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# The subconscious factor in religious experience

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T H E S I S

Subject:  
The "Subconscious Factor" in Religious Experience.

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Feb 17

# T H E S I S

## Subject;

.....The "Subconscious Factor" in The Religious Experience.....

The year 1886 is, in the minds of many of our great psychologists, ~~is~~ the date of a great discovery. About this time, suggests William James in his Gifford Lectures, the men who study the phenomena of the mind, received the light that there was such a thing as subconsciousness. However, others suggest that this movement was inaugurated by Sir William Hamilton and Professor Laycock of Edinburgh at an earlier date. Leaving the matter of who was the discoverer, we note that the same phenomena which are discussed in connection with the subconscious were formerly credited to "unconscious cerebration", but a different explanation was given to them.

Before proceeding farther is it appropriate for the sake of elucidation and clearness to define the most common terms necessary to such a discussion, and this we shall proceed to do. The word "consciousness" Baldwin says is, "the distinctive character of whatever may be called mental life", then again he speaks of it as "whatever there is not total unconsciousness in the sense in which we attribute unconsciousness to a table or a log of wood, the existence of some form of mind we denote by the word 'consciousness'". "Whatever we are when we awake, as contrasted what we are when we sink into a profound and dreamless sleep, or as we swoon slowly away; and what we are more and more, as the noise of the crowd outside tardily arouses us from our after dinner nap, or as we come out of the midnight of a typhoid crisis" that is consciousness says Ladd. While Locke tells us "Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a man's own mind". "Factor" is "any one of a plurality of causes or conditions which together determine a thing or event". "Subliminal" or "marginal" are both used to characterize the subcon-

scious, both figuratively. That is "subliminal" which is below a theoretical threshold of consciousness, that marginal which is not in the focus of the field (after analogy with the field of vision), suggests Baldwin.

James says "Recent psychologists have found great use for the word 'threshold' as a symbolic designation for the point at which one state of mind passes into another". Thus we speak of the threshold of a man's consciousness in general, "to indicate the amount of noise, pressure, or other outer stimulus which it takes to arouse his attention at all". Myers in his "Human Personality" says that the distinction between the subliminal and the supraliminal is a psychological one. It is founded upon the attempt to analyze the relation of one chain of memory to another chain of memory, of one type to another type of human perception and faculty. He continues and adds: "The range of our subliminal mentation is more extended than the range of the supraliminal. At one end of the scale we find dreams- a normal subliminal product, but of less practical value than any form of sane supraliminal thought. At the other end of the scale we find that the rarest, most precious knowledge comes to us from outside the ordinary field, -thru the eminently subliminal processes of telepathy, telaesthesia, ecstasy in value according to the dignity and trustworthiness of the subliminal mentation concerned".

The subconscious is defined by Baldwin as "not clearly recognized in a present state of consciousness, yet entering into the development of subsequent states of consciousness". Moreover he says that the subconscious is a least degree of consciousness required by the law of continuity. We have (a) the conscious process given in attention, the focus of consciousness; (b) the conscious process given in the state of inattention, or in the rest of the field of consciousness; (c) the sub-

conscious process which cannot itself attract attention, or be made the object of voluntary attention, until it has obtained the stage of (b), i e until it has ceased to be unconscious.

Another question may arise at this point-what <sup>have</sup> has been the cause leading up to this hypothesis of the subconscious? And in anticipation of such a question we will say that in general they are as follows: (1) the existence of blind conations, organic tendencies etc, for which no conscious antecedent can be discovered; (2) the mechanization of complicated movements, such as piano-playing; (3) the appearance in "memory" of ideas which seemed to have cropped up of themselves, i e have no assignable physical or mental condition; (4) the phenomena of "secondary personality". These in main are the causes assigned by Baldwin.

To show the relationship which exists between these main forces to be dealt with in this thesis we should recall the words of Cutten in his "Psychological Phenomena of Christianity" who states that the two fields of mental activity are divided by what has been designated "the threshold of consciousness". All above is consciousness, all below is subconsciousness, but that they interact upon one another.

For fear some may mistake the factor we are attempting to analyze we shall rule out as untenable the theory of the duality of persons connected with the one body. To be sure there are some who hold to the idea of a separate "self", but to us it is misleading. So, following a process of elimination we shall make more clear the phase of this movement which we wish to discuss.

One of those who contends for the duality or multiplicity of persons in the single body is J. D. Quackenbos. In the main he takes his position upon the following ground: (1) the personality known to one's associates and which takes cognizance of the outer world, is one personality. (2) There is another, a "deeper and more subtle personality

which science has shown as capable of acting independently of a physical environment; and which Quackenbos believes will assume relief after death as the essence or pneuma or spirit. Thru hypnotization, his subliminal or submerged self, which spontaneously asserts itself in the natural somnabulistic state, is brot into active control. The orator addresses the self not in control, the suggestionist invokes the submerged self; invests it with control and seldom fails to get the desired effect. Again this same writer puts the question, not in jest but in all seriousness, -can we substitute self-suggestion for the grace of God? Or for the enlightened faith in God? Another eminent man, Dr Morton Prince, Professor of Diseases of the Nervous System of Tufts College Medical School, and Physician for Diseases of the Nervous System in Boston City Hospital, has written a most interesting book, "The Dissociation of a Personality", developing this same idea. He gives his subject, a young lady, the fictitious name of Miss Sally Beauchamp and brings out during his handling of the case four distinct personalities. This idea of a separate personality is also adhered to by Dr Boris Sidis and Dr Goodheart but the most masterly of them all is F. W. H. Myers who has published two carefully prepared volumes which have <sup>been</sup> quoted from in the preceding pages. In this book he aims to prove by inductive and experimental methods that the soul of the man, or the essence of the personality of the individual is distinct from the organism thru which it alone reveals itself. The personality is not unitary, there is one part of it (supraliminal) above the threshold of ordinary consciousness, and another part which is normally below it. The subliminal is the recipient of all the experiences, thoughts, affections, and appetites derived by man from his human animal ancestors. The supr<sup>l</sup>iminal self which is stimulated by the world of experience and reacts upon it, is something thrown up above the surface by the self which is submerged below. The subliminal self is <sup>not</sup> the unconscious part

of the supraliminal self, but is a separate conscious entity; and that the supraliminal self is a separate entity also. Myers makes an analysis of the self we know, the supraliminal self of common life, and then turns to the ordinary methods of science and uses many of its latest conclusions to substantiate his theory.

In one of his earliest chapters he deals with the disintegration of the supraliminal self, and cites examples showing how at times the personality of a single individual seems to divide itself into two or more personalities. The conclusion of the chapter is that the disintegral character of the supraliminal self shows that it is not the true self, since it has no indissoluble adhesion and that the true self resides in the subliminal regions. He takes up the fact of genius and says that the "subliminal up-rushes" are the work of the true or fundamental self, inspiring and stimulating, if not in an abnormal manner, yet at all events in an abnormal degree. When speaking of sleep, he says, that it is a suspension of the supraliminal consciousness, a partial setting free of the subliminal self, which is a self-acting personality. When discussing hypnotism he says, "In the subliminal self we see the reintegration of that humanity which supraliminally we have found so disintegrable".

In dealing with the phenomena of trance, or ecstasy, he defines trance as a condition under which possession takes place. He means by "possession" the temporary but complete expropriation from a given brain of both the selves- the supraliminal and the subliminal of which it is the normal home and the temporary occupation of it by a personality wholly different". In dealing with motor automatism he defines it as effects produced on physical objects thru the agency of living bodies, but not controlled by personalities with which these bodies are associated normally". An example is automatic writing. In this case the possession of the brain is by an alien personality is partial, in trance it is com-

pletely taken. He concludes with this judgment that incarnate souls exist and can actually take the place of living organisms and can thru the use of their organisms communicate with living persons. The soul, then, is a spiritual unity, superior to and essentially independent of the perishing physical body thru which ordinary science knows it.

We might say in passing that this doctrine of Myers, Quackenbos, Prince, Sidis and others must be passed by and more reasonable views taken of the subconscious. So, now let us

look at the subconscious from a different standpoint, a more positive doctrine if you please, and see what some of the leading exponents have to say whose views are more acceptable.

Professor Ames' s "Psychology of Religious Experience" says that the nature of this subconscious reality is best described as a marginal field extending from the focus of attention and full consciousness. Just as in the visual brightness and sharpness of definition fail at the margin, so in other types of consciousness the illuminated center shades off into an irregular, vanishing fringe. He then illustrates it by a figure of a pyramid at whose top a small section is in the clear light of consciousness, while below all is in the darkness. The boundary between the two is not a fixed line but an indeterminate plane moving up or down under the varying influence of attention and general mental activity. How often we do things when our minds are not thinking of the act done. Here is the subconscious at work. It is busy when we wind our watch unconsciously when changing our waistcoat at dinner. The act of removing the coat suggested it. While, ordinarily we would only wind it at night.

He says that the marginal field of our experience is by no means the peculiar organ of religion. It is "the milieu" of custom, tradition and tastes, and in environment moulded by ~~influence~~

tradition, do we find the influences that "imparted unity and continuity to the great civilizing movements of mankind, in art, in architecture, in music, in poetry, in literature, in science, in philosophy and in invention". In a similar way "religion draws its sustenance from the deep soil of accumulated social experience, and from the wide and spreading roots of individual inheritance and impressionability". The subtle, powerful influences of imitation, suggestion and subconscious habits operate in religion giving it stability and intensity. In respect, then, to the operations of the subconscious elements, religion is not unique. It stands in the normal relations characteristic of all other genuine social interests.

When we come to Jastrow's view of the subconscious we find views of a man who is less radical than most of the popular expounders. He holds that there is in good repute now several theories, (1) The existence of the subliminal self, which view we have discussed and passed by as not based upon reason. (2) The attitude of the ultra-scientific conservatism. This a view that all the alleged phenomena for which there is to be found warrant of a reasonable scientific kind, are to be explained on the ground of cerebral action following the general laws of neural habit. This is in substance the old fashioned "unconscious cerebration" which we spoke of on page one, pruned of certain of the mystical implications of the doctrine. (3) Jastrow leans to the second but presents it with a little different emphasis, if not a different conviction, as regards the subconscious. It is the function continuity of the conscious and the subconscious upon which Jastrow mainly dwells. In his judgment all mental processes of whatever kind are accompanied by neural processes. He states that the facts do not justify the belief in a secondary personality in any basic way severed from the self of the similar sort. He holds that under some certain circumstances there may be a measure of disinteg-

ration, but the division is never enough to justify calling them different personalities. Of course the facts may be interpreted that way but it is not the simplest one adequate for the facts involved. The <sup>advocates of the Myers theory</sup> flout the law of parsimony.

However, before proceeding along this line farther, it might be well to define the scope of religious experience. Quoting from our friend James again, page 508, the essence of religious experience is to be found in terms like these: "the individual, as far as he suffers from his wrongness and criticizes it, is to that extent consciously beyond it, and in at least possible touch with something higher, if anything higher exists. Along with the wrong part there is thus a better part of him, even tho it may be but a <sup>most</sup> helpless germ. With which part he should identify his real being is by no means obvious at this stage; but when the stage of solution or salvation arrives, the man identifies his real being with the germinal higher part of himself; and does so in the following way. He becomes conscious that this higher part is conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck".

Now we shall pass to consider more in detail the effect of this factor upon religious experience. However, before taking up its share in controlling the phenomena of our religious life, let us see a few of the general beliefs of Dr. Cutten who is one of the latest writers upon this subject.

In general his position is that the subconscious is a constant ally of the conscious; that the latter's influence is woven into every mental product; that its impressions govern every day actions. We do not know whence these come, thus we have intuitions, impulses, etc.

In the subconscious delusive, insane or hysterical ideas find their source. Neither of these factors, the subconscious or the consciousness are entities, but they work together. They interact. The impressions which we consciously receive are not all that we get, for the subconsciousness gets much which escapes consciousness. It may despatch impressions to the consciousness at another and more opportune time. It may furnish a mood which cannot be accounted for. Consciousness is critical, but subconsciousness is not so. It takes everything without question. It is very imitative, and what is often charged to heredity may be but the activity of the imitative subconsciousness.

A good example of subconsciousness is genius. Not the reasoning power, but the remarkable impressions which pop into the consciousness of such a man. He may not be conscious of their coming, indeed, he may sit and wonder at them himself. How explain it psychologically? It is the activity of the subconscious which sends into consciousness these manifold helps.

The respiration, the heart action, secretions of the various organs, the regulation of the blood supply, peristaltic action of the stomach and intestines are all controlled by the subconscious. And if you try to control them, you only disturb them. It is only by reaching the subconscious that these organs can be affected thru mental means. Cutten holds that God works thru the subconscious just as he does thru the consciousness. How can it be that we are universally religious just from the ordinary powers of the mind, especially if there is no religious faculty? The answer is given it is because man belongs to the human race, a characteristic of which is to be religious. If we analyze this we may find that some of the factors which make man religious are the subconsciousness, the emotional experiences, and the social instinct.

In treating the various phenomena of religious experience we have been compelled to follow Cutten very largely and while we are do not agree with him in his views find his work most interesting. In his treatment of mysticism (Cutten 36) he states that the subconscious has a marked influence. The dreamy other-selfness of the mystic, is subconscious in character. This experience is a matter of temperament largely, and unattainable by some; yet, we find in it the kernel of religion. The most common experience found among men is prayer, and here we truly come into conscious realization of a union with God, and this is the heart of mysticism. Again he says, (413) "all the subjective value of prayer is of subconscious origin"; and finally "If God works directly thru and on the individual He works thru the subconsciousness".

In sleep, when consciousness no longer rules and controls life, the subconsciousness has charge (Cutten 17). During this time bodily and mental functions are carried on. The subconsciousness acts as an alarm clock when you wake at a given hour, say four in the morning. Sleep furnishes example of another principle. The subconscious may be communicated with and may control the body quite fully when by some means, the normal controlling action of the mind is excluded. The time when the subconsciousness can be reached with most profit, is during the hypnotic stage. Here consciousness is in abeyance, and subconsciousness has control. It may be approached directly during the moments preceding sleep, during deliriums and other mental disorders, in automatic writing and other conditions.

Under the head of faith cures (Cutten 209-10) he says that suggestion works upon the subconsciousness. In the normal states the suggestions must be made indirectly, so as not to have the distraction of continued perception. Apparently that which slips by the

consciousness unnoticed is most effective with the subconsciousness. Altho some abnormal conditions may arise to assist the suggestion in faith cures, trustful expectation in one line works well thru the subconsciousness, because it absorbs the complete mind. To say that the divine works in faith cures would not be inconsistent with Cutten's position. The subconscious corresponds to the "heart" so well known to the old writers on this subject, and may be called "the religious clearing house" The writer does not go so far as to say whether the power in the rear of the subconscious is human or divine, he states that all such cures must come thru the subconsciousness, however.

In his chapter on ecstasy (Cutten 47) we find his words are saturated with the idea that the subconsciousness is a large factor. This is seen when the phenomena of glossolalia and visions are evident, especially when the subject is sufficiently under the control of consciousness to remember his experiences when he awakes. "The intensity of the one absorbing state of consciousness is such as to attenuate and enfeeble the other conscious states, and while these still remain in connection with the primary state, they give the subconsciousness an opportunity to assert itself and push into consciousness."

Touching the matter of dreams, Jastrow says, "Dreaming is a representative form of subconscious ~~and~~ mental action". In dreams there is no guidance for consciousness. We here commit acts for which we can never find courage to forgive ourselves, but we do not feel bad over it. In dreams anything, however incongruous things may be, seems unrestricted. Here there are no tasks too big, none too small; here we follow the imagination wherever it leads, and administer no rebuke. Here the subconscious works uncritically, and most dreams are without value. Yet there are cases where the somnambulist works during his sleep, in which case the subconscious has charge. At times it does work which the consciousness needs, e g, sermon writing, solving of

difficult problems, etc. Not a little of the material for dreams is furnished by impressions left on the subconsciousness by occurrences long since past which have completely faded out of conscious memory or may, in truth, never have been consciously perceived. Cutten says finally that whatever may be the origin of dreams, <sup>at</sup> its seat is always in the subconsciousness, and they must always be studied from that standpoint.

The place dreams have had in religious history would fill many pages. The Gospel of Matthew records five in the first two chapters and none are not important; a dream by St. Patrick meant everything to Erin's Isle; a dream played no insignificant part in the conversions of John Bunyan, John Newton, James Gardiner and Alexander Duff. The reader of Mrs George's "The Diary of Kitty Trevylyan" will see a dream was the primary cause for the conversion of that great Methodist preacher, John Nelson of England.

Again there may be co-operation between the subliminal and the conscious thought. Prof. Royce of Harvard gives a case in illustration. He describes the case in these few words, "a dream in which I saw an enormous flaming clock-dial with the hands standing at 2.20. Awakening at once, I struck a match, and on looking at my watch, found it was only a few seconds past 2.20"

In the matter of visions (Cutten 68) he thinks some are pictorial representations in consciousness of fleeting thoughts, or beliefs perhaps forgotten, but carefully retained by the subconsciousness. (Cutten 69) "If the emotional nature is considered, and the intense concentration of attention is present, then suggestion completes the trio which fulfills the necessary conditions for visions." We have no right to conclude that because hallucinations are common to some individuals, because we might be able to trace such religious visions

to previous experiences, because all are due to the activity of the subconscious, to conclude that God is eliminated from them, and that He cannot give a revelation by means of them. Visions in religious experience have been used in ancient, mediaeval and modern times. For cases of striking interest read F. M. Davenport's "Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals"; the life of Joan d'Arc; the vision which called the Apostle Paul to Macedonia; the experience of St. Augustine when he heard the voice of God in Milan; Luther when he saw the devil in full dress; or the visions which from time to time made the prophets of the Old Testament rebukers of Kings.

The chief characteristic of the subconscious is its "suggestibility". (Cutten 18) "If God works directly in man He must work thru the subconscious. We know of his indirect dealings thru the reason, imagination, emotions and will, but directly in the cure of bodily ills, revelation, inspiration, and in other ways, the subconsciousness has the major part to perform". The inspiration which may come to us as it did to Isaiah, may be the result of the subconscious process (Cutten 345-55) There is nothing slow about its appearance, not as if it were reasoned out, but something breathed into the prophet in order that he might breathe it out again. The prophet must have an appreciation of the worth of things which is not given to the common people. Kaplan defining revelation says, "It is a mysterious awareness of an inflow of thought, an inundation of spirit, an awakening of mind, seemingly from unaccountable (subconscious) sources, and therefore believed to be from not natural channels, thru supernatural agency". The subconscious factor is to be seen in later prophets such as Savonarola, Joseph Smith and Mohammed, suggests Pratt in his "The Psychology of Religion" (137-46)

Shakespeare received truths which were commonly hidden from the common mind. Fra Angelico painted angels, Mozart composed symphonies,

and Isaiah proclaimed religio-political principles. A large part of the valuable art work in the Vatican galleries on the banks of the Tiber in Rome, a great proportion of the painting which graces the walls of the Louvre on the banks of the Seine is the result of the suggestions which come from below the threshold of the consciousness, rather than from planning and reflection. Sometimes it seems even to the artist to have been done by another. He was merely a tool, a mouthpiece, or a pen of some superior person. This is paralleled in dreams, as in the case of John Kinsel (Part 11, "The Psychological Review").

"If the subconscious has this place in ~~xxxxxxx~~ inspiration then religious genius might be connected with the neurotic temperament, and thus with abnormal mentality." In the days of years ago religion exalted women because they seemed to have great prophetic susceptibilities. The trance, ecstasy, etc ought to be the experience before they were fitted for divine work. Later on this was all denied. Now, Cutten asks the question have we not gone too far? In speaking of the phenomena of inspiration he does not hold that all the product is the result of subconsciousness, but that it works with consciousness; they interact. He does not mean that simply because inspiration comes thru the subconscious that God is eliminated from it; indeed, God may be directly responsible for it. On the other hand, it does not mean, just because it comes thru the subconscious that all messages from that source are from God.

In the matter of conversion (Cutten 254) "there seems to be not the least doubt that the subconsciousness is an important factor," however not that it is the only factor" This is specially true when one comes into the new life in an abrupt way. This is shown by the scarcity or absence of the intellectual and volitional element at the TIME OF THE CLIMAX, and the inability of the convert to give his reas-

ons for the change, and the little self-direction at this time. "If there is a divine element in conversion it must come largely thru the subconsciousness and especially is this true of the sudden conversion" (Cutten 256). Starbuck calls attention to the closeness of this type of conversion and hypnotism (The Psychology of Religion 51). Cutten suggests (245) that when the will lets go in conversion that the subconscious forces are allowed to work and influence, and that new center of energy which has been subconsciously developed takes the chief place in consciousness. When once this system becomes central it controls life. The state of exhaustion spoken of as the climax of the divided self state provides the needed relaxation, the opportunity for the coming in of the subconsciousness. What are these forces, and whence this great power? To call it divine would not be inconsistent with Cutten's theory. The will in this theory is not neglected either for it still directs conscious action. In conversion both the conscious and subconscious are factors, and if they are not then there is no conversion in the New Testament sense of the word. William James (269) gives the interesting case of Col. James Gardiner who was cured of sexual temptation in a single hour. He states that in hypnotism and in sudden conversions the subconsciousness plays a part. In cases of drunkenness "action thru the subliminal seeming thus in many individuals to have the prerogative of inducing relatively stable changes." If the grace of God miraculously operates it probably operates thru the subliminal door, but just how it does so we do not know. Here, the best of them must stop and say, "In the end much of this is mystery".

The phenomena of conversion as he has witnessed it, is explained psychologically by suggesting that in reality a change has been going on in the subconscious regions of the mind, until it has reached a point when the equilibrium is disturbed, so to speak, ~~to~~ and a new pos-

ition is taken. In some cases it comes after one has given up the struggle, and then the subconscious asserts itself and controls the field. He says that the subliminal self gets what it knows from the world of our ordinary knowledge. We may often recall an object which we did not notice originally, but in conversion the convert is convinced that that his knowledge does not come this way. It comes from a higher spiritual power. James says that this cannot be definitely affirmed from an outsider's point of view, but must be classed as an "over-belief". He says (519) "What the more characteristic divine facts are, apart from the actual inflow of energy in the faith-state and the prayer-state, I know not. But the over-belief on which I am ready to make my personal venture is that they exist".

James says that subconscious incubation explains a great number of the instantaneous conversions is not to be questioned in his mind. He finds in Professor Coe's "The Spiritual Life" confirmation of the view that sudden conversion is connected with the possession of an active subliminal self.

When we review these views of the wonderful powers of this mysterious something we marvel at the force which exists in the region into which we have and never can have the privilege of making an excursion. It really looks as if Borden Parker Bowne, and others of his type had all erred in their search for God. Alas, not so much emphasis should be laid on consciousness, but on the subconsciousness. We have not gone deep enough. Our most highly developed faculties have been our instruments up to this time; but now, we must gently lay them aside and use the uncritical processes. The great thing that religion is interested in, the final reality, lies at the top or "bottom of our consciousness" we are told (and mostly at the bottom).

Not being satisfied with the causes named on page four, we ask,

what has caused this turn of attention by our Christian leaders? What has led the highest aspirations of Christian life to become associated with the Quackenbos theory, and with the tricks of the African priest and Medicine Man? Popularly they have desired telepathic hypothesis in support of the mysticism of St. Paul, and secondly telepathy comes and helps in the conception of inspiration- says Coe.

We see the significance of this "new thought" movement by recalling that the mind reader of the twentieth century is but a recent descendant of the Indian Medicine Man, the Shaman, and the Hindu juggler. Still more seriously, a number of the supporters say that the connection between modern spiritism and Christianity has proven to be a good friendship. Once it was like many another good cause, like the work of missions, like the education of the child, rejected and despised of men. But to-day, many of our leading wearers of the black robe lean towards the idea of spirit communication. Yea, some find in it their main support. In a book, "Religion and Experience" the writer says that it is a matter of great concern for religion that psychical research is proving the survival of bodily death. Indeed, the New Testament's value depends upon this fact.

Another matter of regret is that there seems to be agreement between the Roman Catholics and certain Protestants upon the subject of evil spirits. In general the Protestant Church has not agreed with Mr Cotton Mather and John Wesley in their defense of the witchcraft movement as a part of supernaturalism; but the Catholics have clung to the fundamental idea in the witchcraft theory. That some of the physician-ministers and popes accept some of the modern spiritistic phenomena as genuine we are not so surprised, but when some of our own Protestant missionaries in Korea, China and other places give their consent to demon worship we wonder what has happened.

Again we see the "extremes meet, when we see the efficiency of prayer is explained by deference to the supposed connection of mind with God, thru the subconscious". If telepathy be true, then of course my prayer affects my mother out in Ohio. In this theory no one has been a more spirited leader than Myers. His speculation concerning a possible medium for telepathic vibrations now reappears, in a book by J. Brierly, as an assertion that prayer recognizes "waves of psychic force". "Here", says Coe, "we are in closer contact than ever with the old theory that the soul consist of fine matter which can separate itself from the body so as to work and be worked upon at a distance therefrom". Really here is going back to olden time philosophy.

This ~~again~~, causes a change to be necessary with reference to the supernatural. For the theory of the subconsciousness makes a special point that it is in harmony with the latest things in science. "If we allow that the soul is indefinitely extended, and again, that most of it lies in a region of darkness where self analysis is not possible- what can hinder us from believing any number of connections between this unknown soul and various possible storage batteries of cosmic energy"?. If we <sup>let</sup> leave go the standards we have- what have we left? If we try and explain away the power which prayer brings by reference to the being who works in the dark of the subconscious we soon find that it applies to many other marvels. Why should this same cosmic energy not cause the ovum to be fertilized, or the dead to rise?

In truth, a large part of the subconscious may be understood by the dimly conscious. Attention does not differ from vision. Any operation may go on in the outer zone and just before the operations occur in the shadow they leave inferior memory traces. When these appear in consciousness they seem like foreigners whom we have never seen before. If we say, "We never saw that object before", we have told no untruth.

"Other subconscious phenomena are not so clearly cases of dim or sub-attentive consciousness followed by lack of memory" as for instance one may write a line and not recall it later. This will serve as a sample of effects which have their culmination in the doctrine of "the double personality". However this theory is denied even among eminent psychologists and one is Hugo Munsterberg of Harvard who says in his "Psychotherapy" that because there is no subconscious mind at all; because scholars disagree as to the dignity of the "lower mind"; because the advocates make the subconscious ~~mind~~ personality to be in reality a metaphysical power which "transcends the limitations of the earthly personal together has steady connection with the endless world of spirit and the inner soul of the universe"; because those who advance this theory are not supported by scientific facts; he considers the theory a good piece of imaginative work but nothing which should appeal to the thinking individual. But even if there were a "detached subconsciousness" it would bring us no closer to "the occultism of the popular exposition". Its function would not be determined and such would hardly reveal us to the larger world. The whole theory makes telepathy, demon-possession, etc as reasonable and it 'evades criticism by a simple device' says Coe.

Some people interpret the theory of Divine Immanence as meaning that in our ordinary functions of seeking truth and doing our duty we are working with God and He is working with us. Notwithstanding the fact that the true conception is that "God is immanent in the sense that the One is the ever present power in and thru which the many exist, the theory of the subconsciousness goes farther. It says we shall find God in "a set of functions that contrast with and sometimes overwhelm the plodding labor of thinking and of moral effort"

Here in the name of "Divine Immanence"

we are told to look for wonders. Behold, this way the old chasm between the natural and the supernatural is bridged over. What a God we have! . One who cannot get nearer to us than the most inaccessible part of our mental structure. A God who is far away when we strive to earn our daily bread; and near to us in the borderland between the waking and sleeping. Perchance the Divine himself may be subconscious, suggests one.

Accept the subconscious theory and our religion will have its permanent basis in the dim and irresponsible subconsciousness; while science will have its seat in the clearness of the subliminal. This theory comes to us not only when our theology is in the throes of reconstruction, <sup>and</sup> ~~but~~ it assumes "the standpoint of mere substance-concept, and endeavors to breathe into its nostrils that which will again revive life".

Professor Coe says that the subconscious theory has three vital errors: (1) Even if the subconscious continuity of the human soul with the divine substance were demonstrated, our apparent gain would be offset by "the atavistic ideas of God that would be forced on us"; (2) the psychological analysis is not satisfactory; (3) why should we suppose that an "ethical God can be more clearly revealed to us than in our moral experience, the most complete of which are least under the control of the subconscious?" To these let us suggest a few other considerations which ought <sup>have been?</sup> to more clearly set forth by Myers and his followers, namely: (4) any theory is untenable which asserts that a subliminal power has taken the place of a conscious directing activity of the individual; (5) the conscious will has a range of power which extends further than the sphere of the subconsciousness; (6) Mental facts of all kind, such as feelings, intuitions, impulses etc are non-spatial. "The stream of consciousness has no place, no locus". The use of the terms "subliminal", "center", "margin", "field",

"zone", "strata", and "subterranean regions" are misleading. (7)

"Things in space are mutually exclusive." There is no such thing as mental states permeating one another. (8) If the subconsciousness could be proven to be larger than the conscious, it would not prove that it is more important, notwithstanding Sanday's contention.

The well known author whose name has just been mentioned in his "Christologies Ancient and Modern" might well have called the main part of his constructive work, "The Divinity of The Subconscious", says Thompson. He really says some of the most important part of our thinking are not thoughts at all but "up-rushes" (whatever they are). James tends to identify the sphere of the subconscious with "the mystical or supernatural region" and in some sense with God. The aim of the two writers is parallel. The former says, "the proper seat of the Divine in man is that part of the living self which is most beyond our ken". It is very fortunate indeed that Sanday says that he is not saying the final word upon this subject, and has not forbidden a review of his book by Charles D'Arcy who brings into clear sunlight the dangers of his view.

Dr. W. F. Warren in a survey of Cutten's work calls attention to the fact that both the conscious and subconscious are represented as personal, as personal acts are often credited to them, that both are resident in our own minds, that conviction may come thru a mysterious "sluiceway" in exclusive control of the subconscious, and further that "all the subjective value of prayer originates in the subconscious" -all of which places the subconscious as far as power is concerned not much inferior to the Divine. The same writer then wonders if Cutten has not indulged in more "amorphous notions and phrases" than he can consistently take care of. He suggest that the disciples of Myers re-study their new propaganda and see if space relations really apply to spiritual experiences, and if superconscious "sluiceways"

are not as tenable as subconscious "sluiceways".

This doctrine which places such great emphasis upon the subconscious, and so little upon the conscious, finds another of its greatest obstacles in the theology of the New Testament, for there are few things plainer than that of the doctrine of assurance. "We know that we have passed from death unto life" ( 1 Jno . 3:14 ) and "Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us" ( 1 Jno. 3:24 )

When Paul says, "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are Children of God", he is speaking from the standpoint of adoption. To be sure of God's favor and to be sure God is your Father, are very different things. It is not the same to think a thing, and to feel it. The intuitive grasping of the fact of adoption is one of the crowning experiences of life, Dr. H. E. Warner and Jno. R. Mott to the contrary notwithstanding. Prof. Curtiss tells how the filial sense was lost in depravity, how personal effort to recover it fails, the necessary dependence upon another for power, a crisis in a deep sense of need, a self-surrender, an inrushing of the spirit which completes the broken intuition, and the final result is that the one has a glorious filial sense, and his home life in the family of God is as real to him as his peace of conscience. Further attestation of Paul's belief on this matter may be found in Romans 8:1-17; Galatians 3:26-29; and Galatians 4:1-7.

Again, how can we know that we are sanctified? Only by a revelation from the divine that there is not any sinful tendency left beneath consciousness.

When Christian leaders come forth with books bearing the hearty endorsement of the commander of the Young Men's Christian Association movement asserting the worthiness of this new step in psychology we

think it deserves the attention at the hands of some of our leading thinkers. Warner, author of "The Psychology of the Christian Life", holds firmly to the idea that in the region of the subconscious the Holy Spirit is to be credited with being the source of an "indefinable luminosity" which rises unbidden from the subconscious at some unknown gateway, and which prepares conscious intelligence for the ready perception of the rudimentary Christian truths. Then again, that there is drawn from the regions of the subconscious ( where the Holy Spirit is present ) an energy which takes shape in an "impulsion of being" towards Christ and his ideals. It forms itself into a relish for things Christlike. "The divine Being pervades, saturates the psychic life so that the child-consciousness is illuminated and vitalized by this holy Presence". The Holy Spirit thus is the antecedent of the "initiative impulse" and "illumination".

This same writer, when reaching the period of riper Christian experience, holds that the matters of adoption, regeneration, cleansing forgiveness, the indwelling of the fullness of God, sanctification etc all take place in the region of the subconscious and that we are not conscious of any of them. In none of this work does the Holy Spirit appear in consciousness. Here then in the underlying laboratory (in the subconsciousness) there are wrought "remedial processes and structural changes in the psychical being", as portrayed in Psalms 51:10: "Create in me a new heart, Oh, God".

To deny that the normal Christian consciousness may have an element of definite knowledge is to go against the mass of New Testament teaching. "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are Children of God" is an assertion that we must face. Again, "In whom having believed, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance unto the redemption of God's own possession". "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I

will love him", and manifest myself unto him". Dr H. C. Sheldon says, "Assurance is in and through filial consciousness, which consciousness is at once an activity of man's spirit and a product of the Holy Spirit's agency". To discard the subjective certainty of being graciously accepted by God would be to release a vital element in the New Testament.

Finally, modern writers would have us believe that all this evidence which has been of such importance to the Christian believer is untrustworthy and unauthentic. The place where God really works is largely in the region of the unknown, and our thought of assurance will have to disappear from all our theological treatises, and systems of Christian doctrine. Hereafter we cannot assure the searcher after God that he is within the Kingdom of Heaven, because there is no way of knowing for certain; even we ourselves must give up our feeling of certainty for the myriads of expository writers have misinterpreted the great theologians Paul and John.

Once again, we feel that this theory of the subconsciousness, (which is like the top of a mountain in the clearness, and the major and larger part in the darkness) must be rejected as it is generally adhered to to-day because of the fundamental and various faults which we have cited. However, no thoughtful man will hold that the phenomena which has given rise to this theory are not worthy of more careful study than has been given them. On the otherhand it looks to be a very fruitful field for coming generations of psychologists, and every man interested in the betterment of men should encourage such a study for by this avenue may come the solution to many unsettled questions touching the psychology of the christian life. However, any theory which depreciates the importance of the human will, which places the chief spiritual experiences in the region of the unknown, whose chief expositors deal with spiritual experiences as occupying

space, makes the movement, to the mind of the thinking man an extremely untenable one.

By way of constructive argument we suggest, in closing, three possible hypotheses, and by following some of these the decade following may place before us some more creditable theory. In main they have been suggested by Dr. G. A. Coe, a psychologist of some pre-eminence. First, the brain, by virtue of organization developed from past experiences, may of its own momentum bring out mechanically these combinations of the signs of ideas. For that reason, the intelligence to which these signs point may be that of the individual, but there be no present corresponding action. Second, words written or spoken by a separate personality are true signs of mental processes at that time going on, but processes taking place so far from the center of attention, and having so little bearing on the main issue, as not to assert for themselves a place in the chain of memory. Sometimes this division becomes so wide and deep that the one does not effect in memory a reunion of the dramatically separated selves. Third and last, the subconscious processes are genuinely psychical as distinguished from the brain momentum just referred to, and further that they may go in independence of the primary consciousness.

The field is fruitful, the ground is largely not explored, but the investigator should go in well equipped and unembarrassed. The discoverer who can tell us the details of the workings of this unknown region bears tidings of great joy and large value.