Each planet has a different effect on the consciousness of the reincarnating soul:

Thus, as the soul passes from the aspects about the material environs. or the earth. we find that the astrological aspects are represented as stages of consciousness; given names that represent planets or centers or crystallized activity.

Not that flesh and blood, as known in the earth. dwells therein, but in the consciousness, with the form and manner as befits the environ. [1650-1]

As with Blavatsky, Cayce does not mean to say that there is life on Mars--our existence there is spiritual. not physical. There is no life on any other physical planet (3744-3). Cayce's system has several advantages over the more traditional sort of astrology. First. it is much harder to disprove, since it purports to read one's karma rather than observable tendencies and fortunes. Second, it offers an explanation as to how the earth's population can fluctuate if there is reincarnation.

Cayce's interpretations of the various planets are mostly traditional, with some dating at least to the Italian Renaissance if not to the ancient Mediterranean:

As In Mercury pertaining of Mind.
In Mars of Madness.
In Earth as of Flesh.
In Venus as Love.
In Jupiter as Strength.
In Saturn as the beginning of earthly woes, that to which all insufficient matter is cast for the beginning.
In that of Uranus as of the Psychic.
In that of Neptune as of Mystic.
In Septimus as of Consciousness.
In Arcturus as of the developing. [900-10]

One exception is the earth, whose position in the sky cannot be charted on a horoscope (because we are standing on it). Another is "Septimus," whose intended reference is unknown, although some Cayceans identify it with Pluto. Finally. Arcturus is not usually included in a horoscope, since as a fixed star it will always be in the same constellation- Cayce however is far more interested in the geometrical relationships among the various planets (especially transits) than the location of those planets with respect to zodiacal signs or houses, perhaps owing to controversy within astrological circles over whether to compensate for the precession of the equinoxes. Remember however that Cayce is here attempting to describe the progress of the soul between lives, not a new system of fortune-telling. In this case, the significance of Arcturus is that it is the to center from which there may be the entrance into other realms of consciousness" (2823-1) after one has left the earth's solar system. Cayce himself spent time on Arcturus prior to his incarnation as Cayce (5749-14).

F. The fourth dimension

For those whose understanding of mathematical dimensionality has been warped (so to speak) by science-fiction and occult appropriations of the word "dimension," a point has no dimensions; a line, one dimension (length); squares and circles, two dimensions (length plus width); and solids such as

cubes and spheres. three dimensions (length, width, and height/depth). Theoretically, it should be possible to extend this progression to include fourth dimensional shapes such as tesseracts and hyperspheres, fifth-dimensional ones. and so on up to an infinite number of dimensions. Although human beings only have immediate experience of three spatial dimensions, this does not rule out the existence of other, higher-numbered ones. For example, Edwin A. Abbot's *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884) tells the story of the inhabitants of a two-dimensional universe who have trouble conceiving of a third dimension. When three-dimensional objects pass through their universe, the Flatlanders only see a series of cross-sections, which mysteriously appear as if out of nowhere and change their shape in unpredictable ways. Similarly, we three-dimensional creatures might remain equally oblivious to a fourth or higher dimension. (In fact, modern physics gives us good reasons to believe that such higher dimensions do exist.) The now-familiar identification of time as a fourth "dimension" was formulated by Einstein in 1905 as a sideline to special relativity, and popularized by Minkowski.

The idea that we are merely living on the surface of some larger universe has obvious appeal to occult enthusiasts, and especially calls to mind the early writings of Piotr Demianovitch Ouspensky (1878-1947). Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum* deal with the evolution of humanity through consciousness of an increasingly higher number of dimensions. His notion of the fourth dimension appears to have been inspired not only by higher mathematics (especially Charles H. Hinton's *The Fourth Dimension*), but also by Kant and Theosophy. Just as the inhabitants of Flatland would perceive three-dimensional objects passing through their universe as a two-dimensional object which changes shape over time, so might four-dimensional objects account for our perception of three-dimensional reality. Kant, says Ouspensky (with Henri Bergson), was wrong to see space and time as *obstacles* to certain knowledge of the external world, when they are potential *instruments* through which such knowledge could be sought. For Ouspensky, the fourth and higher dimensions lie within the realm of psychology and the spirit, since these deeper levels to the universe are actually deeper levels of the human soul. His reading of Theosophical literature convinces him that the human species is evolving toward consciousness of progressively higher dimensions. Cayce recommended *Tertium Organum* by name while asleep (137-88), and Morton Blumenthal used it as a text for a Cayce study group.

Cayce often uses "dimensional" language, though seemingly with little appreciation of its mathematical basis. For example, we learn that "the three-dimensions in the mind may be seven. and in spirit eleven and twelve and twenty-two" (5149-1). (282) Elsewhere we are told that this solar system includes eight "dimensions" (5755-2), of which earth incorporates three: Venus, four; Jupiter, five; and Uranus, seven (3006-1). Cayce explains:

For, as the earth is a three dimensional awareness or consciousness,--indicated by body, mind, soul,--so is the universal consciousness manifested or expressed in the three-dimensional as Father, Son, Holy Spirit; while it might be manifested or indicated in many more in Jupiter, Venus, Mercury, or Uranus. [3037-1]

As with the astrological readings, Cayce appears to confuse the levels of body, mind, and spirit on one world (such as earth) with the levels represented by the different planetary spheres.

That these dimensions are not limited to spatial ones is indicated by Cayce's description of fourth-dimensional consciousness as "that condition as is reached wherein physical objects are spiritually understood" (900-66) and vice-versa, or as "the privilege of seeing all in one" (900-113). He writes:

Best definition that may ever be given of fourth dimension is an idea! Where will it project? Anywhere! Where does it arise from? Who knows? Where will it end? Who can tell? It is all inclusive! It has both length, breadth, height and depth--is without beginning and is without ending. [364-10]

Cayce's psychological or spiritual interpretation of the fourth dimension, as well as the explanation given, is consistent with Ouspensky's explanation in *Tertium Organum*.

252. e.g. A.T. Barker (transcriber), *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnet*, p. 324.
253. e.g. Rudolf Steiner, *The Gospel of St. John and Its Relation To the Other Gospels*, p. 21 ff.
254. Ernest Holmes, *A Dictionary of New Thought Terms*, entry for "akasha."
255. Levi H. Dowling, *Aquarian Gospel*, p. 16.
256. The Book of Life is mentioned in Philippians 4:3 as well as Revelation 3:5, 3:18, 17:8, 20:12, and 21:27.
257. Baird T. Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, vol V., p. 23.
258. *Ibid.*, vol. II. pp. 61-63.
259. Ernest Holmes, *A Dictionary of New Thought Terms*, entries for "Ideas" and "Ideals."
260. Baird T. Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, vol IV, pp. 22-23.
261. C.W. Leadbeater, *The Inner Life*, p. 141.
262. Manly Palmer Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, pp. Ixxiv, cIxxv.
263. Manly Palmer Hall, *Man, the Grand Symbol of the Mysteries*, p. 47.
264. Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Principles of Nature....* p.50, par. 17.
265. In J. Gall Cayce, *Osteopathy: Comparative Concepts*, p. 2.
266. Baird T. Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, vol. II, p. 70.
267. Martin A. Larson, *New Thought Religion*, p. 349.
268. Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Principles of Natur.....*, p. 622, par. 183.
269. *Ibid.*, p. 601, par. 174).
270. There are several possible ways of harmonizing the seven *chakras* with the ten *sephirot*. One would be to accept the traditional division between the higher three *sephirot* and the lower seven. and make the latter correspond to the *chakras*. Unfortunately, I know of no textual support for this scheme. Another route would be to accept the map of the human body in which *Malkuth* corresponds to the foreskin (and the first three *sephirot* lie on top of the head and beside each ear, respectively). By merging the three pairs of *sephirot* for which there are two on the same level, we are left with seven levels of *sephirot* which correspond approximately (though not exactly) with the levels as given on the chart of seven *chakras*.
271. C.W. Leadbeater, *The Chakras*, p. 16.
272. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
273. Baird T. Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, vol. V, pp. 94-97.
274. Manly Palmer Hall, *Man, the Grand Symbol of the Mysteries*, chs. 14, 17.

275. In J. Gall Cayce, *Osteopathy: Comparative Concepts*, p. 9.

276. Marie Corelli, *A Romance of Two Worlds*, pp. 237-238.

277. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

278. In C.W. Leadbeater, *The Inner Life*, p. 235.

279. Baird T. Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, vol. III, p. 155.

280. H.P. Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 71.

281. Rudolf Steiner, *Man's Being, His Destiny, and World Evolution*, pp. 52, 40, 33.

282. Why twenty-two? Cayce does not say, but it may be relevant that twenty-two is the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Elsewhere Cayce indicates that this number represents "the infinite" (1152-14).

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 14

By "history" I do not mean to insist on the traditional criterion of written records--indeed, many of Cayce's favorite "time-culture slots" (to resort to a Meltonism) are otherwise unknown. For Cayce, history is the story of souls being led to spiritual perspectives over the course of multiple incarnations. This is a group process as well as an individual one, since human relationships (and ultimately, events in history) are part of the teaching process through which these perspectives are imparted. Just as the Old Testament records God's guidance of the Israelites to a higher purpose, so do the readings record a similar process which begins with the first incarnations into the earth plane, meanders through the fall of Atlantis and corresponding rise of ancient Egypt and Central America- and culminates in the life of Jesus. History and metaphysics blur together in the Cayce readings if we go back far enough (e.g. to creation), delve deeply enough (e.g. to the mechanisms of reincarnation and clairvoyance which underlie the entire process), or focus on the example of Jesus (who is the subject of the next chapter).

A. Earth Changes

Geological cataclysms are a recurring theme in the Cayce readings. and in this area the most important influence on him appears to be Madame Blavatsky. According to Cayce, the worlds geography has changed markedly since the dawn of humanity:

In giving such in an understanding manner to man of today, [it is] necessary that the conditions of the earth's surface and the position of man in the earth's plane be understood, for the change has often come since this period, era, age of man's earthly indwelling, for then at that period, only the lands now known as the Sahara and the Nile region appeared on the African shores; that in Tibet, Mongolia, Caucasia, and Norway in Asia and Europe; that in the southern cordilleras and Peru in the Southwestern hemisphere and the plane of now Utah. Arizona, Mexico of the North-western hemisphere, and the spheres were then in the latitudes much as are presented at the present time.

The man's indwelling then in the Sahara and the upper Nile regions, the waters then entering the now Atlantic from the Nile region rather than flowing northward. The waters in the Tibet and Caucasian regions entering the North Sea, those in Mongolia entering the South Seas; those in the cordilleras entering the Northern Seas.

When the earth brought forth the seed in her season. and man came 'in the earth plane as lord of that in that sphere. man appeared in five places at once--the five senses, the five reasons. the five spheres, the five developments. the five nations.

The period in the world's existence from the present time being ten and one-half million (10,500,000) years. [5748-1]

A number of nineteenth-century geologists had wrestled with the question of what geological forces could explain such massive structures as mountain ranges and canyons. In 1812. Georges Cuvier presented a theory known as "catastrophism" in which sudden earth changes (e.g., earthquakes, floods) result in the periodic extinction of plant and animal life and the creation of new species. The chief advantage of catastrophism was its consistency with the biblical account of the Noachian deluge, and of the age of the earth as calculated by Bishop Ussher. The contrary view, "uniformitarianism," teaches that mountains and canyons are formed slowly, over aeons. The term was first used by James Hutton in 1788, and with the publication of Charles Lyell's

Principles of Geology in 1830, the theory became the scholarly consensus. A further distinction should be made between Lyell's "gradualist" uniformitarianism (which held that the rate of geologic change remains constant), and the "actualist" school of James Dana (1873), which allows for localized catastrophes. Still others (e.g. Airy, Suess, Taylor) tried to map the collision and break-up of

prehistoric continents. a line of research which eventually led to Alfred Wegener's 1915 theory of continental drift. Not everyone, however, was prepared to reject catastrophism, or the ancient myths which it supported. Among the holdouts was Madame Blavatsky. According to *The Secret Doctrine*, each root-race has arisen on a different continent respectively. "the Imperishable Sacred Land," Hyperborea, Lemuria, Atlantis, and Europe. (283) Note, however, that in *The Secret Doctrine*, the root-races are separated temporally, not merely geographically. Like Cayce (5748-1), Blavatsky links the five root-races with the five senses. (284) As for the subraces, Blavatsky elsewhere alludes to a yellow Adam, a red Adam, and so on. (285)

For Cayce, catastrophic earth changes are not limited to the distant past--on the contrary. we may expect more of them in the near future:

As to the physical changes again: The earth will be broken up in the western portion of America. The greater portion of Japan must go into the sea. The upper portion of Europe will be changed as in the twinkling of an eye. Land will appear off the east coast of America. There will be the upheavals in the Arctic and in the Antarctic that will make for the eruption of volcanoes in the Torrid areas, and there will be shifting then of the poles--so that where there has been those of a frigid or semi-tropical will become the more tropical, and moss and fern will grow. And these will begin in those periods from '58 to '98, when these will be proclaimed as the periods when His light will be seen again in the clouds.

[976-15]

According to Cayce, around the year 2000 to 2001 a shifting of the earth's poles will occur (826-8), an event which is to signal the dawn of a new age. (It is unclear whether the magnetic or geographic pole is meant--Cayce appears to conflate the two.) The notion of a pole shift originated with the geologist Loeffelholz von Colberg, whose 1895 paper "*Die Drehung der Erdkruste in geologische Zeitraumen*" presented evidence of crustal rotation, or polar wandering. No doubt von Colberg was relieved to hear that his theory had won the endorsement of Madame Blavatsky, who sees pole shifts as milestones marking stages in spiritual evolution. (286)

B. Human Evolution

In answer to the debate over evolution, Cayce concedes that humans have evolved, but stresses that "man was made as man" and certainly did not "descend from the monkey" (3744-5). It may be that Cayce means here to distinguish between the creation of the human soul and that of the physical body. Both evolve, in a sense, but human souls have always been distinct from those of animals. We originally fell from above. rather than rising from below. The issue of physical evolution is more debatable--early incarnating souls appear to have taken proto-human bodies which had been formed for that purpose over a period of millions of years, but Cayce does not make it clear as to how closely this process is intended to correspond to scientific notions of human origins.

Many of Cayce's ideas relating to humanity's physical evolution seem to have been inspired by Blavatsky. One inquirer was said to have lived "...in Atlantean land when there were the separation of bodies as male and female" (2121-2). The idea that humans were originally androgenous, but later separated into male and female, is found in Plato's *Symposium* (189c- 193d, where it is presented humorously), as well as in the Midrash for Genesis 5:2 ("male and female he created them"). The image of sexual union is an old alchemical one taken up by several of the Hermetic groups of the "proto-New Age," although here the symbol is unitive rather than divisive- Arguing against Darwin--who in *The Descent of Man* considers, but rejects, the possibility of a hermaphroditic ancestor of modern vertebrates--Madame Blavatsky traces the separation of the sexes to the third root-race. (287)

A word about Theosophical race theory is in order. The second half of *The Secret Doctrine* describes five "root-races" which have so far inhabited the earth: (1) an "etherial" (gaseous or jelly-like) race which reproduced by fission, through yoga, (2) an asexual race which reproduced by budding, (3) a hermaphroditic race whose offspring were "sweat-born." (4) a race of giants which reproduced

sexually, and (5) the Aryan race. Each Round or epoch is characterized by the emergence of a new root-race. Now the races we know today are not root-races, but sub-races of the Aryan root-race. (There are exceptions, however--the Australian aborigines are remnants of the previous root race; Plato and Confucius were representatives of a complete fifth-round humanity; and Buddha was an early manifestation of the sixth root-race.) Root-races are divided into a number of sub-races, the newer invariably dominating the older. Leadbeater adds that we are now living in the era of the Anglo-Saxon sub-race, perhaps forgetting that Madame Blavatsky was hardly an Anglo-Saxon. While Cayce does not explicitly endorse the Theosophical system of root-races, he appears to have copied freely from it, and on one occasion refers to the imminent rise of the "fifth root race" (5748-6), which according to Blavatsky arrived long ago.

Intriguingly, Cayce follows Blavatsky in holding that archaic humans mated with animals, producing viable offspring. For Cayce, the practice originated with the first souls who became enmeshed in the material plane, and was maintained by the more perverse among the archaic humans of Atlantis. Vestiges of animal characteristics persisted among their descendents until the rise of pre-dynastic Egypt under Ra Ta. At this time, a "Temple of Sacrifice" was constructed where these unfortunates could have such animal appendages surgically removed. These characteristics then disappeared in succeeding generations. (Note that Cayce's account assumes a Lamarckian view of heredity, unless we suppose that some form of genetic engineering is meant.) This detail is anticipated in *The Secret Doctrine*:

In the initial period of man's Fourth evolution, the human kingdom branched off in several and various directions. The outward shape of its first specimens was not uniform, for the vehicles (the egg-like, external shells, in which the future fully physical man gestated) were often tampered with, before they hardened, by huge animals of species now unknown, and which belonged to the tentative efforts of nature. The result was that intermediate races of monsters, half animals, half men, were produced... [Later] the 'Egg-Born' sons had taken several of their females unto themselves as mates, and bred other human monsters... Upon seeing this (state of things), the Kings and Lords of the Last Races. (of the Third and Fourth) placed the seal of prohibition upon the sinful intercourse. (288)

Blavatsky maintains that, contrary to the popular understanding of evolution, apes actually descended from man, as the result of humans interbreeding with members of other species. (289)

Cayce's reference to five races corresponding to five colors (red, yellow, black, white, and brown) originated with Johann Blumenbach, who reduced the peoples of the world to five basic races (Caucasoid, Ethiopic, Mongoloid, American, and Malay), and incidentally coined the term "Caucasian" as synonym for white people on the now-discredited belief that white people originated in the Caucasus region. Cuvier narrowed the list to three basic races (Caucasoid, Negroid, Mongoloid). Today anthropologists are more inclined to treat Australian aborigines, Central African pygmies, and Southern African bushmen as independent races, although the task of demarcating "races" (whether on biological or sociological grounds) is widely conceded to be hugely problematic.

C. Atlantis, Lemuria, and Oz

The myth of Atlantis originated with two late Platonic dialogues, the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*. In the *Timaeus*, Socrates hears the story of Atlantis from Critias, to whom it had been passed down within the family from Solon (Critias' great-grandfather's brother), who in turn had heard it from a priest of Sais, Lower Egypt, while on a visit there. Here Atlantis is described as an "island --- larger than Libya and Asia together" (24E, Jowett translation), which had existed beyond the "Pillars of Hercules" (290) some nine thousand years before the time of the dialogue. At that time, the "real sea" was navigable, and ships could island-hop all the way across it.

... for this within the Straits is only a harbor, having a narrow entrance. but that other is the real sea, and the surrounding land may be most truly called a continent. [25A]

Atlantis was ruled by a powerful federation of kings, whose military forces had rule over the whole island and several others, as well as over parts of the continent, and besides these they subjected parts of Libya within the Straits as far as Egypt, and of Europe as far as Tyrrhenia. [25B]

Greece and Egypt remained unconquered, however, and the Atlantean forces were eventually repulsed by an Athenian-led coalition. Later, as the result of flooding and earthquakes, Atlantis "disappeared, and was sunk beneath the sea" (25D). Navigation in that part of the ocean was rendered impossible due to the large deposits of shoal mud created by the island as it sank.

The *Critias* describes the founding of Atlantis by the god Poseidon and his ten half-human sons (five pairs of twins). The eldest, Atlas, was made king over the rest, and it was from his name that the island came to be called "Atlantis" (literally, "of the daughters of Atlas"). This arrangement became hereditary, so that the descendants of Atlas retained sovereignty over the descendants of the other nine brothers. Under their rule, the island grew prosperous as a trade center (metals, timber, game, elephants, fruits, and vegetables are listed as important local products), and as a result was able to build ornate palaces, temples, harbors, docks, and bridges. The main city of Atlantis consisted of a low mountain in the middle of a fertile rectangular plain hundreds of miles in area, surrounded by alternating circles of land and sea. There were many gardens, and a hippodrome was located along the central island's periphery. Atop the hill stood the royal palace. In the center of the palace was a temple to Poseidon covered with silver and gold, at a site where Poseidon had created two springs--one of them flowing with warm water, the other with cold. A pillar inscribed with the laws of Atlantis was located there as well, along with golden tablets bearing the texts of oaths and judgements. Assemblies were held there every fifth or sixth year, and bull sacrifices were conducted within the sacred precincts. Eventually, however, the people of Atlantis lapsed into decadence. Zeus has just resolved to chasten them when the dialogue ends, unfinished.

It is unclear whether Plato meant his Atlantis as straight history, allegory, political commentary, or something else entirely. Furthermore, even if we assume Plato to have been relating an authentic family tradition (Critias being his great-grandfather), we would then have to consider the reliability of Solon, his Egyptian informant, the translators, and possibly many other links in the chain of transmission who remain unknown to us. As it stands, the story is inherently implausible. No evidence of a high civilization from the tenth Millennium B.C. exists anywhere, as it should if trade had existed between Atlantis and the various Mediterranean peoples; and in any case Greece, was far too sparsely populated in this period to have led the defensive forces described in the *Timaeus*. Furthermore, the sudden disappearance of a continent-sized land-mass makes no sense in light of our present understanding of geology. One promising possibility is that the Platonic accounts of Atlantis represent a distorted memory of real historical events, but that the island's size and antiquity have been exaggerated by a factor of ten. On this reasoning, scholars have proposed a number of Bronze Age sites (e.g. Them Sicily, Crete) as the "real" Atlantis. My favorite theory sees the fall of Atlantis as a garbled account of the fall of Troy. (291)

For our purposes, the next important development of the Atlantis myth is Ignatius T. T. Donnelly's *magnum opus*, *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World* (1882). Besides this work, Donnelly (1831-1901) also wrote *The Great Cryptogram* (1888) and *The Cipher In the Plays and On the Tombstone* (1899), which argue for the Baconian authorship of Shakespeare's plays; *Ragnarok: The Age of Fire and Gravel* (1883), in which he traces the Ice Age to a catastrophic comet strike; and several futuristic utopian novels advocating such radical ideas as universal education and women's suffrage. One of these, *Caesar's Column: A Story of the Twentieth Century* (1891), speculates about a Jewish plot to control world finance, and anticipates the invention of radio, television, and poison gas. Amazingly, Donnelly also served in the U.S. Congress (R-NN) between 1863 and 1871, where he took advantage of his Library of Congress privileges to do the research for his books. Later in life he even ran for vice president under the Middle Road Populist banner.

In *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*, Donnelly accepts the Platonic accounts as historically true, but elaborates on them considerably. As the subtitle indicates, he believes that myths of a great flood from both sides of the Atlantic represent dim memories of the sinking of Atlantis. It was on Atlantis that human civilization first arose; and our legends of the Garden of Eden, the Elysian Fields, and

other happy lands hearken back to this formative period in our past. Survivors of Atlantis peopled lands ranging from Egypt to Central America. According to Donnelly, this explains a host of pan-Atlantic cultural and linguistic similarities ranging from the observation that both sides have pyramids, to the fact that the root *atl* is related to water in both the old world (e.g., "Atlantic") and the new (*chocolat*). The religion of Atlantis centered around sun-worship (Cayce agrees--cf. 4543-2). Our myths of gods and goddesses are often garbled stories of the kings, queens, and heroes of Atlantis. (Cayce follows the same euhemeristic principle 'in the context of his account of Ra Ta and Isris, better known as Ra and Isis).

After Donnelly, the next important development of the Atlantis myth came from Theosophy, which made the continent the birthplace of the fourth root-race. Apart from *The Secret Doctrine*, W. Scott-Elliot's *The Story of Atlantis* (1896) is the classic Theosophical treatment. Scott-Elliot states that Atlantean society achieved a high level of technology, including primitive airships propelled by a form of free energy called "vril" (a word taken from Bulwer-Lytton's novel, *The Coming Race*). (292) Cayce, too, credits Atlantis with flying machines (2437-1) and something like free energy (2124-3, 2562-1). Scott-Elliot also holds that prior to their destruction, the Atlanteans had misused their formidable psychic and occult knowledge. (293) Like Cayce, he describes Atlantean politics as centered around a rivalry between two factions, which was carried over into Egypt. (294) The pyramids, he says (like Cayce later), were halls of initiation built by Atlantean refugees. (295) Other refugees settled the Basque country, thereby accounting for the fact that the Basque language is unrelated to other European tongues.

Cayce's version of Atlantis is similar to Theosophy's. Civilization originated as the result of the cooperative efforts of archaic humans to defend themselves against

... enormous animals which overran the earth, but ice, the entity found, nature, God, changed the poles and the animals were destroyed, though man attempted it (destroying the animals] in that activity of the meetings. [5249-]

Dinosaur fossils had first been discovered in large numbers in England during the 1820's. and were finally recognized for what they were by Richard Owen in 1841 (who coined the term "dinosaur"). The fossils created quite a sensation--not only on their own merits, but also for their implications for traditional Christian conceptions of the history of the world.

According to the Cayce readings, the development of increasingly sophisticated weapons for use against the giant beasts inspired a prehistoric arms race, as humans began to turn these armaments against one another. Atlantis thereafter rose to great technological heights, rivaling the achievements of our own civilization:

...the entity dwelt among those where there was the storage, as it were, of the MOTIVATIVE forces 'in nature from the great crystals that so condensed the lights, the forms, the activities as to guide not only the ship upon the bosom of the sea but in the air and in many of those now known conveniences for man as in the transmission of the body, as in the transmission of the voice, as in the recording of those activities in what is soon to become a practical thing in so creating the vibrations as to make for television--as termed in the present. [813-1]

The reader will recall that Cayce's generation saw numerous scientific and technological advances, including the invention of the typewriter, electric light, cash register, automobile, dirigible, sewing machine, phonograph, radio, telephone, airplane, motion picture camera, and the modern bicycle, to name only a dozen of the most familiar. Cayce's Atlantis reflects the technological advances as well as the social turmoil of his times.

As Atlantean society grew more and more decadent, it became increasingly polarized between two competing factions, the Sons of the Law of One (the good guys) and the Sons of Belial (the bad guys). The Law of One is difficult to pin down, but is apparently related to the Shema ("Hear O Israel..."). For Cayce, the Law of One extends beyond the mere recognition of monotheism to an awareness of the unity of all forces (262-52), all life (262-32), and all experience (3581-1). As corollaries it commands inner unity of purpose (1770-2), recognition of the brotherhood of man (900-429), and even monogamy (826-6). Interestingly, Oliver's *A Dweller On Two Planets* (1899) refers to

the Law of One in connection with Atlantis. (296) Although the context does not make it clear exactly what the Law of One is, elsewhere that book refers to the One Energy or One Substance. (297)

The phrase "Sons of Belial" is found in the Bible (e.g. Deuteronomy 13:13). Cayce's Atlantean group by that name

... had no standard, save of self. self-aggrandizement.... [But others believed] that the soul was given by the Creator or entered from outside sources NTO the projection of the IMENTAL and spiritual self at the given periods. THAT was the standard of the Law of One, but was REJECTED by the Sons of Belial. [877-26]

Theosophical lore sometimes refers to an order of evil Masters which Blavatsky- calls the "'Brotherhood of the Shadow'-the murderers of their souls, the dread *Dad-Dugpa* clan." (298) The Brotherhood of the Shadow functions as a kind of counterweight to the Great White Brotherhood- where the latter attempts to aid spiritual aspirants. the former tries to misdirect them down the path of Spiritualism and tantra. Outside of Theosophy, other possible sources of inspiration for the two groups are the Faithists and Uzians from the *Oahspe Gospel*. as well as the Nephites and Lamanites from the *Book of Mormon*. (299)

The dispute between the Sons of the Law of One and the Sons of Belial centered on the status of

...automatons, or THINGS, that were retained by individuals or groups to do the labors of a household, or to cultivate the fields or the like, or to perform the activities of artisans or the like. And these were those activities through which much of the disturbing forces grew to be factors to be reckoned with. between the Children of the Law of One and the Sons of Belial. [1928-2]

These enslaved creatures were not robot-, but the offspring of humans and animals referred to earlier. The parallel with American slavery should be obvious.

The conflict between the two factions escalated until Atlantis was tom apart. literally as well as figuratively.

With the continued disregard of those who were keeping the pure race and the pure peoples ... man brought in the destructive forces as used for the peoples that were to be the rule, that combined with those natural resources of the gases, of the electrical forces, made in nature and natural form the first of the eruptions that awoke from the depth of the slow cooling earth, and that portion now near what would be termed the Sargasso Sea first went into the depths. With this there again came that egress of peoples.... Hence we find in various portions of the world even in the present day, some form of that as WAS presented by those peoples in THAT great DEVELOPMENT in this. the Eden of the world. [363-4]

According to Cayce, Atlantis actually sank in stages, Poseidia being one of the portions to disappear. This is the Atlantis recorded by Plato, he says. Naming an island for Poseidon is a natural move given that god's prominent role in the *Critias*. In fact, the name "Poseidonis" is found in Leadbeater, Scott-Elliott, as well as Oliver. (300)

For Cayce, Atlantis is of more than merely academic significance. First. with the coming geological cataclysms, parts of Atlantis are due to rise again from the ocean: "And Poseidia will be among the first portions of Atlantis to rise again. Expect it in sixty-eight or sixty-nine--not so far away!" (958-3). Second, large numbers of Atlanteans are presently reincarnating. since their former misuse of technology required them to be reborn in a world where they could face the same choices again, and perhaps make better decisions this time around (364-1).

The idea of a Pacific counterpart of Atlantis originated with Ernst Haeckel, who hypothesized that lemurs might have migrated from mainland Asia to the various islands of the Malay Archipelago by means of a landbridge, thereby accounting for their widespread distribution. This hypothetical landmass was whimsically dubbed "Lemuria" by his colleague, P.L. Sclater. Sclater's joke goes largely unappreciated by modern readers--it alludes to the fact that before "lemur" came to be used for the

diminutive primate by that name, the word referred to the zombie-like wraiths of popular Roman religion who had to be propitiated through special festivals in their honor, called *Lemuria*. Haekel eventually changed his mind about the need to invoke such a landbridge, but by then the idea--and name--of Lemuria had become popularized by Augustus le Plongeon (who made the connection with Central America), by Theosophy (which made it the home of the third root-race), and later by James Churchward (1852-1936) in his five *Mu* books. While "Mu" might appear to simply be a contraction of "Lemuria," le Plongeon traces it to one Queen Moo of the Yucatan.(301)

Cayce refers to Lemuria or Mu (the latter being one of three island remnants of the former in his usage), but does not give us very much detail. According to the readings, at least some of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel made it to the New World--not over the Atlantic, as one might expect, but by way of Lemuria, in the Pacific:

The joining in the activities there were for the attempts to establish with those peoples that had been a portion of the lost or strayed tribe that came across from Lemuria; as well as with those that came from the lands of bondage by the Persians and those that were later called the Indo-Chinans--or those peoples from the mountain who raided the Indian land. There the entity aided in establishing a new union of activity, in what would now be called the Arizona land- [1434-1]

The idea of tracing the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel to the New World dates at least back to the Spanish conquistadores (e.g. Diego de Landa, Bishop of Yucatan); however, the source most likely to have influenced Cayce is the *Book of Mormon*. Like Cayce, the *Book of Mormon* asserts that the Lost Ten Tribes sailed to America by way of the Pacific, not the Atlantic. Led by the prophet Lehi, these hardy souls first made a caravan journey to the Indian Ocean, then sailed for the west coast of North America (I Nephi 16-18). While the *Book of Mormon* does not mention Lemuria, the notion of an eastward journey from Palestine to America is too bizarre a detail to be attributed to chance.

In several readings (e.g. 5750- 1), Cayce refers to a land called "Oz" or "Og", which he locates in the vicinity of Peru during the Atlantean period. Like Mu, Oz is described as one of three island remnants of Lemuria, and its name represents more than an occasion for humor.

Lyman Frank Baum, a Theosophist, published his fourteen Oz books over the first few decades of the twentieth century, beginning with *The Wizard of Oz* (1900).A theatrical version of *The Wizard of Oz* premiered in 1902 and was quite successful. The film version starring Judy Garland came out in 1938, riding a wave of popularity generated by the theatrical tours. While Cayce does not say much about Oz, the flavor of Baum's novels curiously resembles Cayce's account of Atlantis and Lemuria--human/animathybrids, fabulous cities in a strange hidden realm, magical battles between good and evil, and so on. Devlin points out that just as Cayce named Oz and Mu as neighboring civilizations, so did Baum in *Scarecrow of Oz* say the same of Oz and Mo. (302)

D. Predynastic Egypt

Popular European interest in Egyptology in modern times was initially sparked by scholars and artists associated with the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt (1798-1801). The Rosetta Stone was discovered in 1799, and deciphered in the 1820's by Jean-Francois Champollion. By the late nineteenth century, a number of museums in Europe and the United States boasted collections of Egyptian artifacts. Wallis-Budge published a number of works during this period, of which the most widely-read was his translation of *The Book of Going Forth By Day* under the apparently more marketable title, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (1897). Fake papyri bearing Egyptian hieroglyphics drawn from this text were widely available in nineteenth-century America, as were patent medicines made from mummy cloth. The discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922 attracted considerable public interest--not only in the historical, and artistic value of the find, but also in legends to the effect that its discoverers had incurred a curse upon themselves for disturbing "King Tut." Freemasons, Mormons, and Theosophists

were particularly enchanted with Egyptian lore. whose antiquity and prestige they sought to claim for their own esoteric traditions.

Cayce joins Donnelly and Scott-Elliot in having refugees from the sinking of Atlantis settle ancient Egypt, Central America, and other places in the area:

... in the Atlantean land, during those periods particularly when there was the exodus from Atlantis owing to the foretelling or foreordination of those activities which were bringing about the destructive forces. There we find the entity was among those who were not only in what is now known as the Yucatan land. but also the Pyrenees and the Egyptian. [1859-1]

Naturally, the peoples who were already living in those places resisted this influx. Matters were not helped by the fact that the Sons of Belial tended to regard native populations as being similar in status to the "automatons" or "things" they had brought with them from Atlantis (281-43). And so, the Sons of the Law of One and the Sons of Belial carried their conflict to new battlegrounds.

In Egypt, a religious leader named Ra Ta (one of Cayce's previous incarnations) managed to negotiate a political settlement between the Atlantean refugees and the native Egyptians (294-148). (Ra Ta was neither an Atlantean nor a native Egyptian, but had led a previous group of invaders from the Caucasus.) In addition, he addressed the problem of humans with animal appendages by establishing two temples, the Temple of Sacrifice and the Temple Beautiful. The former was a place of physical healing, as these beings had feathers, body hair, tails, claws, and other animal protuberances removed (294-8). The latter was devoted to spiritual healing by means of music, dance, and light (281-25). Other temples which were eventually constructed include the Temple of the Sun, the Temple of Records, and the Temple of Initiation.

Being a follower of the Law of One, Ra Ta tried do away with the native Egyptian custom of housing men and women in separate lodges (with mating arranged by decree of the royal household), and replace it with state-legislated monogamy. Unfortunately, despite his beliefs, he found himself unable to adhere to the standard he had set. When a dancer named Isris (Gertrude Cayce) became pregnant with his child Iso (Gladys Davis), the result was political turmoil, with Ra Ta forced into exile by the Sons of Belial (294-149). "Richard Roche" and Stephan A. Schwartz both point out the similarities between the Ra Ta story and the myth of Isis, Osiris, and Horus from Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* (chs. 12-19), with Cayce's rebellious Prince Ralij of IbeX standing in for Typhon or Set. Schwartz additionally names Herodotus and Solon as sources, and Roche points to Diodorus Siculus's account of Dionysius.(303)

After many misadventures, Ra. Ta eventually returned to power. He then commissioned a mysterious figure named Hermes to build a monument which would record the accumulated wisdom of his culture--the Great Pyramid:

In the information as respecting the pyramids and their purpose in the experience of the peoples, in the period when there was the rebuilding of the priest during the return in the land, some 10,500 years before the coming of Christ into the land, there was first that attempt to restore and add to that which had already been begun on what is called the Sphinx, and the treasure or storehouse facing same, between this and the Nile, in which those records were kept by Arart and Araaraat in the period.

Then, with Hermes and Ra ... there began the building of that now called Gizeh ... that was to be the hall of the initiates of that sometimes referred to as the White Brotherhood....

In this same Pyramid did the Great Initiate. the Master, take those last of the Brotherhood degrees with John, the forerunner of Him, at that place. As is indicated in that period where entrance is shown to that land that was set apart, as that promised to that peculiar peoples, as were rejected--as is shown in that portion when there is a turning back from raising up of Xerxes, as the deliverer from an unknown tongue or land, and again is there seen that this occurs in the entrance of the Messiah in this period-1998. [5748-5]

The idea that occult initiations were conducted somewhere in the vicinity of Giza is an old Theosophical one. Leadbeater names Tehutui or Thoth, "called Hermes," as the architect of the Great Pyramid. (304) For Leadbeater, what appears on the surface to be animal worship actually conceals profound esoteric mysteries, as in the *Book of the Dead*. The ancient Egyptians, he says, developed levels of lesser and greater mysteries corresponding to those of modern Freemasonry. Cayce appears to have taken the part about Jesus' initiation from the *Aquarian Gospel* (see. XI) or its derivative in H. Spencer Lewis. (305) Lewis even anticipates Cayce's references to a doorway between the paws of the Sphinx leading to subterranean passages. (306) Roche (1975: 44) points out that the ideas of tunnels under the Sphinx is found in Iamblichus, who connects them with the Egyptian mysteries.

In Cayce's account, Ra Ta (appropriately enough, a Caucasian) is said to have had white skin, blond hair, and blue eyes. While this description is unlikely from the point of view of conventional Egyptology, the notion that white people were present in ancient Egypt is confirmed by Spalding, who credits them with the glories of Egyptian civilization. Modern readers can hardly avoid noticing that Spalding has the unfortunate habit of linking spiritual purity with lightness of skin complexion. Consider the following:

These people [the ancient Egyptians] were the pure white race and were always known as the Israelites, of whom the Hebrew race is a division. Thoth ruled wisely and attempted to maintain the Osirian teachings but, after his day, the dark and material concept crept in, as the Egyptian or dark hordes from the south, who had swept him into power, gained sway. The succeeding dynasties fell away from Osirian teachings, gradually took up the dark concept of the dark race, and finally practiced black magic entirely. (307)

Cayce, for his part, hails the period of Ra Ta as one of a "change of the race to become--and is now--the white. Hence, as Ra Ta means and indicates, among--or the first PURE white in the experience then of the earth..." (294-147). H. Spencer Lewis agrees that the ancient Egyptians were Aryans, and argues based on Matthew 4:15 ("Galilee of the Gentiles") that Galileans were Aryans as well, in order to claim Jesus as a member of the Aryan race. (308)

Cayce claims that the structure of the Great Pyramid records--or prophesies--every significant spiritual event throughout history:

All changes that came in the religious thought in the world are shown there, in the variations in which the passage through same is reached, from the base to the top--or to the open tomb AND the top. These are signified both by the layer and the color in what direction the turn is made. [5748-5]

The notion of "pyramid prophecy" can be traced back to the writings of John Taylor, author of *The Great Pyramid.- Why Was It Built and Who Built It?* (1859); and Charles Piazzi Smyth, author of *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid* (1877). According to Smyth, it would be wrong to interpret the Great Pyramid as the work of heathens--"We find in all its *finished* parts not a vestige of heathenism, nor the smallest indulgence in anything approaching to idolatry," he writes.(309) Instead, the Great Pyramid is a repository for the divine wisdom of the ages. Three "keys" provide a sort of Rosette Stone capable of translating the Pyramid's geometry into spiritual truths: mathematics, natural science, and the Bible. For example, we learn that the ratio of the pyramid's height to twice one of the base segments equals $1 : 3.14159 \dots$; that the pyramid stands at the geometric center of the world's land mass; and that the various twists and turns in the Great Hall record all the great spiritual events in history from the seven days of creation to the birth of Christ and on to the end of time, which was scheduled to occur sometime between 1881 and 1944. All calculations are based on something called the pyramid inch, which according to Smyth must be assumed since it is the only unit of measurement capable of revealing all these exact geometrical correspondences. Skeptics point to the impossibility of reconstructing the exact dimensions of the Great Pyramid once Napoleon's soldiers stripped it of its limestone casing.

A multitude of later pyramidologists continued ideas begun by Taylor and Smyth. Cayce is asked about a work entitled *The Great Pyramid* by D. Davidson and H. Aldersmith, which he evaluates as follows: "Many of these that have been taken as deductions are correct. Many are far overdrawn. Only an initiate may understand" (5748-5). The work in question centers around predictions of the coming

"period of chaos" (expected to last between 1928 and 1936) followed by a period of "judgement" (1936 to 1953). Cayce too speaks of such periods, with 1936 being one of several turning points mentioned.

283. H.P. Blavatsky, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 11. pp. 6-9.

284. *Ibid.*, vol. 11, pp. 107-108.

285. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 426.

286. *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 329.

287. *Ibid.*, vol. 11, pp. 132-133.

288. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 192.

289. *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 184-185.

290. Although these are usually identified with the Strait of Gibraltar, it has been suggested that Plato intended a location in the Aegean by that name.

291. Eberhard Zangger suggests this theory in *The Flood From Heaven*. However, the parallels between the stories of the fall of Atlantis and Troy need not imply that both myths are rooted in actual history, as Zangger argues.

292. W. Scott-Elliot, *The Story of Atlantis & Lost Lemuria*, p. 46.

293. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

294. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

295. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

296. Frederick Spencer Oliver, *A Dweller On Two Planets*, p. 188.

297. *Ibid.*, p. 63

298. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 51. In reality, the Dugpa or Drukpa ("dragon people" or "Bhutanese") are a subdivision of the Kagyupa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Blavatsky's description of them bears little relationship with reality.

299. Curiously enough, a similar idea is found in the Qumran War Scroll (also known as *The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*), which even refers to "the army of Belial." Cayce could not possibly have read this text, although both Cayce and the author of the War Scroll might easily have independently chosen similar appropriations of the biblical references.

300. C.W. Leadbeater, *Ancient Mystic Rites*, p. 16: W. Scott-Elliot. *The Story of Atlantis & Lost Lemuria*, p. 28: Frederick Spencer Oliver, *A Dweller On Two Planets*, p. 42.

301. In L. Sprague de Camp, *Lost Continents*, p. 44.

302. Mary Devlin, "The Great Cosmic Fairy Tale," p. 31.

303. Richard Roche, *Egyptian Myths and the Ra Ta Story*, p. 10 ff.: Stephan A. Schwartz, "The Canadian and the Seer's Son."

304. C.W. Leadbeater, *Ancient Mystic Rites*, p. 17.

305. H. Spencer Lewis, *Symbolic Prophecy of the Great Pyramid*, p. 196 ff.

306. Ibid. p. 206 ff.

307. Baird T. Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, vol. II, pp. 12-13.

308. H. Spencer Lewis, *Symbolic Prophecy of the Great Pyramid*, p. 53 ff).

309. Charles Piazzi-Smyth, *Our Inheritance In the Great Pyramid*, p. 5.

Edgar Cayce's Secret, Part 15

Strictly speaking, Jesus belongs to the previous chapter (on history). However, for Cayce this is history of an entirely different order, owing to the intense spiritual meaning with which it is charged. Cayce's elaborations on the New Testament accounts are no less spiritually suggestive than his incorporation of those accounts. His identification of the Jesus soul's earlier incarnations ties the Bible together with other Cayce material in a manner illustrative of the workings of karma. His descriptions of the Essenes of Mount Carmel hold that group up as an ideal for others who would clear a path for Christ. His mention of Jesus's studies in Egypt, Persia, and India suggest the essential compatibility of Eastern and Western religions. Finally, his Christology makes the Christ spirit not only an ideal toward which to aspire, but a living presence which guides all those who "name the name."

A. Jesus's past lives

According to Cayce, Jesus and Adam were different incarnations of the same soul, as were Eve and the Virgin Mary (Jesus's twin soul). Thus was Jesus able to atone for the "sin of Adam".

Q. When did the knowledge come to Jesus that he was to be the Savior of the world?

A. When he fell in Eden. [2067-7]

Many other characters from the Old Testament were also incarnations of Jesus, to the extent that the entire Christian Bible becomes part of the story of his long struggle to attain Christhood:

Q. Please give the important re-incarnations of Adam in the world's history.

A. In the beginning as Amilius, as Adam, as Melchizedek, as Zend, as Ur. as Asaph, as Jesus--Joseph--Jesus. Then, as that coming into the world in the second coming [364-7]

The stories of the primordial redeemer figure Amilius and the biblical Adam are difficult to disentangle from one another. Essentially, "Amilius" (also spelled "Amelius") is the name by which Cayce refers to the Jesus entity *before* his adoption of a physical body (corresponding to Genesis 1), whereas "Adam" refers to the same entity *after* he took on a material form (corresponding to Genesis 2). The first wave of souls (known as "the sons of men") became entrapped in the earth plane accidentally, through their misuse of free will. These events gave rise to legends of the fall of the angels. The second wave ("the sons of God") consisted of those souls led by Amilius--the Jesus-entity--who voluntarily became entrapped in order to assist the first wave. This they accomplished by steering the process of physical evolution in order to create more appropriate physical forms for these souls. Cayce places Amilius on Atlantis, but says that he did not physically incarnate until the human physical form had been created, at which time the Genesis accounts of Adam and Eve begin. The location of the Garden of Eden is variously given as the "Caucasian and Carpathian" (364-13), or "between the Euphrates, or...the Red Sea. the Dead Sea" (1179-2)--in any case, not Atlantis. Confusingly, Cayce sometimes uses the word "Adam" to refer to the entire *group* of souls which had accompanied the Jesus-entity incarnation into the earth plane, who incarnated as the five races on five separate continents (e.g. 900-227). Eventually, the Jesus-entity, as Adam, joined his twin soul in allowing himself to be seduced by materiality himself, as symbolized by his acceptance of the forbidden fruit. The other sons of God followed suit, and as a result were moved to express their materiality by interbreeding with the "daughters of men" (cf. Genesis 6:2). In this light, humanity's banishment from the Garden of Eden was actually a great blessing, since death, reincarnation, and karma are all designed to draw our attention away from materiality and toward our true nature. In case the reader wonders where Cayce came up with the name "Amilius," or why a disembodied entity in Atlantis should have been given a Latinate name, it bears mentioning that history knows of one Amelius who was a minor neo-Platonist philosopher of the third century A.D. This Amelius was a pupil of Plotinus, a teacher of Porphyry, and the author of a longlost forty-volume work against one Zostrianos the Gnostic. Ironically, in view of the Caycean Amelius's connection with Atlantis, his namesake interpreted Plato's Atlantis myth as astronomical symbolism rather than straight history.(310)

As with Adam and Eve, Cayce interprets the biblical references to Enoch (364-8) and Melchizedek literally, as reliable accounts of historical figures. Interestingly, these two incarnations are also attributed to Jesus by "Visel, the Goddess of Wisdom. or the Holy Breath" as she commands Dowling to write the *Aquarian Gospel*:

Write full the story of The Christ who built upon the Solid Rock of yonder circle of the sun-the Christ who men have known as Enoch the Initiate.... And you may write the story of Melchizedec, the Christ who lived when Abraham lived.... (311)

Melchizedek (the "king of Salem" and "priest of the most high God" who shares bread and wine with Abraham in Genesis 14: 18-20) is mentioned both in the Dead Sea Scrolls (I I Q Melch) and the Nag Hammadi codices (NEC IX 1), where he appears as a cosmic angelic figure. possibly similar to the risen Christ. Hebrews 5:10 calls Jesus "a high priest after the order of Melchizedek," perhaps in an attempt to explain how Jesus could be a priestly messiah without being a Levite. According to Cayce, Melchizedek wrote the Book of Job, which contains many mysterious passages that Cayce liked. "For, as the sons of God came together to reason, as recorded by Job, "WHO recorded same? The Son of Man! Melchizedek wrote Job!" (262-55).

Enoch, too, has a distinguished literary history encompassing several pseudepigraphal works as well as some Kabbalistic writings, in addition to his brief mention in Genesis 5:18-24 (which concludes, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not, for God took him"). These describe the fall of the angels into materiality, take the title character on several heavenly voyages, reveal to him the future up to the time of the messiah, and teach him about such traditional topics as angelology and the divine throne-chariot. Ethiopic Enoch introduces Enoch to a messianic figure referred to as "the Son of Man," and the proto-Kabbalistic (Hebrew) *Apocalypse of Enoch* shows him transfigured into the angel Metatron. In the canonical New Testament, Enoch is mentioned in Hebrews 11:5 and Jude 14-15, with the latter passage apparently quoting from the pseudepigraphal Enochian literature (thereby lending it a certain legitimacy in the eyes of someone like Cayce who is committed to the reliability of the Christian Bible).

"Hermes" of the Cayce readings probably belongs in the same company as Melchizedek and Enoch, although he is not a biblical figure and in any case Cayce never specifically names him as a previous incarnation of Jesus. (312) The readings have him design and build the Great Pyramid (5748-5) under the direction of Ra Ta. Apart from the Cayce readings, a connection between a Hermes and Egypt is also found in the Hellenistic writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, which are of Egyptian provenance. In the first book, Hermes is referred to as *Poimandres*, "shepherd of men." In another curious Christian parallel, he says "the Word which came forth from the Light is the Son of God" (1,6). Here, Hermes teaches that human nature consists of such divine elements as Nature, Light, Mind, and Life: and that by recognizing them we may return to the invisible, immaterial world of Truth. During the Renaissance the newly-translated philosophy of the Hellenistic Hermetic literature mixed freely with astrology, alchemy, Kabbalah, and magic, so that "Hermeticism" eventually came to mean a kind of occult lore. In Freemasonry and Theosophy, this was combined with a revival of interest in ancient Egypt. For example, the 1607 Inago Jones document traces Masonic lore to the children of the antediluvian patriarch Lamech by way of Hermes Trismegistus, who recorded the fraternity's wisdom on obelisks and pyramids for posterity.

"Ur" is elsewhere said to be "rather a land, a place, a city" that somehow guided or influenced Jesus, rather than an actual person (564-9). Outside of the Cayce readings, of course, "Ur of the Chaldees" is remembered primarily as the native city of Abraham (Genesis 11:31).

Perhaps the syllable sounded more mysterious as the result of its German meaning ("primordial").

Cayce identifies "Zend" (also spelled "Zen", "Zan", "Sen". or "San") as the father of Zoroaster (991-1), and as a source of inspiration for the *Zend-Avesta* (288-29). Actually, the word *Zend* in *Zend-Avesta* means "commentary," (313) and in any case the work by that name is a relatively late Middle Persian commentary on the *Avesta*. Also, in reality Zoroaster's father was Pourushaspa, of the clan Spitaman. (314) It would appear that despite the sleeping Cayce's fascination with ancient Iran, he did not actually know very much about that country, but based his readings on a fantasized version of it

inspired by the Book of Esther and Matthew's story of the Magi. Interestingly, Steiner in his gospel commentaries makes one of the Jesus children (the "Solomon Jesus" from Matthew) an incarnation of Zarathustra. Anyway, according to the readings, Zend was the son of Ujhjtd (a previous incarnation of Cayce) and Ilya (Gladys Davis), who was a niece of Croesus. Together they had defied their Icing in order to found a Silk Route oasis called Toaz or Is-Shlan-doen (which he translates as "the City in the Hills and the Plains"),(315) just southwest of the present-day Shushtar in western Iran. Besides Zend, Ujhjtd and Ilya also had a daughter named Uldha and a son named Ujndt.

Turning to the remaining biblical characters, the story of Joseph would have appealed to Cayce for its Egyptian location, its endorsement of dream guidance, and also for Joseph's escape from the pit (anticipating Jesus's resurrection). The appeal of Joshua (who is not listed in the passage above, cf. 5749-14) is more difficult to account for given his notorious genocidal tendencies. (316) Cayce saw Joshua as a member of a family which had produced many adept spiritual counselors (1737); and also as a scribe for Moses, who psychically dictated much of the material from the books traditionally attributed to him (e.g. 5023-2). thus explaining how he could have managed to include such details as the creation of the universe and his own death. The readings give little information about Asaph, the music director and seer who served under David and Solomon. Jeshua (an incarnation of Jesus not listed above), the high priest who helped organize the return from exile and the rebuilding of the temple (as recounted in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah) (317) is claimed by Cayce to have compiled and translated the books of the Bible (5023-2). If these characters (as Cayce describes them) have anything in common, it is their role as psychic revelators.

Note that "Joshua", "Jeshua", and "Jesus" are really the same name. That is, the name "Jesus" is a Latinization of the Aramaic *Jeshua* or Yeshua, which is in turn taken from the Hebrew *Yehoshua*, or Joshua. (Jesus was thus named after the Old Testament hero.) So Cayce has assigned the soul-entity Jesus the same name for three separate incarnations! Eddy had noted the connection between the names "Jesus" and "Joshua" in *Science and Health*; (318) Cayce elsewhere reports that Jesus was registered by his Essene school under the name of "Jeshua" (2067-7).

As for the Second Coming, Cayce sometimes interprets this as an internal, psychic event within the individual seeker (as in his commentary on the Book of Revelation), and sometimes as the actual return of Jesus Christ in particular. In discussing the massive geological changes predicted for this century, he adds that "these will begin in those periods from '58 to '98. when these will be proclaimed as the periods when His light will be seen in the clouds" (3976-15). While this passage might be interpreted psychologically, elsewhere Cayce insists that Jesus will return in the flesh (5749-4). As it happens, early twentieth-century Kentucky was the scene of great premillennialist excitement (although the Disciples of Christ were largely postmillennialists), and several of the Cayce readings imply a premillennialist perspective. For example:

As given, for a thousand years he will walk and talk with men of every clime. Then in groups, in masses, and then they shall reign of the first resurrection for a thousand years; for this will be when the changes materially come. [364-8]

Although Cayce gives the year date of the "entrance of the Messiah into this period--1998" (5748-5), he also admits that no one knows the exact time of the Second Coming, since it cannot occur "until His enemies--and the earth--are wholly in subjection to His will, His powers" (57491). Strictly speaking, this will not be a future incarnation, since Jesus has already transcended the necessity of reincarnating.

B. Jesus the Essene

The readings claim that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were affiliated with an Essene community based on Mount Carmel, which was a continuation of a "school of the prophets" begun by Elijah, Elisha, Samuel, and ultimately Melchizedek (254-109). The Essenes are not mentioned in the Bible--Cayce's generation would have known about them from Josephus, Philo, and Pliny the Elder. While the word "Essene" is never used in the Qumran texts (a.k.a. the Dead Sea Scrolls), most scholars accept that

the Qumran sectarians were either identical or closely related to the Essenes of the classical authors. Nevertheless, the Dead Sea Scrolls were not discovered until 1947, so Cayce could not have been influenced by them.(319) According to the Cayce material, the Essenes were an esoterically-inclined religious community consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, men and women. whose purpose was to prepare for the coming of the messiah. The word "Essene," we are told, means "expectancy" (254-109). (Scholars have advanced several theories as to the origins of the Essenes' name, though never this one.) Following Josephus' observation that the Essenes were known for fortune-telling, Cayce has them spending their time recording experiences of "the supernatural or out of the ordinary experiences; whether in dreams, visions. voices, or what not" (1472-1). The Essenes were "students of what ye would call astrology, numerology, phrenology, and those phases of the study of the return of individuals, or incarnation...." (5749-8).

Apart from the glaringly anachronistic reference to phrenology, how accurate is Cayce's description of the Essenes in light of the Qumran material? The scrolls give the impression of an authoritarian, highly regimented community intent on controlling every aspect of its members' lives. The *Manual of Discipline* specifies that members were to turn over all money and property to the community after a year's probation, and lists a bewildering variety of offenses which merit lengthy punishment or expulsion. The Qumran sectarians were located at about a four-hour walk from the nearest town (Jericho), probably out of a desire to "be separated from all the men of error who walk in the ways of wickedness. (320) The sect's theology stressed the dichotomy of good and evil--in members' personal lives. in the half-mythical conflict between the "Teacher of Righteousness" and the "Wicked Priest," in the separation of the Qumran sect from the outside world, and in an anticipated final war between the sons of light and the army of Belial (from the War Scroll). It may be that the members of the Qumran community were not typical of Essenes elsewhere, and that more liberal Essene groups (it would certainly be hard to imagine more conservative ones) congregated in the towns and cities. As for the Jesus connection, James Charlesworth has edited a good introductory volume on the problem of Jesus' relationship to the Qumran sect. (321) In brief, the scholarly consensus seems to be that whe there are many intriguing points of similarity between Jesus and the Qumran community. the differences are just as profound. For example, the Qumran sectarians would certainly not have approved of Jesus' relatively relaxed moral standards (e.g. enjoying the company of prostitutes and tax collectors), although similar groups elsewhere may have been more understanding. Also. an equally impressive roster of similarities could be mustered on behalf of competing interpretations making Jesus into a proto-Pharisee, Zealot, Cynic sage, folk magician, or a lapsed follower of John the Baptist.

The idea that Jesus was an Essene dates back to the German enlightenment. and came from rationalists who sought to deny the authority of traditional Christian doctrine. As early as 1717, one Humphrey Prideaux mentions the idea in connection with the Deists. In 1800, there appeared a four-volume Jesus novel by Karl Heinrich Venturini which speculated that Joseph of Aramathea, Nicodemus, and Jesus were Essenes. Jesus's disciples, however, were not fully initiated and therefore misunderstand his message. Venturini's fictional plot was seriously advanced by Karl Friedrich Bahrdr (1741-1792), a professor of Halle, Prussia who named the Masons as the Essenes' modern continuation. (322)

A number of occult gospels confirmed that Jesus had been a member of the Essenes, and hence of the Great White Brotherhood. Typical themes include white robes (mentioned by Josephus), mastery of the healing arts (an exaggeration of Philo's observation that they cared for the sick), and a quasi-Masonic hierarchy (an extrapolation from Josephus' comment that their order consisted of four classes). For example, there is *The Crucifixion of Jesus, by an Eye Witness*, of unknown authorship (first published in 1849). This work was supposedly copied in translation from a Latin manuscript in a Greek monastery in Alexandria. Goodspeed traces it back to nineteenth-century German Masonic circles. (323) According to *The Crucifixion of Jesus*, John the Baptist was an Essene, and Jesus also joined that order. White-robed Essenes were mistaken for angels during the annunciation to Mary; made arrangements for the flight into Egypt (cf. Cayce reading 1010); and later supervised the resurrection, which was actually accomplished through the Essenes' advanced healing arts. Cayce largely adopts the perspective of the *Aquarian Gospel* and H. Spencer Lewis with regard to the Essenes. The *Aquarian Gospel* portrays the Essenes as cosmopolitan types with contacts as far afield

as Egypt, Greece, Persia, India, China and Tibet. Cayce, like Dowling, identifies the Essenes with the Great White Brotherhood:

Q. Were the Essenes called at various times and places Nazirites, School of the Prophets, Hasidees, Therapeutae, Nazarenes, and were they a branch of the Great White Brotherhood, starting in Egypt and taking as members Gentiles and Jews alike?

A. In general, yes. Specifically, not altogether.

They were known at times as some of these; or the Nazirites were a branch or THOUGHT of same, see? Just as in the present one would say that any denomination by name is a branch of the Christian- Protestant faith, see? ... The movement was NOT an Egyptian one, though ADOPTED by those in another period--or an earlier period--and made a part of the whole movement. They took Jews and Gentiles alike as members-yes. [254-109]

The question appears to have been inspired by Lewis's account, which discusses nearly all of the groups named. There the Essenes are described as a Palestinian branch of the Great White Brotherhood in Egypt. One branch was located at Ein Gedi, the other (like Cayce's Essenes) at Mount Carmel. Their purpose was to prepare for the coming of the messiah. (324) Meanwhile, like Cayce, the *Aquarian Gospel* asserts that "Joseph was an upright man, and a devoted Essenes" (1: 12). and that Jesus received his education and mission from this order. Lewis makes the same claims. Again like Cayce (but unlike Notovitch and the Enlightenment rationalists), Dowling affirms all of the traditional miracles and then some--Mary was 'indeed a virgin; Jesus really did rise from the dead. Lewis meanwhile seems to affirm the Virgin Birth (which, like Cayce, he interprets in New Thought terms) and the miracles of Jesus, but subscribes to the "swoon" theory in which Jesus did not really die on the cross.

Cayce says that, due to her great virtue, Mary was chosen by the Essenes for intensive spiritual training in preparation for the conception of the messiah. Mary's election as mother of the messiah occurs during a special ceremony in the temple at Mount Carmel, in which an angel leads her by the hand to the altar:

Q. How long was the preparation in progress before Mary was chosen?

A. Three years.

Q. In what manner was she chosen?

A. As they walked up the steps! [5749-7]

Q. How old was Mary at the time she was chosen?

A. Four, and as ye would call, between twelve and thirteen when designated as the one chosen by the angel on the stair. [5749-8]

In the apocryphal *Infancy Gospel of James, or Protevangelion Jacob*, Mary is presented to the Lord at the age of three when her father Joachim "set her on the third step of the altar, and the Lord God gave grace to her ... and she received food from the hand of an angel." (325) Cayce (254-109) and the *Protevangelion* agree that Joseph was chosen as her husband by lot. They also agree that Joseph was much older than Mary. Cayce (5749-7) gives their ages at the time of their marriage as thirty-six and sixteen, respectively. Meanwhile, the *Protevangelion* states that Joseph was a widower, and although different versions disagree as to Mary's age, the most common figure is sixteen. (326) Finally, Cayce (587. 1152), the *Protevangelion*, and the *Aquarian Gospel* (3:3) agree that Jesus was born in a cave. Lewis affirms all of these details as well, probably under the influence of Dowling.

C. Jesus's world tour

According to Cayce, at age sixteen the young Jesus returned abroad ("returned" because of Matthew's account of the flight into Egypt) to begin his education--first a brief trip back to Egypt, then three years in India, and finally a year in Persia. The idea of Jesus traveling to these exotic places has obvious appeal to those steeped in Theosophical lore, who interpret his teachings along the lines of doctrines taken from Eastern religions.

Here, after the period again of presentation at the temple, when there were those questionings among the groups of the leaders, the entity then was sent first--again--into Egypt for only a short period, and then into India. and then into what is now Persia.

Hence in all the ways of the teachers the entity was trained.

From Persia he was called to Judea at the death of Joseph, and then into Egypt for the completion of his preparation as a teacher.

He was with John, the Messenger, during the portion of the training there in Egypt.

Then to Capernaum, Cana, and those periods of the first preparation in the land of the nativity.

The rest you have according to Mark, John, Matthew and Luke; these in their order record most of the material experiences of the Master. [5749-7]

The notion that Jesus had spent his "lost years" wandering Asia by no means originated with Cayce. Its first proponent seems to have been the Russian war correspondent Nicholas Notovitch (1858-c. 1916), who describes his travels in British India in a work entitled *La Vie inconnue de Jesus-Christ (The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ)*, published in 1894. According to that work, in 1887 Notovitch was supposedly told by the unnamed "chief lama" of Hemis monastery (located about 40 kilometers south of Leh, Ladakh) that their library contained records of a visit to Ladakh by Jesus in ancient times. Shortly after his departure, Notovitch fractured his knee in an equestrian accident, which he regarded as the perfect excuse to return to Hemis for an extended stay. There, the chief lama finally relented to his earnest requests to examine the manuscripts in question. These were two large bound volumes in Tibetan, which Notovitch duly copied down--in translation. through his interpreter--as *The Life of Saint Issa: Best of the Sons of Men*.

Purportedly the account of traders returning to Ladakh from Israel in the first century A.D. the text begins by summarizing the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, Israel's lapse into sin during the prophetic period, and the subsequent Roman occupation. But God has mercy on one poor couple (Mary and Joseph), whom he rewards by giving them a son, Issa (which is the Qu'anic name for Jesus). All is well until the boy turns thirteen and the parents arrange a marriage for him. Issa

... left the parental house in secret, departed from Jerusalem, and with the merchants set out towards Sind, with the object of perfecting himself in the divine word and of studying the laws of the great Buddhas. [IV. 12- 13] (327)

At fourteen, he traveled across northern Sind, the Punjab, and Rajputana, where he encountered the "erring worshippers of Jaine" (V. 2-3). Then he spent six years in Juggernaut, in Orissa, where he studied the Vedas and learned the art of exorcism and intercessory prayer. True to form, during his stay there Issa rebuked Brahmin priests for upholding the caste system; violated custom by giving teachings to the lower castes (V. 6-11); rejected the authority of the Vedas and Puranas (V. 12); denied the *Trimurti* and the incarnation of Para-Brahma as Vishnu, Shiva, and other gods (V, 14); belittled idolatry (V, 20-21); and barely escaped with his life. In Nepal, he grew proficient in Pali and spent six years studying Buddhist sutras. After that he returned to Rajputana and made his way westward, pausing along the way to condemn human and animal immolation (VII. 14), sun-worship (VIII, 9), the dualism of good and evil (VIII. 15), and the Zoroastrian priesthood (VIII, 20-22). The Zoroastrian priests responded by seizing him by night and abandoning him to the wilderness, hoping in vain that he would be devoured by wild beasts.

Issa made his way back to Palestine at the age of twenty-nine, the point at which the gospel narratives resume. No miracles are reported--earlier (VII, 5). Issa had rebuked those who demanded miracles for failing to recognize that nature is full of such. The only really new element is his lengthy, spirited discourse on the dignity of woman, which begins: "Respect woman, for she is the mother of

the universe, and the truth of all divine creation lies in her" (XII, 10). Issa appears critical of the temple priesthood, but respectful of the Roman authorities. Curiously, Pilate is presented as the villain, whereas the Jewish priests and elders attempt to protect Issa. It is the priests and elders, not Pilate, who wash their hands in order to demonstrate their nonresponsibility for his execution. (Notovitch was the son of a rabbi.) In this version, Issa does not rise from the dead. Rather, Pilate moves his body in order to forstall an insurrection; hence the empty tomb.

Shortly after the book's publication, several articles critical of Notovitch appeared in a journal called *The Nineteenth Century*. The first (published in October 1894) was authored by none other than Friedrich Max Müller who, however, did not actually visit Hemis to investigate. The second (April 1896) was a report by one J. Archibald Douglass, a teacher in Agra who did make the trip to Ladakh. According to Douglass, the abbot of Hemis revealed in an interview that no one answering to Notovitch's description had been there (although evidence in favor of Notovitch later surfaced); that he knew nothing of the many esoteric subjects which his counterpart in Notovitch's book had expounded upon (and it must be admitted that Notovitch does have his chief lama say many things which seem quite out of character); and that in all his years as a monk, the abbot had never heard of any Tibetan work mentioning Jesus. When asked to comment on Notovitch's story, the abbot responded with the statement, "*Sun, sun, sun, manna mi dug*," which is allegedly Tibetan for "Lies, lies, lies. nothing but lies!" (In fact it is certainly not Tibetan and, as Kersten points out, it does not appear to represent any recognizable Asian language, although it is conceivable that Douglass simply wrote it down the way he thought he heard it.) A number of other travelers were later to claim first-hand knowledge of the Issa manuscripts, but their testimony has not been sufficient to dispel skepticism. In case anyone is still inclined to believe the *Issa* manuscript, I would point out that the supposed history of the text does not seem very well thought through (why would first-century traders from Israel include the bulk of the Old Testament as a part of their account of Issa's life?), and that its author makes a number of historical and cultural errors (the Jain religion is not named after a god called "Jaine"; Pali is not the language of Nepal) consistent with the suggestion that he is a nineteenth-century European.

The tale of Jesus's journey across Asia grew with successive retellings. For example, the *Oahspe Gospel* sends him on a camel-caravan to the Caucasus region, but stops far short of India (Jesus travels to Britain instead). Cayce's account is much closer to that given in *Aquarian Gospel*, which is much more heavily dependent upon Notovitch. According to Dowling, Jesus' travels begin when Hillel, after their meeting in the temple, is so impressed that he recommends him to an Indian prince named Ravanna, who becomes his patron and accompanies him (with his parents' permission) to Jagannath. Jesus' itinerary after that is much the same as in Notovitch but with a few added excursions--Benares, "Kapivastu" (probably Kapilivastu), Lhasa (where he spends time in a Tibetan temple learning to read ancient manuscripts from the sage "Meng-ste," whose name sounds like that of Meng-tse, a.k.a. Mencius), Leh, Kashmir, Lahore, Sind, Perseopolis (where he visits the tombs of the Three Wise Men). Ur of Chaldea, Babylon, Nazareth, Athens, Delphi (where he pays his respects to the oracle), and Heliopolis (where he is given a series of initiations culminating in a degree called "THE CHRIST"). John the Baptist also gets initiated in Egypt, just as he does in the Cayce readings (5748-5). Lewis's account(328) reads like an abridged version of Dowling's.

Disregarding the inherently ridiculous parts of the story, of which there are many, could Jesus really have visited India? Trade did flourish along Jesus's route as indicated by Cayce, Dowling, and Notovitch. Although few travelers would go the entire distance, Jesus's near-contemporary Apollonius of Tyana is said to have journeyed to India, where he studied the philosophy of the "gymnosophists." Even so, the fact that the trip was theoretically *possible* for Jesus does not mean that it actually happened; the crucial question is whether there is any convincing evidence of his journey. Unfortunately, the earliest texts containing the story are from the nineteenth century--far too late to be of any practical value. An alternative approach is to demonstrate Indian influences on early Christianity, using only those historical sources which are generally regarded as admissible. Gruber and Kersten attempt this, and propose quite a number of intriguing textual, philosophical, and iconographic parallels. (329) At the same time, just India and later Palestine both gave rise to texts containing some similar-sounding ideas, does not mean that Jesus carried those ideas from India to Palestine. Other possibilities include proverbs and stories passing from person to person along the

trade routes; Indian travelers spreading their traditional lore in the Near East; or the great minds thinking alike.

D. Cayce's Christology

Like the majority of the Metaphysical writers, Cayce makes a distinction between Jesus and Christ. In brief, Christhood is the goal which all of us should strive after. Jesus was simply the first person to achieve it—our "elder brother," as it were, and the pattern for our own spiritual growth. The distinction between Jesus and Christ is made by Mary Baker Eddy in *Science and Health*, (330) although she does not urge us to seek Christhood for ourselves as practically all of the New Thought writers do. Syncretic teachers tended to accept this interpretation of Christhood, perhaps because it resonated well with the concept of Buddhahood and encouraged a mystical, inner-directed perspective. For example, in the following passage from *The Aquarian Gospel*, Jesus is addressing the Silent Brotherhood:

You know that all my life was one great drama for the sons of men; a pattern for the sons of men. I lived to show the possibilities of men.

What I have done all men can do, and what I am all men shall be. [178: 45, 46]

In the New Thought movement, Jesus is seen as a great exemplar who shows how we may become aware of universal laws, so as to rise above the restrictions imposed by them and return to consciousness of our oneness with the infinite. divine mind. For example, Troward says that the Bible is

a teaching based upon Law, spiritual and mental, fully recognizing that no effect can be produced without the operation of an adequate cause; and Christ is set before us both as explaining the causes and exhibiting the full measure of the effects. (331)

Just as Christ fulfilled the Law, so can we—in fact, that is the whole point of Jesus' teaching. Similarly, Cayce has "this then being the law of God made manifest. (that] He *becomes* the Law by manifesting same before man; and thus—as man. even as ye—becomes one with the Father" (1158-12). Readings in this vein could easily be multiplied. As a result of Jesus' triumph over "flesh and temptation", Cayce's Jesus

became the first of those that overcame death in the body, enabling Him to so illuminate, to so revivify that body as to take it up again, even when those fluids of the body had been drained away by the nail holes in His hands and by the spear piercing His side. [1152- 1]

Thus, even physical reality will yield before the spirit—but only when the conditions of the laws relating to these have been met.

Of those writers who accepted the principle that Jesus was the first person to achieve Christhood, only a few address the problem of just where this leaves other great founders of religions (such as the Buddha, who lived long before the historical Jesus). For example, Spalding:

The Masters accept that Buddha represents the Way to Enlightenment, but they clearly set forth that Christ IS Enlightenment, or a state of consciousness for which we are all seeking—the Christ light of every individual; therefore, the light of every child that is born into the world.(332)

Although Cayce's system is unapologetically Christocentric, non-Christian religions are nevertheless respected—up to a point. For Cayce, the Christ spirit constitutes the impelling force and core of truth behind all religions that teach that "God is One":

Q. What part did Jesus play in any of His reincarnations in the development of the basic teachings of the following religions and philosophies? First, Buddhism.

A. This is just one.

Q. Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Brahmanism, Platonism, Judaism.

A. As has been indicated, the entity--as an entity--influenced either directly or indirectly all those forms of philosophy or religious thought that taught God was One... In all of these, then, there is that same impelling spirit... whether this is directing one of the Confucius' thought, Brahman thought, Buddha thought, Mohammedan thought, these are as teachers or representatives.... [364-9]

As the passage may suggest, despite Cayce's lip-service to non-Christian religions, there is no reason to think that he knew very much about them, apart from such snippets as he might have picked up from Theosophy or (in the case of Judaism) the Old Testament. In fact, the readings abound with such howlers as Cayce's naming of *Cato II* as the title of a book by Confucius (900-14). Also, Cayce's suggestion that the Christ spirit ties at the core of all religions is likely to be regarded by non-Christians as tasteless and naive. though surely well-intentioned.

In any case, the readings describe non-Christian religions as "stepping stones" to "knowledge of the Son":

Q. Is the faith of man in Buddha or Mohammed equal in the effect on his soul to the faith in Jesus Christ?

A. As He gave, he that receiveth a prophet in the NAME of a prophet RECEIVES the prophet's reward, or that ABILITY that that individual spiritual force MAY manifest in the life of the individual.... Hence, as we find, each in their respective spheres are but stepping-stones to that which may awaken in the individual the knowledge of the Son in their lives. [262-14]

Since the Christ spirit does not seem to be limited to the religion which bears its name, there is considerable ambiguity as to whether Cayce sees Christianity as an improvement upon other religions. Elsewhere we find him describing Christ "Not as ONLY one [path], but THE only one: For, as He gave, 'He that climbs up any other way is a thief and a robber'" (364-9). However, this too is ambiguous, since it is unclear whether Cayce means for us to become followers of Christ in the narrow sense of identification with Christianity, or merely in the larger sense of manifesting the Christ spirit (however understood) in our lives. As evidence for the more narrow interpretation, recall that Cayce warned many inquirers not to shirk their heritage as Christians by converting to Eastern religions or occult groups, and remained an outspoken supporter of Christian missionary work overseas. In effect, the readings encourage religious conversions in one direction only.

Even this would be quite a liberal theory by turn-of-the-century Protestant standards, however, since the heathen not only escape damnation but are treated identically with Christians by the laws of karma. The key benefit provided by Christianity would appear to be its dissemination of the teachings of Jesus, which are helpful but not necessary to salvation. We may further surmise that although other religions possess authentic teachings of the Christ spirit, Christianity represents a purer distillation of this message, otherwise Cayce would have regarded all religions equally. In any case, Cayce's practice of affirming the centrality of Christ alongside the worth of all world religions is anticipated by Freemasonry as well as most New Thought denominations.

310. *Pauly's Realencyclopaedie*, entry for "Amelius."

311. Levi H. Dowling, *Aquarian Gospel*, p. 15.

312. 281-10 states that the Jesus-entity incarnated as a contemporary of Ra Ta. Since the readings' Hermes is by far the most interesting and mysterious figure from this period for whom no twentieth-century Incarnation was ever assigned, many Cayceans have concluded that Hermes was a previous Incarnation of Jesus.

313. Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, p. 94.

314. Ibid., p. 17.

315. Genesis 19: 29 refers to the destruction of Sodom and "all the cities of the plain." Perhaps this (or Proust's appropriation of it) is the inspiration for Cayce's name for his Persian city.

316. Glenn Sandurfur (*Lives of the Master*, p. 110 ff) ventures the intriguing observation that the respective careers of Jesus and Joshua followed remarkably similar geographic paths. with memorable stops at Jericho/the Jordan. Hazor/Capernaum. and Aijalon/Emmaus. (However Jesus, unlike Joshua, did not shy away from entering Jerusalem.) Sandurfur's explanation is that Jesus met his previous karma by performing healings in those very places where Joshua had killed. Such a link may have occurred to Cayce as well, although in cold reality such parallels might be better explained as the result of the gospel writers trying (consciously or otherwise) to fit Jesus into the patterns of previous culture-heroes.

317. In line with his speculations about Jesus' fulfillment of Joshua's karma. Glenn Sandurfur (*Lives of the Master*, p. 129) notes that whereas Jeshua made a point of *rejecting* Samaritan generosity (towards the rebuilding of the temple). Jesus centered a parable around it.

318. Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health*,p. [t.k.]

319. Cayceans (e.g. Jeffrey Furst in *Edgar Cayce's Story of Jesus*, p. 30) often hall the readings' description of a community of Essenes near the Dead Sea (1391-1) as a successful prophecy. In fact. Cayce's wording is ambiguous. and in any case the Dead Sea location is given by Pliny. Cayceans also point to the fact that the readings claim (correctly, in light of Qumran) that the Essenes admitted women. whereas the ancients say that they did not. However, Josephus knew of a sect of marrying Essenes.

320. *Manual of Discipline*, in Willis Barnstone, *The Other Bible*, p. 214.

321. James Charlesworth, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*.

322. Per Beskow, *Strange Tales About Jesus: A Suney of Unfamiliar Gospels*, pp. 47-48).

323. Ibid., p. 49: also Edgar Goodspeed, *Strange New Gospels*, p. 21.

324. H. Spencer Lewis, *Mystical Life of Jesus*, pp. 25, 27, 41.

325. In Willis Barnstone, *The Other Bible*, pp. 385-92.

326. Ibid., p. 392 n. 1.

327. In Elizabeth Clare Prophet, *The Lost Years of Jesus*, pp. 196-97.

328. H. Spencer Lewis, *Mystical Life of Jesus*, pp. 180-183.

329. Elmar Gruber and Holger Kersten, *The Oriqinal Jesus: The Buddhist Sources of Christianity*.

330. Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health*,chapter 11, p. 33, statement XII.

331. Thomas Troward, *The Edinburgh and Dore Lectures On Mental Science*, p. 167.

332. Baird T. Spalding, *Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East*, vol. I. p. 7.