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Preface

As God is the Holy Spirit of perfect love, humankind's quest for God will always be vastly more important than knowledge, or experience, of psychic phenomena. But in today's world there is a great confusion between the psychic and the spiritual realms. Many people, having had little or no experience of the Christian church, or other world religion, seek contact with a greater power than they are usually aware of. Should they hear of, or personally experience, something paranormal, the desire to explore further may be very strong indeed.

The majority of folk will, perhaps, argue that anything to do with the psychic should be avoided like the plague. This is unfortunate for us all because 'God is love: he who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him.' (1 John 4:16). The somewhat overlooked Christian mystic, the Revd William Law, with extraordinary vision, saw that 'Life is God living and working in the human soul' and another word for soul is psyche.

The aim of this small booklet is to cast some light into an area of human living that is often kept in the dark and so dispel some fears that may have arisen from ignorance.

Chapter 1

Psychic Awareness: An Introduction

“The only road to a fuller grasp of Reality is the exploration of ‘super-normal’ perception.”

Dr Albert Schweitzer

“Extra-sensory contact with a Power greater than the individual self is an essential part of man’s natural history.”

Sir Alister Hardy, FRS

It must be readily admitted that even expressing an interest in the psychic realm is likely to lead to raised eyebrows and expressions of concern about one’s welfare at the very least. The strong secular movement to deny the possibility of the existence of such things is seemingly in the ascendant at the present time. To argue, as do many in the scientific and medical communities, that experiences such as premonitions, visions and out of the body experiences (OBEs) are the result of lack of oxygen to the brain is to be selective with the known data (Fenwick, 2008). Scientific standards of proof demand that the conclusions of experiment are repeatable, and rightly so, but in its nature psychic awareness is intrinsic to the individual and so not repeatable at will by sceptical experimenters. Whilst some may say this makes Extra-Sensory Perception (ESP) unscientific, others might suggest such an approach carries an element of arrogance. Science is not the only form of knowledge. ‘A careful enquiry into psychic phenomena will yield often richer treasures for the well-being of men than physics, chemistry and biology have given them, vast though those treasures are’ wrote the Revd Dr Leslie Weatherhead, CBE.

There are also many religiously-minded people who cry “Satan!” and “Demons!” at the mere thought of anything paranormal. To claim that the Deuteronomic prohibitions, in Deut. 18:10-12, are the final word on the subject, for Christians and non-Christians alike, is to dismiss the numerous occasions on which Jesus, humanity’s supreme Exemplar and Saviour, expressed psychic gifts. These two extremes, both fundamentalisms of their kind (cf. Prov. 18:13), suggest that the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

The word *psychic* comes from the Greek *ψυχή* – “psyche”, meaning mind, soul, or heart: it means “concerning the soul”. The word itself is morally neutral signifying neither good nor bad. The realm of psychic, or extra-sensory, communication is the *intermediate* dimension between the physical at one end of a spectrum and the spiritual at the other. More particularly, it lies between the rational modes associated with the body, mind and intellect on the one hand and the Spirit of God on the other. Psychic perceptivity ranges from ESP which is akin to sensory perception of physical things, where objects have quasi-physical form, and are, as some say, *half-glimpsed*, to intuition where the perception is in the form of direct knowledge or insight, and is more akin to spiritual illumination wherein revelations are experienced as self-evident. Spiritual verities concerning the ways of God in his creation are mediated, brought down to our very fallible human realm of activity, through this intermediate dimension known as the realm of paranormal activity or psi. Spiritual truth is, in other words, imparted psychically and interpreted in intellectual terms. The spiritual dimension transcends pure rationality so as to lead the mind to new areas of reality.

Humanity’s response to the paranormal (a synonym for psychic) tends to be either fear or excitement, and usually a combination of the two. There is an undoubted attraction, more commonly in

young people, to the idea of using paranormal powers to influence others, whether for positive purposes such as healing or negatively to make others respond to one's own will.

Traditional religious prohibitions make sense when they are used to protect people from their own ignorance and hubris. More or less mysterious powers, shown in psychic awareness and activities, are rightly seen as potentially very dangerous. Also potentially very dangerous are phenomena such as electricity, fire, pharmacy and surgery yet modern society is far from dismissive of these powers. It seems that fear of the unknown, the unconscious and fears of our human potentials collide to form a strong social signal of "Here be dragons. Do not enter." when psychic phenomena are mentioned.

This does nothing to help the countless millions of people down the centuries who have been perceptive of such events as clairvoyance, automatic writing, foretelling, trance and glossolalia (i.e. "speaking in tongues"). How are they, and we, to understand such things and how should we relate, both to the people involved, and to the events themselves?

ESP is a natural part of the human psyche, i.e. soul. According to the Alister Hardy Religious Experience Research Centre archive, one in two British adults privately admits to having had one or more experiences of psi. We are all more sensitive than we think; one has only to notice how children can react to unconscious signals from their parents and friends. Strong emotions can be overwhelming to a sensitive child (E. N. Aaron, 1996, P. D. Payne & L. J. Bendit, 1958). Parents who fail to integrate the darker side of their personality often unconsciously project such unpleasantness onto their children who are, in one form or another, consequently crippled.

Those who are psychically open, whether innately through natural gifting, or through damage or suffering, quickly learn that people are porous and that feelings are contagious. Every emotion has a psychic charge. Psychic awareness and phenomena pour light on St Paul's teaching that "what is seen is transient, what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor. 4:17f).

When Jesus spoke, people were impressed at once by His authority. This authority came over to them primarily as a communication from soul to soul, and what He said spoke to their innermost condition. Their acknowledgement was at a psychic level. Then they began to grasp His message intellectually. When there is effective psychic communication between one person and another, something inside the second individual responds with recognition, even joy, to what is emitted from the first person. It is by psychic communication that we gain a deeper understanding not only of life but also of the individual person. Psychic events described in the New Testament alone number more than one hundred and fifty (Kelsey, 1977).

Christians are taught that God is Love; absolute, infinite and eternally Divine Love. Love so great that it voluntarily humbled itself taking on the fullness of humanity in the form of Jesus of Nazareth in order to show, once and for all, how humanity could and should live: that is in love and charity with oneself and all around. Love is spiritual union and the foundation of all religion. What, then, is a loving, discerning response to ESP?

To answer this we must first look at the two kinds of psychic abilities: those which are primarily receptive or passive and those which are primarily executive or active.

Chapter 2

Receptive and Executive Gifts

Receptive Gifts

Receptive psychic gifts are far more common than is generally realised though many individuals may experience ESP only once or twice in their lifetime. The Alister Hardy Religious Experience Research Centre archive has more documentation.

Telepathy

Some individuals are able to tune into the minds of others directly; this is known as telepathy. Telepathy (from the Greek *τηλε tele*, meaning “distant” and *πάθη pathē*, meaning “affliction, experience”) is the induction of mental states from one mind to another; the transfer of information on thoughts or feelings between individuals by means other than the “five classic senses”. The term was coined by Frederic W. H. Myers, a founder of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882. Psychometry, precognition, retrocognition, clairvoyance, clairaudience and prophecy are all considered, by some, to be forms of telepathy.

Psychometry

Psychometry is the ability to obtain information about a person or event by holding an object related to that person, for example their wristwatch. The longer the object has been in contact with the individual, the stronger their personality and the more intense the emotional crises through which the wearer has passed, the greater is the impression made upon the object and the stronger will be the prospect of a sensitive being able to perceive and interpret them accurately. It is commonly offered as a form of psychic reading at psychic fairs. The one giving the reading may be accurate or fraudulent; it is up to the sitter to make a considered assessment.

Precognition and Retrocognition

Precognition is foreknowledge. A premonition is a forewarning. Sometimes an individual *knows* what will happen in the future (or, in the case of retrocognition, what has happened in the past) to someone nearby. However right a precognition may seem to be, there may well be more than one course of action open. It is easy to give a wrong interpretation of a correct premonition, so we should always pray for discernment and guidance. If in doubt it's best to be non-committal. Precognition may be a form of clairvoyance. Retrocognition is extra-sensory perception of previously unknown past events, later found to be accurate. There were several well-attested premonitions of the Aberfan disaster of 1966. Such phenomena teach us something about eternity; all time is as one in God's sight.

Clairvoyance and Clairaudience

Communication at a distance from one person to another occurs in the random episodes of telepathy. Habitual and predominant emotions, desires and thoughts form the basis of telepathic contact, not only between the living but also between incarnate and discarnate souls. This is liable to happen especially between people who have a close emotional link, such as husband and wife, parent and child, or devoted siblings. Here there is direct soul contact at a distance, and one person can glimpse something important happening to the other at the time. The communication may be heard (clairaudience) or seen (clairvoyance). Later the event is verified. So, clairvoyance occurs when an especially sensitive person has a direct vision of a person or an event happening some considerable distance away, a vision subsequently proved to be veridical.

Automatic Writing

Automatic writing is writing made in varying degrees of a dissociative state. The handwriting can be in the author's usual script or someone else's. Automatic writing in which the writer has no control over the content of the message differs from inspired writing when the writer's mind is actively engaged in producing a text and is aware that there is another mind at work, partly controlling and partly suggesting what should be written. The source of the message could be someone who has died and desires to communicate with the writer's mind. Alternatively it may originate from the writer's subconscious or even the Collective Unconscious. Whatever the source, the writing should be judged according to its merits. If it is sensible and helpful, it can be used in a practical way; if it is nonsense or unhelpful, it is better ignored. The Revd Dr Charles Fryer has explored this in great detail and with integrity. The *Daily Express* of June 19th, 2014 gave a whole page over to a mother's communications from her deceased son by automatic writing.

Trance

A trance is an altered state of consciousness. In its lightest level, when the person in this state (known as a *sensitive*) shows no sign of being in a trance yet thought transference occurs, information may be given from a source known to the enquirer but not the sensitive.

At a deeper level of trance the sensitive may become motionless, speaking in their own voice, although there can be changes of timbre, pitch, and speech habits. The message given is heard by the sensitive as if from a distance. In fact, the sensitive "hears" the words a fraction of a second prior to speaking them.

When there is a good understanding of what is happening between the communicator and the sensitive, the interval is so slight that it ceases to be significant. The sensitive may in their mind receive an entire thought pattern and use their own words to convey the meaning.

In deep trance the sensitive's own mind is held quiet while another mind makes use of certain faculties: the voice, hands, facial expression. The voice can be different from the sensitive's own; foreign accents and languages are quite common. In these cases the sensitive will have no knowledge of what has taken place when he or she "comes to". The 14,000 documented cases of the evangelical Christian, Edgar Cayce, producing accurate medical diagnoses and effective prescriptions whilst in trance, are worth perusing.

The communicating mind can be of someone still alive (incarnate) or of someone who has died (discarnate). Another name for the disembodied soul; the soul or spirit of a deceased person; a spirit appearing after death; is, of course, ghost.

No-one should ever attempt to go into trance alone. Anyone alongside someone who unwittingly goes into a state of trance, and through whom an entity speaks, should just reply quietly to them as if they were talking to a friend. If a person seems unable to come out of trance, anyone with them should call their name. The name is very important, because it is not only how that person is known, but represents their whole personality which we are calling to control again their whole mental and physical apparatus, and so break off control by the discarnate personality.

The Revd Donald Bretherton has written a nineteen-page assessment on "Holy Scripture and the trance-state" in the booklet *The Paranormal in Holy Scripture*. Other useful books are Charles T. Tart, *States of Consciousness*, 2001 and Brian Inglis, *Trance: A Natural History of Altered States of Mind*, 1990.

Near-Death Experiences

A near-death experience (NDE) refers to a broad range of personal experiences associated with impending death, encompassing multiple possible sensations including detachment from the body;

feelings of levitation; extreme fear; total serenity, security or warmth; an experience of dissolution; and the presence of a light. These phenomena are usually reported after an individual has been pronounced clinically dead or otherwise very close to death, hence the term near-death experience.

The emotions of an NDE are intense and most commonly include peace, love and joy, although a substantial minority are marked by fear or hopelessness. Most people come away from the experience with an unshakeable belief that they have learned something of immeasurable importance about the purpose of life. Overall, the entire experience is ineffable, beyond description; even art and metaphor cannot capture it. The effects of an NDE are often life-changing. Its details usually are remembered clearly for decades. (cf. I Cor. 15:44 “sown a physical body, raised a spiritual body.”)

Dr Penny Sartori, an Intensive Care Staff Nurse at Singleton and Morriston Hospitals in Swansea, is renowned for having undertaken the largest and first long-term clinical study of Near-Death Experiences within an Intensive Therapy Unit in the UK.

Margot Grey has explored NDEs in her book *Return from Death*. Howard Storm's *My Descent into Death: and the Message of Love Which Brought Me Back* is his account of his own NDE.

Cosmic or Mystical Awareness

Cosmic or Mystical Awareness occurs when one is shown the absolute interconnectedness of all creation, one's own minute yet irreplaceable part in it and that everything is upheld and nurtured by purposeful, outpouring love. It seems to occupy a similar rôle in the individual's life to that of the Transfiguration in Jesus' in that, at a time of deep personal crisis, the veils or hindrances to perceiving God's at-one-ment with his creation are temporarily removed and one is reassured that all-powerful Love is ever prevailing. Like NDEs, memory of the unity revealed in a mystical experience tends not to fade.

'The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science' wrote Dr Albert Einstein.

The Revd Dr Martin Israel wrote that

St Paul and St John envisaged a Christ of cosmic dimensions— “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible... all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things hold together” (Col. 1:15–17).

The prologue to St John's gospel says something very similar. St Paul attained awareness of this glorified, cosmic Christ, who led humanity not only to a fuller apprehension of God but also to a greater actualisation of his own gifts and talents. This “Christ mysticism” is also the path to the abundant life that Christ came to demonstrate. The forgiveness of God, which flows out to us all as grace, is the inner intuition of a supreme source of power and love which cares for all creatures, containing them all in a unity that respects diversity without favouring one at the expense of the other.

True death is really a “coming into life” when we are no longer separate but are bound in complete unity to all things, and mysticism is the apprehension of that unity while in physical separation. In its highest phase mysticism can be considered an experience of reality pervading and transcending the phenomena of everyday life. It is an “I–Thou” relationship with the universe. The key to mystical consciousness is humility. Humility does not mean self-hatred or confessing our sins, but consists rather in losing our sense of self-importance and in becoming actively receptive. When we sacrifice our own fullness we may become full of the reality of another. The most important other with which we can reach true communication is another individual; this is the beginning of love, and as it proceeds it

embraces all humanity and the created universe. This is the nature of the mystical experience: it is the union of the individual self with the created world so that personal isolation is dissipated in universal communication.

The Revd Dr Martin Israel has described one of his many mystical experiences on pp. 265-7 of the seminal compendium *Life, Death and Psychical Research*. The world-famous scientist and Christian mystic, Fr Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, has written intellectually and sensually beautiful mystical essays showing the relationship between science and religion in his *Hymn of the Universe*.

Executive Gifts

Psychokinesis

Psychokinesis (PK) is the use of one's mind or soul to move objects. There are twelve such incidents mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles*, (Kelsey p. 157), such as the time when the house was shaken as the apostles prayed and were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31).

Poltergeists

Poltergeist phenomena are such incidents as pictures falling off the wall, objects disappearing from one room and reappearing in another, cupboard doors banging open and shut, hanging lights swinging to and fro or small objects flying through the air, all seemingly unaccountably. The term "poltergeist" comes from two German words, meaning "noisy ghost". Priests and sensitives working in ministries of deliverance almost always find that the origin of such phenomena lies within the psyche of a living person suffering great emotional stress. Rarely are discarnates found to be involved. The remedy is psychological and not what used to be known as exorcism. The Rosenheim case in Germany in 1967 was shown to revolve around a 19-year-old.

The Gift of Tongues

The word for speaking in tongues is *glossolalia*, which is vocalising a series of apparently meaningless sounds, or else speaking in a language one does not know. In public meetings there should, ideally, be an interpreter, as what is heard is usually unintelligible to those who witness it.

Many people who experience speaking in tongues can do so at will. Indeed glossolalia can be used privately to give praise to God, and perhaps more significantly, in prayers of intercession. This can be very helpful when an intercessor is unable to pray as they would like to because, for example, of lack of information. The intercessor is well aware of whom and what he is praying for in a general way, but need not know in detail; indeed, it may be desirable that he remain ignorant. In this instance an interpretation is quite unnecessary as God, to whom the prayer is addressed, is fully aware of what lies behind the words of the prayer and will act accordingly. It has been known to transform the life-style and purpose of the speaker for the better.

Out-of-the-Body Experiences

Out-of-the-body experiences (OBEs) involve a loosening of the attachment of the soul to the physical body. In an OBE experience there is a very clear perception of being somehow separate from one's physical body, possibly hovering nearby and watching events going on around the body. On other occasions one may travel vast distances. They have been widely researched and can be artificially induced by, for example, drugs, anaesthetics, sleep deprivation or sensory overload. Frances Banks, a psychologist and ex-nun, sent a questionnaire to 800 churchgoers. Forty-five percent of those who replied had had an OBE. There is also "astral travelling" during sleep, some memories of which, unlike

ordinary dreams, do not grow dim. Some argue that astral projection is a paranormal interpretation of OBEs. Neither OBEs nor astral travelling should be cultivated as there are real dangers inherent in both. One man's experience is described here:

"I was 18 years old and having a gap year. It was a Sunday afternoon and I had attended St Philip & St James' church in Bristol that morning. A young couple had invited me back to their house for Sunday lunch and soon after we had finished the meal their phone rang. They went off to help an old lady leaving me in their house alone. I had not drunk alcohol and was not on any kind of drugs, legal or otherwise. I was not sleepy.

Out of nowhere I suddenly felt a huge compulsion to get on my knees and pray. As I put my elbows on the settee I felt myself fly out of my body through my head at great speed. I travelled high in the sky westerly over the Atlantic ocean for hundreds of miles until, about mid-ocean, I saw a large luxury passenger boat (like the Q E II) heading towards the USA. At which point, like Superman, I aimed for it and descended at high speed. I went right through several layers of cabins and stopped just below the ceiling of a cabin where this couple were having an argument. No thinking on my part was involved. It just happened. Suspended there, I continued gently praying for them. All the time I was aware that my physical body was kneeling in Bristol and that a very fine silver coloured line linked my body and soul. (See Ecclesiastes 12: 6-7 in the Old Testament.) Fairly quickly the couple calmed down. Then I started to be slightly uneasy about being in two places at once and I thought I would rather be back in Bristol. No sooner had I thought this when I was hurtling back down the silver line. When very close to my body there was a brief blackout moment (I don't know how better to describe this.) and then I was back in one piece kneeling at the settee. At no time was I frightened, but I certainly was amazed. It did not hurt in any way. I had not been researching OBEs at that age.

Since that day, I am absolutely certain that body and soul exist, are separable and need each other in this life. I also believe that the soul can and sometimes does leave the body during sleep, either for refreshment or for work in other realms. The scientist who worked for the British government, Dr Robert Crookall has much to say about this in his publications."

Healing

Healing is the redemption, that is the salvaging and reforming, of all that is awry and disordered within us, and outside us, so that it may be claimed for the universal body of Christ. Healing begins when we become aware of our inadequacy. Actual healing leads to self-actualization—the development of the personality to its highest potentiality. The power that impels us on to self-realization is the Holy Spirit of God. The goal is a fully integrated life as shown by the presence of love, joy, peace, gentleness, self-control, patience and humility.

Successful healing is permanent; medical treatments and complementary medicines tend only to partial or temporary cures. Healing can be, as Jesus showed, an instant happening but it usually takes time as the patient adjusts to a new attitude. A particular healing that is sought may never happen in this life, as was the case with St Paul. It is individual persons who may be healed: ailments are cured.

Desire, in this case for healing, is the stimulus that awakens the will, the action of the soul. The soul is the directing principle of the personality and our personality is both how God made us and also wounded from past experiences. Our imperfections need to be assimilated with gentleness and courage so that they may be brought to the redeeming light of Christ. A necessary first step is self-acceptance. Healing is a gradual process that needs faith in the ever-present love of God and forgiveness of

ourselves and of others for what we are now. Faith is based on a higher intuition firmly founded in the soul, but not yet properly brought down to the mind. It is our innate knowledge of God which is our saving faith. The faith of one who is growing spiritually is not belief in facts taught by the Bible or the Church; rather saving faith is in the fundamental goodness of life itself. Faith is the active realization of spiritual truths: it is acting as if they are true.

The psychic aspect comes into this when, for example, a sensitive *knows* what is wrong with a sufferer. Some feel the pain in the actual organ or part of the body affected. Other sensitives can see the aura and by its colours diagnose the illness, locating its position in the body. An aura is a field of subtle, luminous radiation surrounding a person or object (like the halo in religious art). The writings of Payne and Bendit are most informative here. There again, some sensitives work as healers, claiming that their work in a trance state is directed by a discarnate doctor.

The spiritual element of healing is where the teaching and healing ministries of Jesus come together. Jesus taught the necessity for forgiving. Forgiveness is a state in which we are no longer enclosed in a shell of distrust or self-righteous anger; we are completely open to the other person. In such a state the mind is clear and its inner essence, the soul, is revealed. When one reaches this level of one's true identity, one's soul is no longer separate or isolated but is in psychic communion with all other souls and with the Christ who is the light of the world. In this state of complete self-giving we are receptive to the Holy Spirit. This is what St Paul calls "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27).

Charlotte M. Waterlow, writing in *Light* (LXXXII, 1962, p. 40) pointed out that

The rational mind, in showing modern man that he can be free from what is commonly called "superstition", i.e. childish dependence on real or imaginary spirits, has cleared the way for a new relationship between mortals and spirits, an adult relationship, namely, "soul communion". The immature person, being ego-centred and self-isolated [separate from others not in fact, but in his own thinking] tends to treat others, whether incarnate or discarnate, as outside himself, and thus he communicates rather than communes with them—there is not vital contact... But in communion between mature souls there is that complete interchange of life-force, that complete blending of consciousness which is love, and which develops and enhances the personality of each... And as soul-communion between angel and mortal takes place (whether or not accompanied by external phenomena such as clairvoyance and clairaudience) the angels will be enabled thereby to enter into the murky psychic realm of the earthbound spirits to release and heal them.

Beatified saints of the church have been shown to have performed post-mortem miracles. Jack Sullivan, a lay deacon in the Church from Boston, Massachusetts, was recently healed after prayer to, the now Blessed, John Henry Newman.

It is the primacy of love that should dominate Christian healing, and until it is manifested in life there can be no true wholeness, no matter how orthodox one's beliefs.

Foretelling

All forms of foretelling, whether by Tarot cards of any sort, ancient books of knowledge such as the *I-Ching*, the falling of sticks or the humble tea leaves are prediction, actively looking for clues to the future and involving a very mild degree of self-hypnosis. The dissociation involved allows a relatively clearer psychic sensibility but this level of ESP is very different from spiritual insight. The objection to it is that it encourages unconscious activity and a splitting, not an integration, of the personality. In a worst case scenario, one may dissociate into a grey, formless world of disturbing entities, at which point family members and friends may start making references about psychiatrists. Much mediumship is psychologically based on compensative fantasy which is operating solely within the medium; nothing is

truly foreseen for another.

Alan Vaughan, in his book *Patterns of Prophecy*, gives clear criteria for distinguishing true predictions from false—however well-intentioned the sensitive giving them.

1. The prediction must be told or recorded before fulfilment.
2. It must include enough details so that chance fulfilment is unlikely.
3. It must restrict itself to fairly narrow limits of time, or else it must contain details which fix the occasion of fulfilment, e.g. on visiting a certain place.
4. It must be of such a nature that inference from wider knowledge could not reasonably explain it.
5. It must be clear that suggestions or unconscious knowledge could not have brought it about.
6. The information must not have been in the possession of any other person.
7. It must be possible to exclude telepathy and clairvoyance of a present event or PK as reasonable explanations.

J. W. Dunne's pioneering *An Experiment with Time* explores foretelling in great detail.

Two reasons for not indulging any desire to see into the future are firstly, that such "knowledge" may lead to living in a constant state of anticipation, rather than living in "the sacrament of the present moment" and secondly, that one's time would not be used in a way which would prepare one for what is to come. Faith must include trusting that whatever the future holds, it is in God's providence.

The Bible has many incidences of prophecy. In scripture, a prophet is a spokesman for God and not necessarily someone who foretells the future. A prophet is different from an ecstatic—one who operates by going into a trance—because the prophet has control over his faculties (1 Cor. 14:32) and he pronounces "upbuilding, encouragement and consolation" (1 Cor. 14:3ff). True prophets proclaim a healing word from God. Jesus used his clairvoyant faculty in fulfilment of a prophecy (Luke 21:1-7). Others, well-known in scripture, include John the Baptist, Simeon and Anna.

The Most Reverend Dr Rowan Williams, a past Archbishop of Canterbury, writes that today's clergy are called to be interpreters and lookouts. As lookouts they are to see more deeply and more clearly into modern relationships and society; in other words to act as prophets of the Most High.

Discernment

To discern means to understand and discriminate between various particulars, judging wisely and objectively. It is normally a fruit of much self-control, restraint and training, in other words discipline. Wise choices can be made in a state of lucid stillness. Discernment comes by prayer and self-renunciation. One should "test the spirits to see if they are of God" (1 John 4:1).

Chapter 3

How and From Whom?

Someone new to psychic awareness may find themselves wrestling with a real dilemma. On the one hand they are aware of the reality of their unusual experience and cannot deny or dismiss it. On the other hand it seems to be leading them away from what they previously considered normal or “reality”. Unable to brush aside such events, should they be embraced or steered clear of? Are psychic experiences OK or may they lead to mental illness?

To whom may one turn for wise guidance? The majority of doctors, counsellors, clergy and psychiatrists, unless they are themselves sensitive, will be unable to take on board experiences of ESP and consequently will deal with them within terms of reference that they feel comfortable with. Prevailing ideologies will prevail. The safe option is to seek out a sensitive who is firmly rooted in the spiritual practices of their culture. There is one Christian organisation with a positive approach to the psychic aspects of human relationships and it is known as the Churches’ Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies, or CFPSS for short. It was founded by a group of Christians in 1953, as an ecumenical study group and safe-haven for sensitive souls. Their motto is “To Faith add Knowledge” (cf. 2 Peter 1:5–6) and it exists to enable Christians to believe what they say they believe. It has a very simple line on contacting the spirit world: Don’t. Never, ever go looking for psychic phenomena, but if it comes to you unbidden, it is as well to know how to deal with it.

Let’s now try to explain how and why some people undergo the kind of experiences described above, and to help those who become aware of different dimensions of reality to understand what they are and how to cope with them. Let’s look first at how we experience ESP.

There are six different ways through which we arrive at an altered state of consciousness in which we may experience ESP. They are:

1. Trance. This dissociative state may come about from, literally, a bang on the head, from drunkenness or from prolonged dancing to loud rhythmic music, for example.
2. Hallucinogenic drugs or anaesthetics.
3. Hypnotic trance.
4. Divination or seeking an oracle, These last two involve a third party: a hypnotist or a fortune-teller perhaps.
5. Dreams. This is natural and normal. Vera Staff has explored theories of dreaming in her fine book *Remembered on Waking*. Celia Green has researched dreams experienced when awake, in her book *Lucid Dreams*. St Ambrose (340–97) wrote that through his dreams he continued his relationship with his deceased brother Satyrus.
6. Religious ritual and meditation.

Dreams, meditation and religious rituals show us that there are socially and morally acceptable paths to ESP. No religion is more concerned with opening channels of healing than the Christianity of the *New Testament*.

Sudden and extremely severe shock, the abuse of drugs (including alcohol) and prolonged debilitating illness can turn a non-psychic into an unaware psychic. Unless a person is of sound mind, has well controlled emotions and is definitely actuated by the highest motives, he, or she, should never invite dissociation by the use of the ouija board, automatic writing or any other device.

Any of these acts may open us to influence from an incarnate or discarnate soul.

Influence from the “Dead but not Departed”

When we become aware, through a change to our senses of sight, hearing, touch or smell, that a discarnate person has approached us, we should discover the reason for their presence. Most commonly it is a dead relative or friend come either to assure us about a situation or to prompt us to do something. If this is the case we may listen and consider what they have to say, just as we would consider our earthly friends' comments i.e., with interest, loving thoughts and wise discernment. We may accept and act on the message if it appears sensible and in character. They will then leave us in peace, their task and our response having been achieved. Love is the strongest link between incarnate and discarnate souls, for “the soul lives where it loves, not where it breathes”, as St John of the Cross wrote. In this life or the next, it is “in God we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Some souls are “earthbound”; they may be overcome by feelings of guilt, remorse or anxiety for dear ones left behind. Some are earthbound because of binding love or hatred or some unresolved difficulty. Some have died so suddenly that they were unprepared. Suicides are very likely to be earthbound at first: their condition being due to their refusal of life. (Cf. 1 Peter 3:19; “the spirits in prison” that Jesus went and preached to are, by many, believed to be earthbound souls?) Some do not realise that they have died and have no knowledge of, or belief in, the afterlife. Many would-be domineering earthbound spirits act as if demented and are difficult to reason with, this condition being due to the false doctrines, fixed ideas, to which they cling. These unquiet dead may well be seeking our help. It is not rare for emotional distress suffered by a family ancestor to be passed down the family line and to be found represented in a living descendant. This is the realm often known as “Family Tree” healing. Prayer for the dead fulfils a genuine pastoral need.

Those who have died are receptive to our love and prayers, needing them especially in the early stages of adjustment to their new environment. Many of them find it easier to communicate with those on earth than with those on the other side, because they have not adjusted to their new surroundings. Thought and emotions are much more alert and sensitive on the other side as are the creative faculties on which our new life is built there.

Gentleness and understanding are needed for such distressed souls, yet we should be quite firmly directive. They should be encouraged to let go former earth-life conditions that seem so binding, and helped to go to their place in the new life that awaits them. It is necessary to tell them to look for the “Light” and to follow it. We, on this side of life, should especially pray for them and also ask help of those on the other side whose rôle and duty it is to lead them. The church's traditional teaching on angels is relevant here. If a priest is the percipient of such a presence he or she should absolve them. A requiem Eucharist will be most beneficial.

On Dealing with Harmful Influences from Discarnate Entities

Those who have led unconstructive or unfulfilled lives here do not change suddenly after death; none of us do—we are the same personality one minute after we die as we were one minute before. Their condition persists. Some will gropingly seek help from those on this side of death. Other discarnates try to continue living out the pattern of their former life through those on earth who are receptive. When incarnate souls experience an intense emotion such as love, hate or anger they strongly attract discarnate souls in whom the corresponding emotion is habitual. Like attracts like. Hateful souls, for example, stir up strife both in this life and the next: they vicariously enjoy the excitement of hate in others. A person who is habitually angry is certain to be surrounded by harmful souls. Sometimes the impersonal desire for generating emotions becomes personal: a discarnate who when incarnate was habitually drunk finds that by attaching himself to an incarnate drunk he is sure to get thrills. The same applies to lust, avarice, etc. Carried to its ultimate, it may become obsession. In some cases individuals suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) have been permanently freed from their distressing

condition when the one haunting them has been prayed for in a requiem Eucharist. As we read in Rom 8:38–9, “I am convinced that there is nothing in death or life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers... that can separate us from the love of God.”

The intrusion of a discarnate into the personality of someone psychically open is less rare than many would imagine. Until we are so filled with the love of God that his presence is with us as a conscious power at all times, we are liable to fall victim not only to impulses deeply set in our own unconscious but also to psychic debris around us that is only too ready to obtrude upon us. It is likely that a proportion of people under present psychiatric care might be released from such by specific intercession for the discarnates who haunt them.

Some souls are beyond our aid in the flesh and have to be left to the care of specially gifted people on the other side of death. However, on recognising this, we can link with them in intercessions for their help.

We briefly mention the possibility of possession by evil or demonic entities. Suffice to say that holy men and women of all spiritual traditions attest to such a reality. The likelihood of being so afflicted if one lives an ordinary life is remote in the extreme. Indeed, were we all to study the common stages of human growth and development applicable to us all, there would be a great reduction in fear and the fear-mongering expressed by some religious groups. We have already seen that many “demons” are in fact only discarnate souls seeking enlightenment. “Do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul...” (Matt 10:28).

Influence from Incarnate Personalities

Of course, it is not only communications from the dead that one should be discriminating about. In this life, as on the other side of death, some of us with strong personalities are able telepathically to influence the receptive minds of others. Some use psychic energy for their own gain; for wealth, position or power over others. The aggressor may know something of the penetrative ability of directed thoughts. It can take the form of disrupting the thought processes and so causing confusion in the mind of the victim; it may be simply a desire to hurt, inhibit or depress. Uncontrolled, this can be unwelcome, even detrimental. If this is the case, one will know by the kind of instructions given and the atmosphere created while the impressions are being received. Such an attack can result in a temporary partial paralysis. Others suffer mental breakdown as a result of the effect of their own practices.

Even though psychic attack is not common, measures must be taken to prevent it. No person need be forced to receive unwelcome impressions, so we must learn how to protect ourselves. This is largely a matter of building up and using a good, strong and skilful will, backed by knowledge and spiritual insights. Human will can project those things conjured up by one’s creative imagination to protect oneself.

Protection

Those who are insensitive to impressions from discarnate persons usually have their own protection. Those who are sensitive to these impressions are natural, open channels for communication. If this is the case we need to be able to protect ourselves from unwelcome intrusion. Prayer is our effective tool; we must know how to use it. Though we may place ourselves wholly in God’s hands, because of our imperfections and psychic vulnerability, we may still be open to receive impressions that are not necessarily guidance from God. On the one hand we need to be trusting and on the other, alert to our own inability to discriminate. To be safe and useful in all circumstances is a matter of long experience, dedication and spiritual integrity.

After an unpleasant and testing communication we should make a conscious effort to close our psychic centres, also known as chakras, and commit ourselves to God’s protection. If it is natural for us

to make the sign of the cross and call upon the Trinity we should do so. Other effective means are to call upon the name of Jesus, the Saints, or our Guardian Angel and, if it is our custom, to use Holy Water; but in each case this must be done with real purpose and act of will, i.e. intention. Superstitious acts are not sufficient.

There is, however, no need to attempt anything foreign to our accustomed manner of prayer. A simple request such as “God help me to dedicate myself to you, and give me your protection against all who would harm me” is enough. Those who do not know how to ask for protection and find a set form useful may use the prayer *St Patrick’s Breastplate*, or put on *The Armour of Light*.

St Patrick’s Breastplate prays:

“Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me. Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger. I bind unto myself the name, the strong name of the Trinity, by invocation of the same, The Three in One, and One in Three.”

The Armour of Light, from Eph. 6:13-18, reads:

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

This passage should be read slowly and reverently: the directions carefully followed, using the power of one’s imagination, visualising each instruction as a part of clothing oneself with the whole armour of light so that in the end we are wholly surrounded by its protective light.

There are some individuals whose circumstances are such that, for the time being, the wise choice may be to pray that their sensitivity may be lessened.

Chapter 4

The Soul Lives where it Loves

'Let saints on earth in concert sing
with those whose work is done;
for all the servants of our King
in heaven and earth are one.'

Charles Wesley

Dr Bob Gilbert wrote that this chapter 'looks at the way in which anxiety over psychic experiences can be transcended by consideration of their spiritual content within the framework of the Christian faith.'

Spiritual Beings

A quick search using the internet reveals a large number of television programmes aimed at teenagers and young adults which have a paranormal theme. Amongst them are: *American Gothic*, *Being Human*, *Charmed*, *Ghost Whisperer*, *Hex*, *Jekyll*, *Medium*, *Moonlight* and *Night Gallery*. The viewing figures, the large sums of money spent by the programme makers and the counsel of elder relatives 'not to waste your time on such stuff' suggest the possibility that there may be something in such stories.

Fr Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, by the gift and grace of God, a spiritual genius and world-famous palaeontologist, wrote 'We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience'.

In fiction, we have Oscar Wilde's delightful story of *The Canterville Ghost*. This chimes in with the great Doctor of the Church, St John of the Cross who tells us that 'the soul lives where it loves, not where it breathes' (*Spiritual Canticles* 8.2.). Putting all this together suggests that there really are souls with bodies, like us (incarnate beings) and souls without bodies, people who have died (discarnate beings).

Spiritual Union

Helen Greaves' *Testimony of Light* is the remarkable account of her unsought and ongoing relationship with her deceased friend Frances Banks. As scripture says, 'Love is stronger than death' (Rom 8:38). This must be so because 'God is love: he who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him.' (1 John 4:16). Jesus brought Lazarus back to life again and, later, God raised Jesus from the dead.

Purposeful, outpouring Love (also known as God) never ends. It is, of course, God who first loves us (1 John 4:10,19). We are all members of the mystical body of Christ whose love binds together the communion of saints (cf. 1 Cor 12-15). Love is both spiritual union and, as the bishop St Francis de Sales wrote, 'the abridgement of all theology'. Jesus promises us eternal connectedness to him (love) and through him to our loved ones: 'Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time' (Matt 28:20).

Dying Unprepared

The opposite of love is separation. It may well be that fear of death and dying comes from the fear of being disconnected from those who love us the most. Indeed, the Litany in Common Worship teaches

'From dying unprepared, good Lord deliver us'. What, then, of today's war dead, those who died in traffic accidents or acts of terrorism, those who have committed suicide, the stillborn, the miscarried, the aborted foetuses and others who have not died peacefully?

The Revd Dr Martin Israel wrote, regarding babies who have died, 'As a rule, the younger the victim of "unnatural death", the more unsettled is its soul, and the more disquietude it sets up. Following miscarriage, "inevitable" or "induced" abortion the foetus is not well disposed after its rejection and death, for it tends to remain in psychic attachment to its mother, and sometimes to other members of its family also. There is often a great degree of resentment inasmuch as the foetus has lost its foothold in the family circle, and it may intrude quite disastrously in the family proceedings until it is persuaded to move on to God's care.' Loving prayer can heal this hurt; though the pain may still be felt for a long time.

Misery and Terror

Some people suffer from thoughts that torment or terrorize them. They inwardly struggle to be their normal selves, yet find, at times, that they are behaving 'out of character', 'unlike their usual self'; contrary, argumentative. "Why can't you hear me? Who am I, really? Can I ever be the me I want to be?", they may ask of others and of themselves. They may spend many years wandering the waste-howling wildernesses of anguish, loneliness and despair (Deut 32.10), in which life appears to be hell.

One way to begin to comprehend such enormous suffering is to envisage the afflicted one as an actor; at times involuntarily acting-out the part of another character, someone else. In medical circles the norm is to think of psychiatric, rather than psychic, conditions. Some of the individuals tormented by, e.g. gender confusion, may in fact be haunted.

The state of being haunted is a state of being sought and needed. The help the unquiet dead needs is recognition of who they are and that they do indeed exist, though not as we exist in the flesh (1 Cor 15:44). What is forcefully wanted is recognition of the emotional pain and distress of those still very close even though they have died. They, too, need to be loved.

The psychiatrist Dr Kenneth McAll taught that those most likely to be haunted will be, within their family environment, the most sensitive, the most intelligent and the closest to God, because the 'lost soul' is turning to their best bet for help. Clearly, one may be a recipient of psychic phenomena and also need psychiatric help but the two need not be confused: one may be mentally ill and not psychically aware or psychically aware and mentally healthy.

Healing Atonement

The Church is tasked to bring healing both to the seen and to the unseen (cf. Eph 3:10) and the annals of the Vatican contain many records of the practical art of healing the haunted (see Fr F X Schouppe, *Purgatory Illustrated by the Lives and Legends of the Saints*).

The first requisite is love for all involved, then prayer. Praying for, not to, the deceased is one of the best ways to resolve grief and inherited family conflicts and is recommended in the Church of England's 1971 Report, *Prayer and the Departed*. Traffic accident 'black-spots' can cease to be dangerous after clergy have prayed at and blessed the site.

As these may be uncharted waters for almost everyone, it would be wise to ask your local minister or priest if he or she conducts 'requiem Eucharists'. Some evangelical ministers do and the majority of 'catholic' clergy certainly will. A requiem Eucharist is a celebration of Holy Communion (itself a representation of Jesus' Last Supper) undertaken in the minister's usual fashion in which particular prayers are made to God. In these prayers, the 'dead but not departed' person is explicitly named, admitted to

be one of the family if it is a foetus, apologies are made regarding the circumstances of their untimely death and forgiveness is sought from God over selfish, unloving acts of the past. The deceased is then commended into the light and love of Christ. It is most beneficial if the prayers come direct from the family members involved e.g., Mum or the afflicted one. It is perfectly acceptable to use one's everyday language; special "religious" phrases are not essential. Suitable scripture readings include Ephesians 3:7-20 and John 5:24-29. Countless thousands of souls, in this life and the next, have received tremendous relief, release and healing by this simple method of amendment and reconciliation.

In a reversal of common belief regarding our deceased relatives, as Maurice Zundel wrote in *The Splendour of the Liturgy*, 'God has not taken them from us; He has hidden them in His heart that they may be closer to ours.' All parties concerned may then rejoice, in the words of George Wallace Briggs:

'Unfathomed love divine,
reign thou within my heart;
from thee nor depth nor height,
nor life nor death can part;
my life is hid in God with thee,
now and through all eternity.'

Chapter 5

Love and Life after Death

Today you shall be with me in Paradise. Luke 23.43

This chapter shows that belief in life after death is consistent with biblical and church teaching.

In the Bible

Just as the church's doctrines of the Trinity and of Infant Baptism have been fairly and honestly deduced from scripture, so we may make similar deductions about life after death - at least as far as it refers to its earliest stages.

By the first century BC, King Saul had spoken with Samuel after the prophet's death and belief in a rich after-life had grown as the numbers of Jews killed in battles rose. We find care for the dead, in 2 Maccabees 12:38-45: 'Judas had this expiatory sacrifice offered for the dead, so that they might be released from their sin.'

Amongst other instances, we find in the New Testament that: Moses and Elijah were recognized by the apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration; Dives and Lazarus are both described as in Hades, an intermediate state of life; Jesus' word to the penitent thief on the cross shows a continuing relationship after physical death, a transitional incident which one need not fear; Christ preached to the spirits in prison after he had died. In John 5:25-30, Jesus refers to his relationship with the dead. The 'judgement' is a disciplinary, corrective time of punishment. The 'many mansions' of John 14:3 are wayside 'caravanserais' or roadside shelters for resting places along the journey after death and, in John 17, Jesus said, "This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only God".

In the Bible, there is only one God, one Saviour, and one humanity; that is all mankind was considered as one in its collective humanity. There was one Adam, representing the fall of humanity, and only one 'second Adam', Jesus, who shows the way for the return of this one humanity back to at-one-ment with the Divine. The popular focusing on Jesus by Christians makes sense when Jesus is seen as the representative man, standing for any and all humanity.

Similarly, for the hope that God will bring all creation home to himself see Rom 5&11, 1 Cor 15, Eph 1, 1 Tim 2&4, and 1 John 2. The story of Zacchaeus, in Luke 19, shows that in the presence of Jesus, the Saviour, we judge ourselves.

In the Tradition of the Church

We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Nicene Creed

In Liturgy (i.e. the work of the people), the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and some branches of Protestant churches pray regularly for the dead and ask the dead in Christ to pray for them. Early Fathers who prayed for the dead, in accord with "they shall not be made perfect without us" (Heb 11), include St Augustine, Epiphanius, St Chrysostom, Eusebius, Arnobius and Tertullian. As just mentioned, the dead pray also for us. From the 20th century, St Thérèse of Lisieux wrote, in her autobiography, 'I shall spend my heaven doing good on earth.'

Part of the churches ministry of deliverance consists in 'healing the haunted' by praying for a 'dead but not departed' soul that they may continue their journey towards the light of Christ and so release the afflicted, incarnate soul from their influence. The key is always love.

The Key Relationship

As God's love is absolute so is his commitment to all. In both life and death, God's love will not let us go. As death was not the end of the matter for Jesus nor is it for us. The resurrection of Jesus gives us a sure and certain hope of resurrection to a new life.

Death will not change our being, only our environment. We will be the same personality one minute after we die as we were one minute before. Only we will have left behind our earthly body, which was necessary for the education of the soul in this life. The soul is an overlying intelligence which makes itself known through the body, and then detaches itself when the body dies, for as St John of the Cross wrote, 'The soul lives where it loves, not where it breathes'. 'Life is God living and working in the soul' wrote the Revd William Law. So much so that, 'we are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience' to quote Teilhard de Chardin once more.

Continuing Growth towards the Divine Spirit

Differences in the next life are moral differences arising from variety in character and spiritual attainment wrought in this life. We shall reap in the next life what we have sown in this life. Indeed, the spiritual body of I Cor 15 consists of the attitudes, opinions and actions of the person while he or she was still alive in the flesh. The chastening of our selfishness is Fatherly, remedial and finite resulting in enlarged consciousness and compassion. Such purging is a preliminary to ascending to more heavenly realms, one of which is the traditional 'paradise'.

St Catherine of Genoa wrote that, except in paradise, no joy can be 'compared to the joy of the souls in purgatory. This joy increases day by day... since the impediment to God's love is worn away daily. This impediment is the rust of sin. As it is consumed the soul is more and more open to God's love.' Such knowledge strengthens our 'faith which is reason grown courageous.'

Bishop Gregory of Nyssa went further when he wrote, 'The desire of those who thus rise never rests in what they can already understand; but by an ever greater and greater desire, the soul keeps rising constantly to another [grace] which lies ahead, and thus makes its way through ever higher regions towards the Transcendent.'

Life and death are continuously happening. We may truly pass from death to life, now, as we turn from self-centredness to self-sacrificing service of others. Our choices determine whether we are moving towards death, separation from others, or towards greater life; headed for hell or heaven.

In loving service, lies our consciousness of immortality for 'God is Love'.

Heaven and hell may be seen as one spiritual world perceived differently according to our own spiritual state. Hell as a state of despairing isolation; heaven a state where one experiences complete trust and mutual acceptance in total openness. It follows that heaven cannot truly appear until all creation is 'one in Christ', then Christ shall be 'all in all' and heaven revealed.

Faith, Hope and Love

Neither death nor life... nor anything in all creation can separate us from the love of God. Rom8.38-9

Have no misgiving; if one has not responded to Christ's love in this life, it may yet happen in the next. Though there may be considerable correction and cleansing needed, nothing can separate us forever from the Love that is God.

Chapter 6

'A Paler but Present Reality'

An Address for a Eucharist celebrating the Transfiguration of Jesus.

The transfiguration account in Luke 9:28-36 is one of those universal stories which shows how it is for Jesus, for you, me, everyone. It is a great favourite of mine.

The first thing to be aware of is that Jesus had reached a crisis. A turning point in his life and ministry. He had just heard that John the Baptist - the forerunner - had been killed. Peter had announced that Jesus was the Messiah. From now on it was clear that Jerusalem and his own death lay ahead of him.

Second point. It says Jesus was "at prayer". Whenever the Son of God was "at prayer" in the Gospels you know something very big is about to happen.

His 'departure for Jerusalem' uses the verb 'Exodus'. Jesus and all around him knew he was taking over as the Way to the Promised Land of God's Kingdom. The Law and the Prophets disappear in the Cloud - the shekinah, the Glory of God - leaving only Jesus. The old has passed away. Behold the New Way is announced. It is a way of suffering and service. Hence the suffering servant. When Jesus sees what horrors lay ahead of Him the heavens are opened and the all powerful, always present, presence of Our Heavenly Father was shown to Jesus and to his followers. Whatever the future holds for Jesus, you or me it is held in Divine Love. The Transfiguration is a preview - a pre-cursor - of the Resurrection. A paler, but Present Reality.

A priest friend of mine wrote his Master's thesis on how to respond to patients' accounts of Near Death Experiences. Near-death is a precursor to dying and actual death. Actual separation of body and soul finally. Like the transfiguration of Jesus, a Near Death Experience will, normally, transform a dark and difficult period which presages dying into an actual, real experience of Eternal glory and imparts great hope, renewed energy and vision. An NDE is a paler, but present reality.

All clergy are ordained to the cure of souls. The soul being the deepest, most authentic part of oneself. The adjective meaning 'to do with the soul' is psychic. Clergy are to assist folk in raising their deepest awareness's and concerns away from self and towards God. Hence all religious and spiritual adventure is a Journey back to God.

The Alister Hardy Religious Experience Research archive holds accounts of the 1 in 2 British adults who admit to having had one or more religious or psychic experiences. Their stories of religious experiences are, compared to the spiritual, a paler but present reality.

The state of our psyche, our soul is often shown to us at time of need. The transfiguration experience shows us that when we wonder how to respond in difficult situations, we should ask to be shown what needs to be done.

Which reminds me of the vicar who lay poorly in his hospital bed. An elderly lady of the parish comes to visit him. She places the grapes on to the tray over his bed, sits down and says, "Good news, vicar. The PCC have decided to pray for your recovery. The vote was 5 to 4."

We mortals need constant reminding that in times of uncertainty, fear, darkness or pain, we must raise our sights far beyond our present vision, way past the prognostications of a mystic Meg or a fairground fortune-teller, up into the Cloud of Unknowing where God has been known to make himself not only Present but visibly so in the life, work, death and resurrection of his only son Jesus, whose very life we take into ours by means of the bread and wine of this, his Last Supper offering.

Chapter 7

Psychiatric Findings of patients in whose family there were closely related abortions.

Below is a tabulated summary of information sent to Dr William Wilson, Professor of Neuro-Psychiatry at Duke University, North Carolina, U.S.A., to augment his article for the American 'Southern Medical Journal'. The data was compiled over a three week period from the clinical records of Dr R Kenneth McAll by Ken McAll and the present author.

"The presenting symptoms in patients coming to me in whose family there were closely related abortions that had been unmentioned are as follows. These were extracted from my private Consultant Psychiatric practice of 2,900 family records over a ten year period."

Physical presenting symptoms	
Arthritis	5
Gastro-intestinal	22
Epileptiform	5

Mental presenting symptoms	
Alcoholic	7
Neuroses	14
Anger	31
Phobic anxiety	13
Anorexia Nervosa	50
Paranoid	6
Bulimia	5
Psychopathic	15
Manic depressive	5
Schizoid	59
Depression	92
Sleepless	16

Haunted presenting symptoms	
Person	37
Place	5

Total Cases = 387

Therapy	
Prayer only begun in	31
Eucharist begun in	319
Course adopted unknown	37
	Total = 387

RESULTS	
Quick healing	254
Slow healing (more than 7 days)	74
Antagonistic to therapy	9

No result known	44
Died	6
Total = 387	

Interesting other factors

126 cases involved close female relatives. 32 %

In 30 cases sons were the patients. 8 %

In 80 cases other male relatives were involved.

In 35 cases the patient did not attend but this did not prevent resolution.

2 mothers presented with symptoms related to their daughters' abortions.

Additional facts

367 Families had 589 abortions.

422 People were involved in counselling.

Conclusions

With those willing and persistent in the Eucharist or Mass setting, resolution occurred within one week.

This represented 65 %. 254/387 equals 65 %

In 19 % resolution was much slower. 74/387 equals 19 %

The total cure rate was 84 %.

Chapter 8

The Psychic and the Spiritual

This chapter was written by the Revd Robert Llewelyn, the Guardian of the Julian shrine at Norwich and a patron of the Sozein Trust up until his death. I had planned to abridge it, but it reads better as he composed the piece.

What is the difference?

What is the difference between the psychic and the spiritual? It is a question which, probably, most of us have often been asked. First we must understand how we intend the word 'spiritual'. The spiritual may be used in contrast to the physical, but I shall not be using it in that way. Used in that sense the question of moral worth would be irrelevant. The Archangel Gabriel and the devil (both being pure spirits) would be equally spiritual. I shall be using the word here in the ordinary New Testament sense.

Thus St Paul writes (Romans 8.6), 'to be spiritually minded is life and peace'. It is that sense that I use the word spiritual. There is no contrast here with the physical, for Paul is clearly speaking to those in physical bodies. The spiritual person is the one who lives in the power of the Holy Spirit and who bears in his or her life the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, goodness, gentleness, forbearance, meekness, self-control.

Psychic

The word 'psychic' has reference to paranormal phenomena: telepathy, psychometry, clairvoyance, tongues, healing, prophecy, etc. People with psychic gifts may be deeply spiritual but this by no means follows. They may equally be rogues; or perhaps controlled by demonic forces. It depends on whether psychic powers are used selfishly for personal ends or benevolently for the glory of God. Much psychic activity is morally neutral; the bending of spoons, for example: the psychic power works independently of whether the agent is a rascal or a saint.

Gospel passages

Two Gospel passages are worthy of attention. In Matthew 7.21-23, we read how Jesus said: 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of Heaven . . . When the day comes, many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and in your name perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Out of my sight; your deeds are evil!"'. Jesus makes it clear that the capacity to work miracles is in itself no guarantee of goodness.

The second passage is Luke 10.17-20, which reads: 'The seventy-two came back jubilant. "In your name, Lord", they said, "even the demons submit to us". Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall, like lightning, from heaven . . . Nevertheless, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but that your names are enrolled in heaven". Jesus bids his disciples to rejoice, not on account of remarkable powers, but because their names are written in heaven.

The devil is an example of a being of immense psychic power whose spiritual rating is zero. Jesus is an example of a person of the deepest spirituality possessing great psychic power. This power is made evident in such instances as seeing Nathaniel meditating under the fig tree, discerning the past life of the woman at the well, knowing from a distance that Lazarus had died, healing, exorcism etc. But in him the psychic was totally subsumed in the spiritual. It was never used for personal ends, but that God might be glorified.

We are all psychic

Everyone is psychic to a certain degree; indeed every emotion, whether positive or negative, has a psychic charge. Communication in ordinary speech is in part a psychic phenomenon. But relatively few are psychic in the specialist meaning of the word as used here. Such are generally known as sensitives.

Psychic powers may be developed but this is a dangerous thing to set out to do. However, it usually happens that as a person grows spiritually, psychic powers do develop naturally without attention being paid to them, and this is safe and further, beneficial because it is the spiritual by which the life is ruled. Even so, the degree of the psychic in a spiritually minded person depends very largely on that person's psycho-physical make up and not necessarily on the depth of his or her spirituality. Thus in the realm of the psychic a rogue could be a giant and a saint a dwarf. Whereas, in the realm of the spiritual, gianthood would belong to the saint and dwarfdom to the rogue.

Development

It must always be desirable that those with psychical gifts should develop their spirituality, since it is upon the spiritual that salvation depends. Whether it is desirable for psychic gifts to be developed alongside the spiritual is best left to the Holy Spirit in the ruling of one's life. The following from Dr Martin Israel makes a valuable summary:

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are essentially psychic in nature (and in no way to be belittled on that account), but the harvest of the Holy Spirit is genuinely spiritual, by which I mean leading one to an encounter with God. Psychical gifts are excellent provided they are spiritually, and not egoistically, directed.

Why be suspicious?

It is unfortunate that many Christians are suspicious of the psychic. The word itself is morally neutral signifying neither good nor bad. It is the character of the one who uses psychic gifts, determining the end to which they are put, which makes them a force for good or evil.

Chapter 9

Prayers

Pray continually; give thanks whatever happens; for this is what God wills for you in Christ Jesus.
I Thessalonians 5.17–18.

Whilst chatting to God will never go out of fashion, there may be times when we know not the best words to use, or, indeed, find that we are drawn to the silent prayer of contemplation.

This booklet is not primarily about prayer, but as all psychic – indeed, all life's – events are best handled with prayer, I have included some appropriate ones here.

The Lord's prayer:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.

The Collect for the 19th Sunday after Trinity:

O God, forasmuch as without you
we are not able to please you;
mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit
may in all things direct and rule our hearts;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

The Collect for St Michael and All Angels, which is celebrated on September 29th:

Everlasting God,
you have ordained and constituted the ministries
of angels and mortals in a wonderful order:
grant that as your holy angels
always serve you in heaven,
so, at your command,
they may help and defend us on earth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

On October 2nd, the Roman Catholic church celebrates the holy Guardian Angels:

God our Father, in your loving providence you send your holy angels to watch over us. Hear our prayers, defend us always by their protection and let us share your life with them forever. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Archbishop William Temple wrote this beautiful prayer:

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to thee, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly thine, utterly dedicated to thee; and then use us we pray thee, as thou wilt, but always to thy glory and the welfare of thy people; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

William Law's prayers on love:

O God, in whom nothing can live but as it lives in love, grant us the spirit of love which does not want to be rewarded, honoured or esteemed, but only to become the blessing and happiness of everything that wants it; which is the very joy of life, and your own goodness and truth in our soul; who yourself are love, and by love our Redeemer, from eternity to eternity. Amen.

O heavenly Father, infinite, fathomless depth of never-ceasing Love, save me from myself, from the disorderly workings of my fallen, long corrupted nature, and let my eyes see, my heart and spirit feel and find, your salvation in Christ Jesus. Amen.

O God, who made me for yourself, to show forth your goodness in me, manifest, I humbly beseech you, the life-giving power of your holy nature within me; help me to such a true and living faith in you, such strength of hunger and thirst after the birth, life and spirit of your holy Jesus in my soul, that all that is within me, may be turned from every inner thought, or outward work, that is not you, your holy Jesus, and heavenly working in my soul. Amen.

The prayer below is by Tukaram, an Indian Peasant Mystic 1608-49, (from *The Oxford Book of Prayers*, OUP, 1985):

'Take, Lord, unto Thyself,
My sense of self; and let it vanish utterly:
Take, Lord, my life.
Live thou thy life through me:
I live no longer, Lord.
But in me now
Thou livest:
Aye, between Thee and me, my God,
There is no longer room for 'I' and 'mine'.

Dorothy Kerin's Little Way of Prayer:

'Let us by an act of will place ourselves in the presence of our divine Lord and by an act of faith ask that he will empty us of all desire save that His most blessed will be done and that it may illumine our hearts and minds. We can then gather together all those for whom our prayers have been asked and hold them silently up to Him making no special request – neither asking nor beseeching – but just resting with them in Him desiring nothing but that our Lord may be glorified in them.'

A prayer for the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies:

Bless, O God, our fellowship:
Guide us by your Spirit,
That by dispelling the fear that arises from ignorance
And by realizing your love,
We may bring all whom we serve
Into the knowledge of eternal life;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

From the Catholic missal, for All Souls masses for the dead:

Merciful Father,
hear our prayer and console us.
As we renew our faith in Your Son,
whom You raised from the dead,
strengthen our hope that all our departed brothers and sisters
will share in His resurrection,
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen

From the Benedictine Diurnal, the Collect for All Souls Day:

We suppliants, O Lord,
pour forth our prayers
for the souls of Thy servants and handmaids,
that Thou wouldst mercifully pardon
whatsoever they have committed
through human frailty
and graciously bring their sufferings to an end.
Through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Intercessions when praying for healing the family tree should be as specific as possible and, ideally, prayed by those most closely involved. The scene may be set by reading such scripture passages as 2 Maccabees 12: 38-45 or alternatively John 5:24-30.

Chapter 10

The Eucharist

Paschal Lamb, thine offering, finished
once for all when thou was slain,
in its fullness undiminished
shall for evermore remain.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Cleansing souls from every stain.

(Verse 4 of 'Lord enthroned in heavenly splendour' by G H Bourne.)

Scripture tells us that 'God is love; he who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him (1 John 4:16) .' Fr Ron Rolheiser tells us the passage might well be translated: "God is shared existence, and those who break open their lives and gratefully share them with others already live inside of God." We may say that the power of the Holy Spirit is spelt l-o-v-e. The divine action of the liturgy of Holy Communion is being caught up into this love. In worshipping God in the Eucharist we are caught up in a mystery which is both in time and out of time.

The Eucharist contains and carries many deep realities: it helps continue the incarnation of God in history; it is God's physical embrace; it is an intensification of our community together as Christians; it is the new manna that God gives to nurture his people; it is our family meal together as believers; it is Christ's sacrifice which we commemorate ritually; it is God's gift of reconciliation and forgiveness; it is an invitation to a deeper discipleship; it is a banquet table opened up for the poor; it is a vigil service within which we wait for Christ to return; and it is Christ's priestly prayer for the world. (R Rolheiser, *Our One Great Act of Fidelity*, p.120.) It is a celebration, a thanksgiving to God for what He has done for all humanity in Jesus' offering of his own life to save us from our self-centredness. It is the ultimate free gift of self-giving love. It is a re-presentation, a making present once again, of an assembling together within God's infinitely compassionate mercy of all the brokenness's of the whole of creation. To share in Holy Communion is to be inwardly and spiritually lifted up into the fullness, the completeness of healing, of salvation which has already been achieved for all of us together in Christ Jesus.

The Christ of God is love, William Law tells us. It is always love that saves, redeems and restores.

"Love is the fundamental impulse of Life, or, if you prefer, the one natural medium in which the rising course of evolution can proceed. It is through love and within love that we must look for the deepening of our deepest self, in the life-giving coming together of humankind. Love is the free and imaginative outpouring of the spirit over all unexplored paths. It links those who love in bonds that unite but do not confound, causing them to discover in their mutual contact an exaltation capable, incomparably more than any arrogance of solitude, of arousing in the heart of their being all that they possess of uniqueness and creative power." (Teilhard de Chardin, *The Grand Option* in an essay entitled *The Future of Man* pp.54-5.)

Commenting on this, Ursula King in *Christ in all things* (pp 36-7) says 'In his essay "The Spirit of the Earth" (1931) this great vision of one world and one human community is once again strongly expressed. If we wish to extend rather than diminish our capacity of being human, we have to draw on the "incredible power of love," "the primal and universal psychic energy," "the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces." For Teilhard, love is "a sacred reserve of energy; it is like the blood of spiritual evolution" through which we can develop the sense of the earth and "the miracle of a common soul" for the world.'

Jesus never promised us rescue, exemptions, immunity from illnesses, or escape from death. He promised rather that, in the end, there will be redemption, vindication and eternal life. To redeem is to atone for, to expiate, to restore, to deliver and to recover.

But that's in the end; in the meantime, there will be the same kinds of humiliation, pain, and death that everyone else suffers. This is well summarized by the great St John of the Cross when he wrote "I saw the river over which every soul must pass to reach the kingdom of heaven, and the name of that river was suffering... and I saw the boat which carries souls across the river, and the name of that boat was love."

'It is man's privilege to traverse this path (of suffering) to self-realisation in Christ; through the crucifixion of the lower nature that same nature is finally resurrected in glory, and corruptible matter is transfigured in eternal spirit.' as Martin Israel wrote in *About Death...*(p.38)

The point of all liturgy, including the Lord's Supper, the Mass, the Eucharist, Holy Communion is to feed all involved with actual spiritual food, food for the spirit - divine love. At the heart of this service is the anamnesis, the long prayer the priest says before breaking the bread. This memorial prayer of remembrance recalls for the worshipping community past events in their tradition of faith that are formative for their identity and self-understanding. This compelling and creative remembering has its roots deep in Jewish tradition especially in the Passover meal the shared preparation and consumption of which is a memorial action (*zikkaron*; cf Exodus 12.14 and 13.9), through which God's redemptive power in the past act of the Exodus may be freshly experienced in the present participants.

We have earlier noted that a requiem Eucharist can powerfully heal so, 'with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name for ever praising you and saying' in the words of the Methodist Post-Communion prayer

"We thank you, Lord,
that you have fed us in this sacrament,
united us with Christ,
and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet
prepared for all mankind. Amen."

Chapter 11

Criteria by which to Evaluate ESP

Psychic awareness is rarely frequent; for many it is a once in a lifetime event. ESP is not something to dabble in, any more than it is wise to dabble in surgery. Nor is it safe to try and prematurely open up faculties not already open. In other words, never seek psi either for oneself or for another; nor should one practise psychic awareness alone. But, if such perceptivity is already a feature of one's life it is wise to learn how to handle it, especially when lack of proper control and discipline can, and does, lead to trouble. This distinction, between going and actively looking for psi and receiving unsought communications, is central to CFPSS teaching. A person who is naturally psychic cannot help being aware of ESP any more than someone who is not deaf can help hearing; there is no blame possible to be attached.

Sadly, it is too easy to get carried away, believing that ESP is something not only different but superior, and that because one has decided to use this gift in God's work, nothing can go wrong. This is far from the truth. That one has experienced something psychic conveys no special status whatsoever. To think otherwise leads to pride which inexorably separates one from our fellow humans and, for this reason, is considered the deadliest of all sins.

Many people are indeed psychic, but those not spiritually ready to use their gift are liable to hurt themselves and others. Those who desire ESP for material purposes, amusement or curiosity are liable to contact earth-bound souls. The development of psychic gifts for their own sake is a snare to spiritual growth entrapping the aspirant in a web of glamour and deceit. It will not produce increased spiritual awareness.

Just as there are receptive and executive experiences of psi, though in this life the two are often intermixed, so there are negative and positive sensitives. A negative sensitive has an unbalanced personality, is prone to dissociate, enter trance or psychologically disintegrate. They can be highly strung. Such a person may convey aspects of a greater truth but will do so by giving over their will to another entity, opening themselves to unhealthy relationships. He, or she, is not in control of themself.

Other researchers speak of a lower and a higher psychic sensitivity. The former is a gift, present in varying degrees in many people, outstandingly so in those who are called sensitives. These vary greatly in spirituality, but on the whole they do not show the fruits of the Spirit any more strongly than do their non-psychic neighbours. The higher psychic sensitivity is seen in the great saints of religion, and develops with their spiritual growth. A positive sensitive is a person of healthy body and mind, with an integrated personality and is in control of themself. Such a person can enter into a conscious, willed state of stillness in which to serve others. This distinction between lower and higher psychic sensitivity indicates that psychic ability is not necessarily accompanied by spirituality, but spirituality tends to be associated with increasing degrees of psychic awareness.

All forms of sensitivity should be dedicated to God. It is wise to train ourselves in prayer and wait on the Spirit for divine inspiration. The essence of prayer is, of course, stilled attentive waiting upon God for him to draw us towards further integration within ourselves, our communities and our Saviour.

In all these things we have one sure recourse; God's love for us. Knowledge of God is attained through self-sacrificing love not by psychic experimentation. The wise psychic will spiritualize their gift.

In order to discern intelligently the value of ESP we may look at their consequences because, as in all things, it is "by their fruits you shall know them". The following questions will help:-

Does my gift help me accept the world and people as they really are?

Does using my gift lead to increasing psychological integration, intellectual breadth and spiritual growth in me and in others?

Does it increase faith, hope and joy?

Does it promote healing and love in individuals and groups?
Do I use my gift out of love for God and other people?
Does it bring courage and liberation to others?

Someone emotionally mature who is non-intrusive and sympathetic, perhaps a spiritual director or soul-friend, may help one tease out truthful answers to the above.

St Teresa of Avila (1515–82) gave us wise criteria by which to evaluate true visions:

- they have a sense of power and authority;
- they produce tranquillity, recollectedness, and a desire to praise God;
- they impart an inner certainty that what is envisioned is true;
- they are clear and distinct, with each part carrying great meaning;
- they give strength and peace and inspire love for God.

The most important criterion is that true visions result in a life of improved ethics and psychological integration.

In all psychic matters the psychological attitude is the determining factor. The intuitive, feeling kind of personality needs to cultivate a degree of analytical, objective thinking to counter-balance any tendency to over-confident assumptions. Equally, the logical, reasoning and seriously minded souls need to allow that there are “more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in their philosophy”.

What is needed is scrupulous self-honesty. To see oneself as one *is*, rather than as one would like to be. Such reflection upon our experience of ESP will help us understand the forces that impinge upon us and encourage us to reach a state of consciousness such that we can become both truly aware and responsible.

Our task during this earthly life, one of physical embodiment or incarnation, is to grow into the fullness of our unique identity as given by God. Incarnation produces the separation necessary to enable each of us to develop our individual character. We are to learn lessons of self-control, selflessness and humility; to learn how to reason and handle intuition; to master both emotion and intellect. Hopefully we develop good habits of honest thinking, sincere feeling, determined willing and responsive praying. Incarnation is for individuation. As Polonius said in *Hamlet*, “This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.” (Act I, scene 3, 78–82)

We are to grow from the baby’s “all or nothing” reactive immaturity, through the teenager’s years of crowd mentality and thence through life’s vicissitudes towards mature individuality and prayerful perception of God’s mystical relationship with us and all creation. This lifelong adventure applies not just to individuals but to groups, organisations and nations. Our modern western societies place a very high value on intellect and the achievements of the scientific community. It is unfortunate that life’s complexities, darkneses and mysteries are so often given “all or nothing” responses of the kind one may find in a two-year old. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to soften such abrasiveness into an appreciation not only of black and white but of all the colours of creation. Our society is making steps towards “emotional intelligence”, though it may be a long time before the arts are as highly prized as the sciences.

Scientists teach us that single facts can never be “proved” except by their coherence in a system. It is the same with ESP: psychic communications are like a jig-saw puzzle. Once solved, jig-saw puzzles are not proved by experiment or statistics—they are seen to be correctly assembled.

One looks forward to the days when the gifts of the Spirit discussed above are duly appreciated and seen to be positive handmaids to growth in spirituality: when perceptions of every kind are acknowledged as being “to the greater glory of God.”

It is vital that to faith we add knowledge of things psychical and spiritual. The Church must integrate modern findings in this as in any other field of human living or fail society.

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The Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies

The CFPSS exists to promote the study of psychical and spiritual experience within a Christian context. Founded in 1953 by a group of clergy and laymen on an ecumenical basis, it continues to serve the churches and its individual members who come from many and varied backgrounds.

Some have sought help from the Fellowship's extensive knowledge, at significant points in life where there may have been spontaneous gifts of the Spirit, the pain of bereavement or simply a vocation to a spiritual life through psychic encounter. Many bring a wisdom and depth of vision to enrich the understanding of others.

The Fellowship takes a positive view of psychic sensitivity which many people experience quite naturally in their lives, perhaps through an unsought telepathic communication. Some seem to have a greater awareness of this dimension than others and in some it is more refined. There is a gentle call on members to relate this to a fuller Christian life in which the psychic may find consecration.

There are two classes of membership: full and associate. Those eligible for full membership must be practising members of Churches which are members of, or affiliated to, the World Council of Churches, or must themselves acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of the World. Associate members, who cannot vote or hold office, need no such qualifications and may be elected if the Council of the Fellowship so determines.

Full and associate members receive *The Christian Parapsychologist* twice a year and the *Quarterly Review* four times a year. The Fellowship has a library from which study material is available, for purchase or loan. This includes CDs, cassettes and video tapes, books and booklets. A fuller prospectus together with lists of the above is available from:

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