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of man’s being and the power to heal.**



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Christian Science purports to popularise the treatment of disease.

And claims that it possesses the secret of man's being and the power to heal.

A critical analysis by H.P. Blavatsky.

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. II (11), July 1888, pp. 410-14. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CHRISTIAN SCIENCE)¹ X pp. 34-42. Headings by ED. PHIL.

The object of this work, which is published in the form of twelve pamphlets, each averaging about twenty pages in length, is to prepare the reader for becoming a student of the Science of Healing by means of the Spirit, for this title (though somewhat lengthy) more accurately describes the so-called Science than the cognomen "Christian." "Prepare the reader," is also said advisedly; for the first ten of these pamphlets are chiefly occupied with the thesis that man's beliefs with regard to the existence of matter being erroneous, he is thereby subject to certain illusions with regard to it, the chief of these being ill-health and disease. This is pure Berkeleyan philosophy, if not Platonism itself; Theosophists indeed, may claim for it a far older origin, for do not the early Brāhmanic and Buddhist philosophies teach that all outward appearances, all phenomena, are illusion — Māyā? However this [35] may be, the application of the principle to the treatment of disease, if not actually new, is here presented to us in a novel form, and with a view to rendering its practice popular. It is philosophy reduced to its simplest expression. It is the physician's highest art made common property. It is another claim to a "secret unveiled," the secret of man's being. And if, as the writer states, the present treatment of disease is the result of man's belief in the reality of matter, it is doubtless necessary to begin by a somewhat lengthy chain of reasoning in order to convince him of his error, for man cannot understand what he really is so long as he pronounces upon himself as he sees only.

Not until he brings his higher powers into action, his discernment and perception, will he begin to perceive the truth about himself, which stands opposed to his own belief of himself. And never till he so perceives and understands will he reverse his decision upon himself. And never till he reverses it, will he grow into the consciousness of what he really is.²

He will remain, as the author puts it, in the Adam-state, subject to the law of matter, making to himself "graven images," and falling down and worshipping them. And as:

¹ *Statements of Christian Science. Comprised in eighteen lessons, and twelve sections.* By Ursula N. Gestefeld. Chicago, 1888.

² § III, p. 18

Adam¹ is the model of man as we see and know him to-day, Jesus is the model of what he is to become — consciously, as he is in reality — through his own work of regeneration and redemption. . . . It was this consciousness which was perfect realization, which gave him [Jesus] the power he manifested over sin, sickness and death, by which he healed the halt,² the sick and the blind; by which he cast out devils and raised the dead.³

Diseases are said to be nothing but mental pictures, which man creates for himself and believes in religiously. We must therefore learn to dominate all those conditions which may be susceptible to the implantation of mental germs.

And, as man is the creator of every form of sin and suffering, so is he also the vector of his misdeeds being transmitted to others by mental germs, instead of physical germs.

This consciousness is the chief point insisted upon in this stage of the work, for until this is realized, there is no possibility of the exercise of the healer's power, except perhaps in a weak or partial manner. It is not therefore till we arrive at Section X that the treatment of disease is actually touched upon. In this section we are told that "what man in [36] his ignorance calls health is as much a belief as what he calls sickness," and that "putting medicine into a stomach never yet changed a man's conception of himself; but he has changed one conception or belief of his for another in consequence of his belief in the power of the medicine." Conditions of ill-health are said to be nothing "but mental pictures which man creates for himself and believes in religiously." We must therefore learn to dominate all those conditions to which we believe our bodies to be subject. Denial of the false, affirmation of the true, constantly in thought if not in word, is to be the first process for bringing about a change in man's own body first, subsequently in that of others. If we deny sickness and suffering and all kinds of evil as no-things, non-existent, not proceeding from the Infinite Mind, both as regards ourselves and all surrounding us, for all are parts of one Universal Whole (which is another purely Vedanto-Buddhistic tenet), we shall, by this transformation of the inward gradually act upon and cause a transformation of the outward, and overcome all discordant conditions, be they called sin, or suffering, or sickness. And as man is the creator of every form of sin and suffering, so is he also the transmitter of these through "Thought Transference"; diseases are communicated by this means "instead of through physical germs."⁴ The healer by means of "Christian Science" must attack the root of all disease, man's belief about himself and others; he must treat the sufferer for his faults and for sin, of which his diseases are but the extreme expression, one disease being the same as another to a scientific healer.

¹ [Quick overview, by ED. PHIL. There are four Adams, one for each of the preceding Root-Races:

Adam 1, Kadmon, or Heavenly Man (Second Logos).

Adam 2, of *Genesis*, the ethereal, Self-born Astral Sons of Yoga (First Root-Race, Self-Existent).

Adam 3 plus Eve, the sweat-born, asexual Sons of Passive Yoga (early Third Root-Race, Lemurian).

Adam 4, of *Genesis*, the womb-born men and women (Fourth Root-Race, Atlantean].

² [lame]

³ § VIII, p. 6

⁴ § XI, p. 12 [Consult "The occult causes of epidemic diseases," in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.]

In treating little children, it is mainly the parents who have to be dealt with, their beliefs about the child, their fear and their anxiety.

The last section closes with some instructions as to the attitude and deportment of the healer towards his patient, but the whole treatment is to be spiritual, above and beyond the plane of material being. [37]



Such is an imperfect digest of the teaching contained in Mrs. Gestefeld's twelve pamphlets. A candidate for "Christian Science" would have to study them in all their details; for it is only by dwelling and meditating on the principles therein set forth that one can arrive at the state of mind necessary for realizing the results to be attained. The Science of Being can be summed up in few words, but it cannot be so easily imparted, and many difficulties naturally occur to the student which require to be separately answered. A few of these must be stated at the outset.

The assertion of the Christian Scientists that it was through their "Science" that Jesus healed, is a preposterous absurdity!

When told to turn our left cheek to him who smites us on the right, we are not commanded to deny the blow but, on the contrary, to bear the offence without encouraging the offender to smite the other cheek.

① To begin with, why premise by giving to a Science a qualification which does not belong to it? Why start with a *misnomer*? Why call it "Christian" rather than "Sufic," "Buddhist," or better than all, the "Yoga Science," the aim of which is preëminently to attain union with the Universal Spirit? We are told by the author, as also by several other professors of this new school, that it was through this *Science* that Jesus healed, and that it was this Science which he taught. We demur to the statement. There is nothing whatever in the New Testament to lead to such an idea or even suspicion; and there are no other documents known more authoritative to the Christians than the Gospels. The Sermon on the Mount, which is the very embodiment of Christ's teachings — Christianity in a nut-shell, so to say — is a code of preëminently *practical* as also impracticable rules of life, of daily observances, yet all on the plane of matter-of-fact earth-life. When you are told to turn your left cheek to him who smites you on the right, you are not commanded to *deny* the blow, but on the contrary to assert it by meekly bearing the offence; and in order not *to resist evil*, to turn (whether metaphorically or otherwise) your other cheek — *i.e.*, to invite your offender to repeat the action.¹

¹ ["We should freely forgive, but forget rarely," says Colton. "I will not be revenged, and this I owe to my enemy; but I will *remember*, and this I owe to myself." This is real practical wisdom. It stands between the ferocious "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" of the Mosaic Law, and the command to turn the left cheek to the enemy when he has smitten you on the right. Is not the latter a direct encouraging of sin? From "Occult laws and paradoxes," in our Living the Life Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Sins and diseases are neither denied by Jesus, nor are their opposites (virtue and moral purity) anywhere affirmed. The Christian Scientists deny every theological dogma from Eden downwards, as much as Theosophists do, yet the former affirm that they are not at one with the Omnipotent Spirit of Truth, which alone can heal.

② Again, when your “Son,” or brother, or neighbour, asks of you bread, you are not invited to *deny* the hunger of him who asks, but to give him food; as otherwise you would indeed give him instead of fish “a serpent.” Finally, sins, wickedness, diseases, etc., are not *denied* by Jesus, nor are their opposites, virtue, goodness, and [38] health, anywhere *affirmed*. Otherwise, where would be the *raison d’être* for his alleged coming to save the world from the original sin?¹ We know that “Christian Scientists” deny every theological dogma, from Eden downwards, as much as we do. Yet they affirm that which Jesus ever practically denied; and affirming (is it for the sake, and in view of the Christian majority in their audiences?), they are not in union with the Universal Spirit, which is — TRUTH.

Mrs. Gestefeld warns the would-be healer that if he treats for personal gain, the power to heal will desert him and he will be no longer a Christian Scientist, only a Mesmerist;² but to the Occultist, this would be no objection.

③ Again, is it safe to entrust this occult power (for such it surely is) to the hands of the multitude? Did not Jesus, whom we are expressly told to take as our model, himself say:

To you (who are disciples, initiates) it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; but to others in parables?³

Is there no danger that one who acquires this power of controlling the will and thoughts of others, and the conditions surrounding them, should fall from this high estate, and use his influence for bad purposes — in other words, that the *white* magic should become *black*? The very fact that Mrs. Gestefeld warns the healer never to give a treatment for any purpose but to make the Truth of Being manifest, “never for any personal gain,” points to this possibility; she also warns, or I may say threatens, that if this should be attempted, the would-be healer will “descend at once to the plane of mortal mind.” Perhaps this implies that the power will depart from him, but that this salutary consequence will accrue is scarcely made clear to the reader. She says, indeed, “You will be no Christian Scientist, but a mesmerist.” But to certain people this would be no objection. Where then is the guarantee, the hall-mark, of the true Christian Scientist, by which he can be known to the unwary? If this, like other spiritual things, can only be “spiritually discerned,” the patient must be equal to the healer, and will have no need of him.

¹ [Consult “The Origin of Good and Evil” and “The Original Sin is a Jewish Invention,” in our Black versus White Magic Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Consult “Magnetism, Mesmerism, Hypnotism,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

³ [Paraphrasing *Matthew* xiii, 11]

Mrs. Gestefeld’s assertion that diseases are the result of “wrong beliefs” is a fallacious syllogism, absurd and ridiculous in equal measure.

The child, who has no belief, knowledge, or conception of true and false, can only catch scarlet fever through the oropharyngeal secretions of close contacts infected by *Streptococcus pyogenes* (or even asymptomatic carriers) — not through the alleged “infectivity” of someone else’s thought.

④ Again, is it true that all our diseases are the result of wrong beliefs? The child, who has no belief, no knowledge or conception, true or false, on the subject of disease, catches scarlet fever through the transference of germs, not through that of thought. One is tempted to ask, [39] like those of old, did the child sin or his parents? Will the answer of the Great Healer fit the case, *i.e.*, “Neither did this child sin nor his parents, but that the glory of God might be made manifest”? The “glory of the new *Christian Science*,” then? — the “new” wine in very, very old bottles? And are there not among the renowned teachers of the new science, who are themselves afflicted by disease, often incurable, by pain and suffering? Will Mrs. Gestefeld, or some one nearer home, explain?

More! Epidemics, such as cholera, flourish in crowded slums and camps of displaced populations (our brothers and sisters, in fact), who are forced to live in unsanitary and inhumane conditions. Are all these poor and lowly, despised and oppressed people sinners? Or are they victims of ecclesiastical and secular cruelty, and of man against his kith and kin?

There are also climatic conditions, as in the outbreak of cholera in 1884, when the epidemic seemed confined to certain areas following some law of atmospheric currents, or some other undetected, but not undiscoverable, physical cause.¹

⑤ Then further, in the case of widespread epidemics, such as cholera, we know that to a certain extent these are the consequence of man’s sin, his neglect of hygienic laws, of cleanliness and good drainage, and, in proportion as these laws are obeyed, to a certain extent preventable. But there are also climatic conditions, as in the last visitation of cholera in 1884, when the epidemic seemed confined to certain areas, following some law of atmospheric currents, or other undetected, but not undiscoverable, physical cause. Can these be overcome by Christian Science? How is it they do not yield to a whole nation’s fervent prayers? — for prayer, when in earnest, is surely, at least, when accompanied by virtuous living, a *mode* of Christian Science, of intense WILL? And do we not see the holiest and the best, and those, too, not living in ignorance or in defiance of law, spiritual, moral, mental, or hygienic, fall victims to disease, and only able to preserve life at all with the utmost, almost abnormal, care and precaution?

¹ [Consult “The occult causes of epidemic diseases,” in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.]

“Christian Science” goes further by asserting that physical disease is the direct effect of mental disease and wickedness. As an example, Bright’s disease of the kidneys¹ is supposed to affect persons who are untruthful and deceitful.

Shall we be next told that cancer of the tongue or throat is produced in those who backbite and slander their fellow men? Or are the Christian Scientists themselves, who are untruthful and deceitful?

⑥ But “Christian Science” goes further than that. At a lecture, in London, it was distinctly asserted that every physical disease arises from, and is the direct effect of, a mental disease or vice: *e.g.*, “Bright’s disease of the kidneys is always produced in persons who are untruthful, and who practise deception.” Query, Would not, in this case, the whole black fraternity of Loyola, every diplomat, advocate and lawyer, as the majority of tradesmen and merchants, be incurably afflicted with this terrible evil? Shall we be next told that cancer on the tongue or in the throat is produced by those who backbite and slander their fellow men? It would be well-deserved [40] Karma, were it so. Unfortunately, some recent cases of this dreadful disease, carrying off two of the best, most noble-hearted and truthful men living, would give a glaring denial to such an assertion.

If, in the age of slander we live in, people are told that strangers can deny their faults and vices by barging into their mind (thereby absolving them from the effects of demerit arising from their actions) — would not such a belief cut from under their feet personal responsibility, and every hope of redemption and salvation?

⑦ “Christian” (or mental) *Scientists* assert, furthermore, that the healer can work on a patient (even one whom he has never seen) as easily thousands of miles away, as a few yards off. Were this so, and the practice to become universal, it would hardly be a pleasant thing to know that wherever one might be, occult currents are directed towards one from unknown well-wishers at a distance, whether one wants them or not. If, on the one hand, it is rather agreeable, and even useful, in this age of slander to have other people *denying* your faults and vices, and thus saving you from telling lies yourself; on the other hand, it would cut from under one’s feet every possibility of amending one’s nature through personal exertion, and would deprive one at the same time of every personal merit in the matter. Karma would hardly be satisfied with such an easy arrangement.



¹ [Bright’s disease occurred frequently in diabetic patients; and in some cases it would probably correspond to the modern diagnosis of diabetic nephropathy.]

The diseases and other exigencies, in which we find ourselves entangled in their meshes, are the Karmic progeny of our former thoughts and deeds that are governed unerringly by Karma, the Law of Ethical Causation and Harmony across the Universe. By fostering responsibility and self-reliance, Karma frees every man from the servitude of religion and the clutches of “Christian Science.”¹

This world would witness strange sights and the next one (a reincarnationist would say “the next rebirth”) terrible disappointments. Whether viewed from the standpoint of theists, Christians, or the followers of Eastern philosophy, such an arrangement would satisfy very few minds. Disease, mental characteristics and shortcomings, are always effects produced by causes: the natural effect of Karma, the unerring Law of Retribution, as we would say; and one gets into a curious jumble when trying to work along certain given lines of this “Christian Science” theory. Will its teachers give us more definite statements as to the general workings of their theories?



“Christian Science” is Hypnotism under a Christian Garb. It is a pernicious form of Black Magic practised by Roman Catholic priests, adepts of the Black Art, enchanter, dugpas, and necromancers, who are known to have incited mental epidemics.²

Blessing 1.

In conclusion, were these theories to prove true, their practice would only be our old friend magnetism, or *hypnotism* rather, with all its undeniable dangers, only on a gigantic universal scale; hence a thousand times more dangerous for the human family at large, than is the former. For no magnetizer can work upon a person whom he has never seen or come in contact with — and this is one blessing, at any rate.

Blessing 2.

And this is not the case [41] with mental or “Christian” Science, since we are distinctly told that we can work on perfect strangers, those we *have never met*, and who are thousands of miles away from us. In such case, and as a first benefit, our civilized centres would do well to have their clergy and Christian communities learn the “Science.” This would save millions of pounds sterling now scraped off the bones of the starving multitudes and sunk into the insatiable digestive organs of missionary funds. Missionaries, in fact, would become useless — and this would become blessing number two. For henceforth they would have but to meet in small groups and send currents of Will beyond the “black waters” to obtain all they are striving for. Let them *deny* that the heathens are not Christians, and *affirm* that they are baptized, even without contact. Thus the whole world would be saved, and private capital likewise.

¹ [Students to consult “The Pitfalls of Occult Arts and Metaphysical Healing,” in our Black versus White Magic Series. — ED. PHIL.]

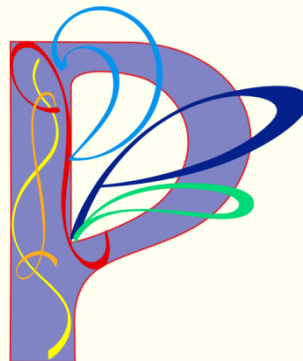
² [Consult “Magnetism, Mesmerism, Hypnotism” in our Confusing Words Series, and “The Theosophical Society’s position on hypnotism,” in our Black versus White Magic Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Of course it may so happen that our “heathen” brethren who have had the now called “Christian” science at their finger ends ever since the days of Kapila and Patañjali, may take it into their heads to reverse the current and set it in motion in an opposite direction. They may *deny* in their turn that their Christian persecutors have one iota of Christianity in them. They may *affirm* that the whole of Christendom is eaten through to the backbone with diseases resulting from the seven capital sins; that millions drink themselves to death and other millions (governments included) force them to do so by building two public houses to every church, a fact which even a Christian Scientist could hardly make away with if he denied it till the next pralaya. Thus the heathen would have an advantage over the Christian Scientist in his denials and affirmations, inasmuch as he would only be telling the truth; while, by denying disease and evil, his Western colleague is simply flying into the face of fact and encouraging the unwary mystic to *ignore* instead of *killing* his sinful nature.

Occult philosophy is the only remedy for the ills of mind and body.¹

Let us cultivate brotherly feeling, charity, and tolerance towards the whole of creation, extending even to the dumb brute, and all shall be well.

The present criticism may be a mistaken one, and we may have misunderstood the “Science” under analysis, in which, however, we recognise a very old acquaintance, [42] namely, Dhyāna, “abstract meditation.” But so much the greater the necessity for a definite explanation. For these are questions we would fain have answered, precisely in the interest of that *old* Science reborn under a new mask, and because it must be the desire of every true follower of Eastern Theosophy to see the doctrine of self-oblivion and altruism, as against selfishness and personality, more widely understood and practised than at present.



¹ [Consult “Medicine of the Mind,” in our Living the Life Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Suggested reading for students.



From our Black versus White Magic Series.

- A CASE OF MESMERIC ATTACK
- A STRANGE STORY BY BULWER-LYTTON
- AKHUND ABDUL GHAFUR OF SWAT
- ANCIENT MAGIC IN MODERN SCIENCE
- ANIMATED STATUES, TROPHIES OF THE BLACK ART
- AURAS OF MEDIUMS AND ADEPTS
- BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE MAGIC THERE IS BUT A COBWEB THREAD
- BLACK MAGIC IS IN FULL SWAY AMIDST MANKIND
- BLACK VERSUS WHITE MAGIC, THE TWO OPPOSING POWERS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE AUTHOR OF PHALLICISM
- BLAVATSKY ON THE FABRICATORS OF MAGIC MIRRORS AND THEIR MOTIVES
- BLAVATSKY ON THE MALIGNANT FEVER OF UNSOUND SCEPTICISM
- BUDDHISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND PHALLICISM
- BUDDHIST FEMINISM IN CEYLON
- CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS A RELIC OF JEWISH BARBARITY
- CHRISTIAN LECTURES ON BUDDHISM
- CHRISTIANITY HAS RETARDED THE WOMAN'S PROGRESS
- CONFESSIONS OF CYPRIANUS, THE PENITENT SORCERER OF ANTIOCH
- DOES YOUR MIND ELATE WITH SELF-ADORATION
- EGYPTIAN MAGIC, GOOD AND BAD
- EVIL IS AN ILLUSION CAUSED BY THE CIRCLE OF NECESSITY
- EVIL IS THE INFERNAL END OF THE POLARITY OF SPIRIT-MATTER
- EXACT SCIENCE VERSUS ARCHAIC PHILOSOPHY
- FRIGHTENING CRYING CHILDREN INTO SILENCE
- HOW CAN A BLACK MAGICIAN BE KNOWN
- HUGO'S LA FIN DE SATAN (1911)

**BLACK VERSUS WHITE MAGIC SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- HYLO-IDEALISM IS A FIG LEAF FOR CRASS MATERIALISM
- INSIGHTS TO THE HIGH IDEALISM AND QUAIN T WIT OF ÉLIPHAS LEVI
- INSIGHTS TO THE OCCULT ARTS
- INSTEAD OF BLACK AND WHITE MAGIC, READ SELFISH AND UNSELFISH MOTIVE
- MAGIC IS THE OCCULT KNOWLEDGE OF NATURAL LAW
- MEDIUMSHIP AND ADEPTSHIP ARE POLES APART
- NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO CONTROL THE MIND OF ANOTHER
- OCCULTISM AND KABBALAH ARE ONLY MASKS TO HIDE THE SACRED TRUTH FROM THE PROFANE
- ON ASTRAL INTOXICATION
- ON MALEVOLENT BEWITCHMENTS AND VENOMOUS MAGIC
- ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN ARE EVER OPPOSING POWERS, YET INSEPARABLE AND INTERDEPENDENT
- PAPAL DISPENSATION FOR MURDER AND MAYHEM
- PHALLICISM AND PHALLIC WORSHIP
- PRESENTIMENTS OF WHAT LIES IN THE BOSOM OF FUTURE
- PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CONJURING TRICKS
- REFLECTIONS OF AN ARDENT APOSTLE
- RELIGIOUS CONVERSION MEANS ABSOLUTE PERVERSION
- SELFISHNESS IS THE CAUSE OF ALL SIN AND SUFFERING
- SELFISHNESS IS THE HALLMARK OF FAKIRS, HERMITS, AND YOGINS
- SIN BY CRUEL ACQUIESCENCE IN AN UNWORTHY FASHION
- SOUL-DESTROYING SOPHISTRY IS FAKE WISDOM
- SPIRIT AND MATTER ARE DUAL ASPECTS OF ONE CAUSE
- SPIRITUAL PROGRESS IS NOT AIDED BY WATCHING THE ASTRAL LIGHT
- TERAPHIM ARE THE ELEMENTAL SPIRITS OF ANCIENT DIVINATION
- THE ARABIAN NIGHTS ARE ECHOES FROM OF LEMURIA AND ATLANTIS
- THE ASTRAL LIGHT REFLECTS IMAGES OF EVERY THOUGHT AND ACTION
- THE ENSOULED VIOLIN
- THE GREAT SCHISM OF THE “CHURCH OF CHRIST” INTO LATIN AND GREEK, FASTENED LIKE A HIDEOUS CANCER IN 865
- THE IDYLL OF THE WHITE LOTUS
- THE ORIGIN OF GOOD AND EVIL
- THE ORIGINAL SIN IS A JEWISH INVENTION

**BLACK VERSUS WHITE MAGIC SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS**

- THE PERNICIOUS SOPHISTRY OF HYPOCRISY
- THE PHILOSOPHER’S STONE IS TRIUNE UNITY
- THE PITFALLS OF OCCULT ARTS AND METAPHYSICAL HEALING
- THE POWER OF THE MAGICIAN IS INVERSELY RELATED TO HIS WORLDLY INTERESTS
- THE PROCESS OF PRECIPITATING HANDWRITTEN LETTERS EXPLAINED
- THE SILENT BROTHER
- THE SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS OF ANTHROPOMORPHISM
- THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY’S POSITION ON HYPNOTISM
- THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOMORPHISM IS THE PARENT OF MATERIALISM
- THEOLOGICAL MALICE IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF SATANIC MAGIC
- TRAINED IMAGINATION CAN PRODUCE OCCULT PHENOMENA
- TRUE MAGIC IS THE GNOSIS OF PYTHAGORAS
- WARNING TO PHENOMENA SEEKERS
- WHEN THEOLOGICAL ETHICS SPEAK NO LONGER IN MAN
- WHY WOMEN SHOULD AVOID THE CHURCH LIKE A PLAGUE
- YOGA IS A WOLF IN SHEEP’S CLOTHING

