

CHAPTER IX.

THE SPIRITUAL CONFERENCES (1581-1589).

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VII. Dee's return to England — Kelley's continental success as alchemist — his relations with the English government — his disgrace and death.

I. The principal source of our knowledge of Dee's life and activities for some years following 1582, is his own detailed record or "spiritual diary," consisting largely of verbatim accounts of what passed at each of his "angelic conferences," with a few narrative links. A portion of this was published by Casaubon in 1659 under the title: A True and Faithful Relation of what passed for many years between Dr. John Dee (a Mathematician of great Fame in Queen Elizabeth and King James their Reignes) and some Spirits: Tending (had it succeeded) To a general alteration of most States and Kingdomes in the World....with a Preface concerning the Reality (as to point of Spirits) of this Relation and showing the several good Uses that a sober Christian may make of all. This, though contemptuously described by Cooper as "A large folio volume of the most arrant nonsense that ever issued from the press," (1) has always, apparently, retained a reputation as a veritable treasure house of wisdom among occultists (2). Subsequently, further papers, including the earlier books missing from Casaubon's printed material came to light in the secret drawer of a piece of furniture that had once belonged to Dee, and had passed by the middle of the seventeenth century into the hands of a Mr. Jones, a confectioner in Lombard Street. He and his wife "made no great matter of these books etc. because they understood them not, which occasioned their Servant Maid to waste about one half of them under fyres and other like uses," (3) and only a happy chance preserved the remainder. There are still sudden gaps in the narrative, which leave parts of Dee's continental wanderings obscure, but in the main a fairly complete account of this period can now be constructed.

It is perhaps not without interest and relevance first to examine briefly the reasons advanced in Casaubon's sixty pages of preface for his publication of these writings. The uses that the book will serve he summarises at the end (his preface is unpaginated) under four heads: it will provide an antidote both to Atheism and to Enthusiasm, and a warning as to the dangers of the uncontrolled indulgence in private effusions of prayer, productive of overconfidence in God's special grace and belief in a privileged extension of His concern towards the intercessor, and will generally prove an excellent moral lesson by its exhibition of the awful consequences of entertaining "presumptuous unlawfull wishes and desires." After a careful second reading, Casaubon declares, "I shall not be afraid to profess that I never gave more credit to any Humane History of former times"; hence a complete refutation is here offered of all philosophers who "with the Saducees of old (that is Jewish Epicures) believe no Spirit or Angel or Resurrection." It is also a timely tract for the age, an implied vindication of the safe moderation of the Church of England, as the only truly secure religious practice; for this work salutary "as against Atheists at all times, (is) so in these times especially, whom the Spirit of Errors and Illusions, not in profest Anabaptists only, even of the worst kind that former ages have known and abhorred, doth so much prevail." Carefully Casaubon examines the counter-evidence provided by philosophers and medical writers on the frequency of illusions, and praises the caution of Lucian and Sextus Empiricus on such matters, setting forth their arguments against the probability of the occurrence of genuine apparitions, when imposture is so easy, and delusion so provenly widespread. But, he concludes, this reasoning cannot establish a general negative, and though one may gather from the sceptics useful tests that should undoubtedly be applied in investigating all cases of this kind, in this instance, Dee's record successfully survives all objections. Casaubon then proceeds to a general defence of miracles, oracles, and apparitions, maintaining that these should not be enquired into over nicely, or forcibly interpreted to make them congruent with some framework of natural causality, which only stubborn prejudice prevents men very properly laying aside when confronted with mysteries; for, "Aristotle did not meddle with things that he could give no reason of; yet he did not deny them (as we have showed), and it is one thing to require a reason of things merely natural and another of those that happen by a moor secret Providence."

Dee is thus presented as a deluded figure, but one imposed upon by real spirits. His good faith throughout is not questioned: "...and again his Humility, Piety, Patience, (O what pity that such a man should fall into such a delusion)...Let these things I say be well considered, and I think no man will make any question but the poor man did deal with all possible simplicity and sincerity to the utmost of his understanding at that time." But it is not without interest that a considerable share in his spiritual ruin is attributed, by implication, to his overmuch reading in Plato (4). Kelly too is not condemned utterly, as other advocates of the diabolic theory, and most upholders of the fraud explanation, were led to do; for Casaubon he was "a great Conjuror," but one of the better sort of Magician who work by command and not by compact — which did not preserve him only because his naked human intelligence could not successfully match with the wiles of the Devil. So Dee became, in short, according to this account, though wholly unwittingly, an instrument to serve the ends of Hell; and his effigy with globe and compasses is placed on the title page with those of several other misled or misleading magicians: Kelly (shown reading Trithemius),

Apollonius Tyaneus, Mahomet, Roger Bacon, and Paracelsus.

Casaubon sought much advice from his friends and various ecclesiastical authorities before venturing to make public such a detailed and intimate record of diabolic conversations. Their verdicts were largely favourable; the relation they found convincing, the moral appended by the editor, salutary (5); the authorities of the commonwealth, however, rightly construing Casaubon's purposes, regarded it with suspicion (6). The obstacle to publication was removed, or objections lost sight of, in later confusion, on the death of Cromwell; and in general it appears that, though some attempt was made by scientific apologists of Dee, such as Hooke, to lend the book a different colouring, and others like Ashmole more credulous as to its literal statements may have viewed it as both a profound and wholly innocent work, the public were generally content with the interpretation advanced by Casaubon in his preface (7). That, in believing in the awful monitory efficacy the volume might have, were its moral properly pointed, Casaubon was not, at least, underestimating the striking impression the book could make on the contemporary reader, is testified to by Antony a Wood's entry in his journal-autobiography respecting it, he read it a few months after publication, and, as a consequence, he says (referring to himself in the third person): "His thoughts were strangely distracted, and his mind overwhelm'd with melancholy." (8)

II. It has been usual to see an abrupt discontinuity in the type and manner of Dee's investigations at this period in his life, i.e., from about 1582, when he commenced his angelic intercourse. Godwin, dilating on "the incredible sottishness and blindness which marked his mature years," (9) gives a typical expression of this view. After speaking of Dee's positive achievements in the seventies, in particular of the Euclid Preface, he continues "Had Dee gone no further than this, he would undoubtedly have ranked among the profoundest scholars, and most eminent geniuses that adorned the reign of the maiden queen," but being "cursed with ambition," and "having accustomed his mind to the wildest reveries, and wrought himself up to an extravagant pitch of enthusiasm," Dee plunged wholly into magic to the ruin of his mind and fortunes (10). Nevertheless it is clear that Dee had been engaged in speculations, of a similar nature, for a considerable time before the arrival of Kelly, and without injury or prejudice to his more mundane activities; though as it became more apparent that no great national reforms were to be looked for as a result of this earlier, more public work, he more and more concentrated on the reception of the apocalyptic prophecies and obscure oracles delivered by the angels; there were also perhaps other good reasons, arising directly out of his long settled philosophical opinions as will be shown, why he should have devoted himself to these pursuits with increasing singlemindedness at this precise period. But it is also possible to show to a large extent that the substance of the spiritual "science" to which he now principally turned, was not a reflection of more personal eccentricities, nor a rejection or neglect of previously acquired knowledge, but an almost logical extension of the road he had always trodden, and that even the manner of his investigations — by angelic communication — was not wholly unusual among his learned contemporaries. His activities do not seem to have been entirely secret, yet it is difficult to trace any change of attitude towards him among his acquaintances unless the spirit Madimi's warning against Burleigh and Walsingham be taken as an indication of some apparent and increasing eccentricity — "I heard them when they both said, thou wouldst go mad shortly."(11)

The mysteries of the spiritual regions which Dee attempted to penetrate by establishing direct contact, were not infrequently regarded in his age, in which the claim of religion to contain the most perfect and complete expression of the general scheme, structure, and purpose of the cosmos, was neither denied or lightly regarded, as forming a legitimate branch of Natural Philosophy. Indeed, as has been continually noted, especially in regard to magic, few sciences then had, in the last analysis, a defined borderline which could justify a complete separation of distinct spheres of the "natural" and the "spiritual." Thus The Arte of Navigation translated by Dee's friend Richard Eden for the Muscovy Company in 1561, begins, quite conventionally, its exposition of cosmography by an account of the three types of creation, Elemental, Spiritual, and mixed, and a comparison of man to the world for "the whole globe or sphere, thereof is moved by the voluntarie motion of an intellectual substance or angels," and it proceeds as a matter of course from a description of the lower spheres of the planets to descriptions of those of the stars, and to the crystalline heaven, and spheres inhabited by the souls of the blessed and orders of Angels (12). Again the analysis of "Nature" in a very ordinary little book, The Wonderfull Workmanship of the World (13), translated by Thomas Twyne, Dee's acquaintance, provides a fair specimen of the contemporary overall view in this respect. "Nature" it is observed, consists of "Suche thinges as doe consiste not of essence onely of whiche sorte God is, but are compounded with certain accidents adioyned"; and Natural Philosophy "is busied in the handling of the mixt, copouded and materiall thinges" (14); it has two branches (15); the second and inferior containing most of what has since come to be thought of as the province of "science." This is concerned with "particular" phenomena, their properties and effects, is largely analytic or classificatory, answering such questions as "What is the Nature of a Man, what of an Horse," but does not go deeply into such problems, in a speculative manner, or relate them to more universal laws and causes; it is mainly to be gathered "out of the woorkes of the Physitians, or of others which have written the histories of plants and of lyving things." The more fundamental portion of the subject is "General" natural philosophy, which has, ultimately, theology for its basis, and is, indeed, "chiefly to be learned out of Holy Scriptures," since as every Art is known best by the workman who practises it, so the structure of the universe is best known to its creator, and is to be studied by God's revelation of it, the scriptures being the textbook of his handiwork. Yet General Natural Philosophy is concerned with the heavens and the four elements, "for that these; in respect of the other parts are as it were the first beginnings and principles, and causes of their being and compounding." Thus all subordinate forms of knowledge depend on, and can be derived from, Divinity; the philosophers lacking scriptures teach only confusion, as Plutarch's de Placitis Philosophurum demonstrates; and the only two amongst them here allowed to contribute anything of value to General Natural Philosophy are Plato and Hermes Trismegistus, for "ther is none among the Philosophers except

only Plato and Trismegistus, that although they do wonder at the worlde, doeth declare notwithstanding for what cause it was made, and what is the end of the Creating or now subsisting Thereof.” Christophe de Savigny’s diagrammatic representations of the divisions of all the arts and science exhibits a similar scheme. Thus “Le vrai et seul sujet de la Physique c’est Nature laquelle est ou” “corporelle” (its lower portion) or “incorporelle,” which last divides into the science of God (shown as a triangle set in the sun) and of “L’Esprit,” which in turn divides into “Humane” and “Angelic” and the last into the study of “good” or “evil” angelic powers (16). Similarly Francis Bacon, discussing the hierarchy of divine, natural, and humane philosophy, writes “Nam theologia naturalis, philosophia etiam divina recte appellatur. Definitur autum haec, ut sit talis scientia, seu potius scientiae scintilla qualis de Deo haberi potest, per lumen naturae et contemplationem rerum creaturam; et ratione objecti, sane divina, ratione informationis, naturalis censi potest.” But, despite certain restrictions of its scope in relation to revealed religion, he adds in connection with it “Secus est, quod ad angelorum et spirituum naturam attinet; que nec inscrutabilis est, nec interdicta; ad quam etiam, ex affinitate, quam habet cum anima humana, aditus magna ex parte est patefactus.”(17)

Dee’s mention of the ars scintilla that Bacon’s phrase here may possibly refer to, and his view of this study in general as the very crown of the sciences will be noted later. But first the very ordinary nature of some of his assumptions and aspects of his practices regarding it may perhaps be emphasized. For the existence and activities of these angelic spirits, or “daemons” the exact status of many of them is never dogmatically asserted, and a large portion of their manifestations through Kelly corresponded far more closely to conventional ideas of lower daemons than of God’s more exalted ministers — ample warrant could be found in the frequent mentions of them in the Platonic dialogues themselves; passages which Renaissance readers were inclined to consider with much more seriousness than later ages — indeed these and later Platonic writings are usually the first “philosophic” authorities cited in contemporary discussions of spirits (18) and Pomponazzi disparagingly attributes much of Plato’s credit to his inculcations of this “superstition.”(19) Thus Socrates claims his actions were sometimes prompted by a secret spiritual sign (20), a “divine warning” aids him in the selection of his pupils (21). In the beginning, it is said, not kings but daemons wisely ruled cities, who correspond now with the “immortal element within us.”(22) Prophecy, the reception of communication from higher powers, is not only accepted as a fact, but valued and recommended, for “prophecy, as the knowledge of what is to be, and temperance directing her, will deter the charlatans and establish the true prophets as our prognosticators.”(23) Xenophon emphasized this side of Socrates’ supposed teaching, making him affirm “in so far as we are powerless of ourselves to foresee the future the gods lend us their aid revealing the issues by divination to enquirers,” while “Those who intended to control a house or a city he said needed the help of divination. For the craft of carpenter, smith, farmer or ruler, and the theory of such crafts, and arithmetic and economics and generalship might be learned and mastered by the application of human powers, but the deepest secrets of these matters the gods reserved to themselves; they were dark to men”; and their aid was necessary except in regard to such subjects as “What we may know by reckoning, measuring or weighing.”(24) Moreover it was but a step from claiming external spiritual inspiration in writings and philosophical activity as was customary with many neo-Platonists, of such a kind for example as Dee, as has been noticed, also believed himself on occasion to be receiving and from accepting a belief in the attendance on the individual by a specific spiritual guardian, a frequently associated doctrine in the thought of many neo-Platonists — and one which Dee concurs with in his angelic conferences, to the attempting of direct, conscious and personal intercourse with the beings of the spiritual realm (25).

But the most definitive, and influential, statement — serving as a text for many later discussions — on these daemons who had figured in Greek writings since the time of Hesiod, in the dialogues of Plato, is the passage in the Symposium, in which Socrates tells of what he has learned from a Mantuan woman called Diotima, on the nature of love. It is neither mortal nor immortal, but and everything spiritual is of this kind, and serves as intermediary between gods and men, interpreting prayers and sacrifices and conveying the responses of the gods; “Through it are conveyed all divination, and priestcraft concerning sacrifice, ritual, and incantations, and all soothsaying and sorcery. God with man does not mingle: but the spiritual is the means of all society and converse of men with gods, and of God with men, whether waking or asleep. Whosoever has skill in these affairs is a spiritual man; to have it in other matters as in common arts and crafts is for the mechanical. Many and multifarious are these spirits and one of them is love.”(26) Thus one finds Apuleius in the Apology, to which Dee refers his readers in the Preface as a justification by proxy as it were of his own life, declaring: “I believe Plato when he asserts that there are certain divine powers holding a position, and possessing a character

intermediary between gods and men, and that all divination, and the miracles of magicians are controlled by them.”(27) Already, after Plato, Xenocrates seems to have adopted the doctrine in order to construct a familiar neo-Platonic plenum — the hierarchy extending from God to unformed matter: his descending orders of daemons, it has been claimed, “n’est autre chose que la serie des etres ou la progression du divin dans le materiel.”(28) Plutarch however provided a standard text for many in the Renaissance — there were good and immortal spirits, and lower evil ones which though long-lived, were mortal, and he who doubted their existence was denying providence, and breaking the chain that united the world to the throne of God (29).

The doctrine became an intrinsic part of the idea of the “Great Chain of Being,” necessary to avoid a discontinuity in the series of entities and functions, that would otherwise occur somewhere between God with the higher angels who were occupied only in contemplation of the highest, and man. It is advanced in the middle ages; thus William of Conches claims to derive from Plato the teaching, which is nonetheless consonant with, and supported by, scripture, that there are three sorts of daemons. Those between the firmament and the moon are immortal, invisible, and ethereal animals; those in the upper atmosphere adjoining the moon, communicate between God and men, and know feelings of joy and sorrow with and for humanity, and both these kinds or kalodaemones are good in their nature. The third, the evil order of Kakodaemones, inhabit the humid atmosphere near the earth; they are rational, immortal, watery, lustful and graceless (30). Roger Bacon adopts Avicenna’s teaching, which provides a link between this series and the neo-Platonic and Cabalistic doctrines of creation by a series of successive emanations, for he explains how God being infinite Unity, created only one angel, who created another and the first heaven, who created a third angel and the second heaven, and so on (31); again, discussing magical powers, Bacon declares “without all questions the way is incomparably more easie to obtain anything that is tryly good for men, of God or good angels, than of Wicked Spirits,”(32) on which remark Dee made the comment “Si per spontaneam carnis afflictionem immundus spiritus infunditur: quanto liberius quis per vitae mundiciem mundi spiritus particeps fieri possit?”(33) Though found in other contexts, the doctrine indeed became an almost inseparable feature of the Platonic tradition for a long period, and as late as 1792 Thomas Taylor launches a bitter attack on the modern “Philosophers,” who “exclude the agency of subordinate intelligences in the government of the world; though this doctrine is perfectly philosophical, and at the same time consistent with revelation.”(34) One major exception, at least in his views of the legitimacy of the usual practises associated with this belief, should perhaps be recorded, and that is Cusa, for he denounced the imagination of the Magi that men could elevate themselves by contact with intermediary spiritual natures, and declared such practises diabolical, since prayers were due only to God, while those who sought knowledge or power in this manner venerated and addressed petitions to other creatures, such as would only be exacted by evil daemons (35).

The existence then of spirits and their participation to some degree in human affairs and the physical processes of the world was regarded fairly generally in Dee’s age as an almost necessary belief both on religious grounds and for reasons drawn from natural philosophy. A century later Thomas Browne could still write: “It is a riddle to me...how so many learned heads should so far forget their metaphysicks, and destroy the ladder and scale of creatures, as to question the existence of spirits”; or again, “For Spirits I am so far from denying their existence, that I could easily believe, that not only whole countries, but particular persons, have their tutelary and guardian angels. It is not a new opinion of the Church of Rome, but an old one of Pythagoras and Plato, there is no heresy in it: and if not manifestly defined in Scripture, yet it is an opinion of a good and wholesome use in the course and actions of a man’s life; and would serve as a hypothesis to solve many doubts, whereof common philosophy affordeth no solution.”(36) One of the first subjects Pastel — where thought at many points is curiously similar to Dee’s — deals with when attempting to show how “Religionis christiance placita rationibus philosophicis docertur...” is “de substantijs separatis, sive daemonibus, Genijsue” (37); conceding that “In nulla re maior fuit altercatio, maior obscuritas, minor opinionum concordia, quam ea de daemonibus aut substantijs separatis sermo est obortus inter philosophos...” he nevertheless undertakes thoroughly to establish the doctrine by a multitude of diverse arguments — as that developed from Aristotelian teaching that all things are kept in motion by other entities, for “omnia motus in se indeficiens est,” and bodies do not move of themselves, hence since the stars and planets exhibit many different forms of motion, each must have a genius to propel and guide it; others are drawn “ex mundi harmonia et ordine,” conceived of as a hierarchised plenitude; much stress is laid on the daemon of Socrates, and Plato’s reference to genii. Or again, Guaccius opens his conventional handbook Compendium Maleficarum by declaring that all philosophers have accepted some kinds of demons as active in the world (38); he adds cautiously “omitto autoritates Poetarum, quia ut plurimum

fictionibus vtuntur,” but cites Calcidius, Hermes Trismegistus, the scriptures, noting “Taletes Milesius philosophus scripsit, mundum esse plenum daemonibus,” and emphasizing particularly the doctrines of Plato and Augustine — who distinguished (De. Civ. Dei lib 8) three types of rational spirit. “Primi, aiebat ille, coelestia, secundi aerea, tertij terrestria corpora informant.” In England the well-known letter of Harvey’s to Spencer, half humorous in itself, at least reflects the prevalence of these views: “I will not dosier you” he writes, “to credit magicians but even ower best and most allowed philosophers themselves to go forwarde with the reste, grante there be innumerable legions of waterishe and earthly sprytes — and who can tell but the earth itselfe maye be a compacte and condensate bodye of other grosser and quarrier sortes of them.”(39)

Controversy arose then, chiefly not over the existence of spirits, but upon their precise nature and functions. It was particularly the conception of them of course that had early been elaborated by Porphyry and Iamblichus (40) — that they formed orders of limited independent beings — that encouraged the belief that they could be commanded and controlled by spells and ritual, without diabolic compact, for they were then not necessarily solely agencies of good or evil, answerable only to God or the Devil. Such a view many found quite compatible with religion, nor held the practice it might suggest an automatic infringement of the church’s general prohibition of sorcery. Thus Horanet represents dealings with spirits as an almost “natural” contest of power between two beings; declaring that it is generally admitted that “the Coniurers great art and industrie is not so much in raising up a spirit as in commanding him down again,” and “that if he cannot lay him down quiet, the Artist himself and all his companie, are in danger to be torn in pieces by him, and that hee is so violent, boystrous and bigge as that he will ruffle rage and hurle in the ayre worse than angry God Aeolus ever did, and blow downe steeples, trees, ma-poles and keep a fell coyle in the world.”(41) Even though they might all be classed strictly as good or evil, and the existence of morally indifferent spiritual entities denied, nevertheless conventional accounts of a diabolic hierarchy which presented certain grades of demons, as less powerful, less malicious, more knowledgeable, and closer in status and sentiments to mankind than others and the similar picture in reverse applied to the orders of angels, to some extent concealed the original simple distinction, and was invoked to excuse a variety of theurgic and magical practises — consciousness of this danger probably underlies James I’s downright denial of any hierarchy maintaining in the diabolical Kingdom; but he is somewhat isolated in this assertion (42). The standard classification reproduced thereafter by many more orthodox than he himself might be considered (43) is possibly that which Trithemius borrowed from Psellus, and sets out in a little work, written in answer to certain questions of Maximilian on magic, miracles, and spirits, and which significantly the emperor has demanded “vt quantum fieri potuit, in earum solutione viam sequeretur naturae, propter eos, qui credulitati minus concedunt.”(44) After quoting Plato on the “furor poeticus,” to establish their existence, Trithemius declares: “Multa enim sunt genera daemonum, & certis inter se gradibus distant, ratione locorum in quae cadentes a principio sunt detrusi”; though all daemons, as Augustine states and Aristotle confirms, dwell below the moon. There are six principal orders of them: Igneum, which will not descend to the lower atmosphere until judgment day, though occasionally they may be seen in temporary residence “in fornacibus ardentibus”; Aereum “quod in aere errans nobis propinquo commovatur. Hi possint ad Inferiora descendere, & assumptus corporibus de crassiore aere quandoque hominibus apparere...”; Terrestrium, “quos prolapsos & coelo in terram pro suis demeritis minime dubitamus,” some live in woods, fields and caverns, “qui nocte aberrare faciant itinerantes,” “reliqui casteris minus furiosi & perturbati demorari cum hominibus in obscuro delectantur”; Aquaticum who usually appear in the guise of females, naiads and nymphs belong to this class; Subterraneum, who cause earthquakes and eruptions, guard hidden treasures, and pretend to be spirits of the dead; and lastly, Lucifugiam, the worst type of all: “passionibus frigidis agitatum, malitiosum, inquietum, & perturbatum,” who do violence to men by night (45). Many who nevertheless accepted this or some similar gradation, warned against all dealings with spirits whatsoever, seeing in its existence but a further trap for the unwary, who might be misled into necromancy by the relative harmlessness of certain classes of daemons and the variety of temptations and deceptions they might employ (46), this is Guaccius’ position, who, pointing out that the devils are fallen angels, allows that many of them have retained much of their original natures; “sunt igitur daemones pulcherrimi doctissimi, fortissimi, sicut Angeli coelestos respectu naturae...sunt Mathematici perfecti, optimi Medici; & tandem, omnes scientias, & artes possidunt.”(47) Such hierarchical schemes, however, serve as a link, permitting the adoption of a variety of transitional positions, since they are a feature common to both, between a more rigidly orthodox attitude to such beings and the open affirmation of a neo-Platonic doctrine which viewed them in a far more amiable light, classing them neither as angels nor devils, but as morally independent spiritual entities, or perhaps

as “daemons” with the classical connotation merely of “distributors of destiny.” Those who followed this teaching were even ready to ascribe, as did Agrippa, names to such spirits, conventionally borne only by true diabolic powers. A remarkable instance is the spirit “Behemoth” in Chapman’s Bussy D’Ambois, his name is usually interpreted “demonic bestiality,” but he is here described as “a good aerial spirit.” He is a being of great but limited powers, who neither lies nor misleads, he does not tempt or try to entrap souls, he has little interest in mankind, but is prepared to assist them, he is compelled actually and not only in appearance, by the spells of the Friar (whose soul, despite his dealings with Behemoth, during which he betrays by no sign that he imagines these to be sinful, ascends to the blessed on his death). Behemoth has nothing to do with hell, though he is no angel of God, he is, according to West, in his full discussion of this spirit, “no sin rolted crosswalled vehicle of negation, but a vast being of dignity and sorrow, lost in mysterious meditation; emperor it is granted of darkness, but of a darkness hiding `deepest truths,’ a darkness of inscrutable wonders and mysteries, nor the darkness of pain and error, deprivation and despair.”(48) Or again Nashe, with perhaps a similar ambiguity of terms, writes that there are — and he expresses no disagreement with this division — three sorts of “devils” whose kinds have been distinguished by Plato: those who are invisible and aery; those who are reasonable creatures “passive in mind and eternile in time” (these are they, Nashe claimes, who fell in with Beelzebub); and lastly, the Demons attendant on men of genius (49). It is these last that, to some extent, perhaps Dee believed he was contacting (Agrippa had ascribed to each man three attendant daemons, as well as a good and evil angel (50), a view “Christianised” by, for example, the protestant Leloger, who claims that all Christians have not one but many angels “whom God imployeth to their service.” (51)). They are accepted by Naudaeus in the following century, though he doubts the advisability, owing to danger of error, of engaging in any but entirely natural operations, who — as has been shown in the discussion of magic — lays down a scheme, which might well approximate to Dee’s which attributes the guidance of the actions of great men to a variety of instructing spiritual agencies (52).

But one of the most complete statements of the sixteenth century, upon these intermediary beings, which attempts to synthesize teachings drawn from ancient neo-Platonists and later philosophical accounts such as that of Psellus with the orthodox Christian view of angels and devils, and folklore, and which grants them an important part in relation to all knowledge — so prevalent are they, so varied their functions (“ainsi” comments Schmidt, “pour le chantre penetre par les demons d’esprit prophetique, toute aperception profonde de l’univers bientot se traduit en un art magique et divinatoire” (53)), is Ronsard’s Hymne des Daemons, which appeared in 1555 (54). Accepting their existence as scientifically proved, the poem sets out to define their various natures:

“Quand l’Eternel bastit le grand palais du Monde,
 Il peupla de poissions les abysmes de l’onde,
 D’hommes la terre, et l’air de Daimons, et les cieux
 D’Ange, a celle fin qu’il n’y eust point de lieux
 Vuides en l’Univers, et selon leurs natures
 Qu’ils fussent tous remplis de propres creatures.”

The angels are intelligent and passionless, knowing innately past and future. The Daemons live below the moon in the thick air; their light bodies are compounded of air and fire, and they can assume a protean variety of shapes, changing,

“En centaures, serpens, oiseaux, hommes, poissons,
 Et d’une forme en l’autre, errent en cent facons.”

They are intermediary in nature, for

“Ils sont participans de Dieux et des humaines
 De Dieu comme immortels, des hommes comme pleins
 De toutes passions.”

All that is monstrous or prodigious — rains of blood, preternatural fogs, etc. — in heaven and earth, is caused by them. To men they bring dreams, throw them into sudden frights, or produce in them vague apprehensions, and they also are the source of all prophecy and augury. They foretell the future

“...Non qu’au parfait cognues
 Toutes choses leur soient, ainsi que d’estre venu,
 Mais eux que par long age experimentez sont
 Aux affaires du monde.”

They like the blood of animals offered in sacrifices, and they can be commanded even against their will by the magician for

“Ils craignent
Les Charmeurs dont les pointcs et la voix les
contraignent
A leur faire service, et les tiennent fermez
Ou dedans les mirouers, ou des anneaux charmez.”

Oracles, Nymphs, and Naiads are some of the forms they assume “Les uns pernicious, les autres doux et bons” and they are even equated with the conventional fairies for:

“On dit qu’en Norovegue ils se louent a gages
Et font comme valets des maisons les mesnages”

etc.; a type of being Trithemius also describes as inhabiting the spirit world (55) while other writers accept the fairies as just another variety of, or even a general synonym for, devils (56). This view of daemons is perhaps relevant in explaining a striking feature of Dee’s spiritual conferences; for with the possible exception of a few figures such as Raphael, Aniel, and Uriel, and leaving aside those who seem nothing more than barely personified collections of powers and qualities allegorising various special sciences, representing spirits of the seven metals, etc., most of the visitors Kelly described seem to fall into this class. Again, their behaviour is unpredictable, perverse, frequently mischievous: they play about the room, upsetting books, furniture, etc.; they are frequently dressed gaudily in gay colours like contemporary citizens at festivals, they act in dumb shows past, present or future events, and their continual wanton high spirits contrast strongly with Dee’s deep solemnity throughout, and Kelly’s fearful suspicions of devils; in the course of the conferences, Madimi, their most frequent visitor and guide, grows from a small girl (who can seldom be made to pay attention for very long together to serious matters, though she is as curious about Dee and Kelly as they about her, and who always has at first to fetch, or consult with, her relatives if any difficult questions are put — pleading her youth and ignorance) into an adult woman, her character and attitude to the skryers evolving at the same time. At practically every point indeed, these spirits of Kelly’s could be paralleled by the beings described by Robert Kirk Minister at Aberfoile, from information gathered from folklore and persons possessed of second sight, in the Secret Commonwealth...An Essay of the Nature and Actions of the Subterranean (and, for the most Part) Invisible People, heretofore going under the Name of Elves, Faunes and Fairies or the like (57) “The Roman Invention” — as Kirk calls it, of Good and Bad Daemons, is, he claims, “one ignorant Mistake, sprung only from this original.”(p. 4) These spirits inhabit a world which completely duplicates ours; thus every person and object has an equivalent (which is not necessarily directly similar when individually compared) in their world (p. 4). They have very pliable and subtle bodies “of congealed air.”(p. 2) “They are distributed in Tribes and Orders, and have Children, Nurses, Marriages, Deaths, and Burialls, in appearance, even as we, (unless they so do for a Mock-show, or to prognosticate some such Things among us)” (p. 3); “Their Apparell and Speech is like that of the People and Counterey under which they live” (p. 6); “Their Men travell much Abroad, either presaging or aping the dismall and tragical actions of some amongst us” (p. 7); “Their food is served by pleasant Children, lyke enchanted Puppets” (p. 5). They have “no discernible Religion, Love or Devotion towards God, the blessed Maker of All,” and are liable to disappear at the mention of his name or that of Jesus (p. 7); “They are said to have many pleasant toyish Books...other Books they have of involved abstruse sense, much like the Rosurcian (i.e., Rosicrucian) Style. They have nothing of the Bible, save collected Parcellls for Charms, and Counter Charms” (p. 8); and “The Tabhaisver, or Seer, that corresponds with this kind of Familiar, can bring them with a Spell to appear to himselfe or others when he pleases” (p. 9). Now, whatever Dee’s particular view of them, or Kelly’s fears as to their ultimate origin, it is surprisingly true that almost any of these, and other statements made by Kirk, a hundred years later, in his orderly exposition of the fragments of the widespread and ancient Scottish superstition he was investigating, could serve as a text for analysing much of the behaviour of the “spirits” during Dee’s many years of conferences with them.

One feature of Dee’s attitude to these beings should be noted, his consistently affirmed belief that they could only be spirits of good, ministers however humble of the most high, that communication with them was at the least harmless, if not largely a religious duty of the true philosopher. On the question of their innocence he went so far as to pledge his soul and hopes of paradise to the doubting Kelly, by formal compact. Even when spirits of self-confused malignancy intruded into the sittings, Dee does not seem to have regarded them of great significance, and remained confident that they could be easily disposed of. There were of course, usual tests that might be made for distinguishing good from evil spiritual visitors. These rested largely on criteria relating to their appearance, counsel, effects on the observer, and reaction to prayer and the name of God. Thus Guaccius, for whom devilish and angelic apparitions play a

great part in men's affairs, is careful to provide rules for differentiating these. Thus, "Bonorum, malorum spiritum apparitio non est difficilis cognitu, nor si in apparitione post timore succedit gaudium, boni spiritus est apparitio; si autem incursus timor perseverat, spiritus malus est qui videtur." Again, devils seldom appear in human shape, and if so well be deformed, thus if the apparition is "non formosa, & bene formata, sed terra deformi aut vili, ut puta canis, serpentis, auis, draconis, aranei, busonis, vel similium, vel nigri, aetiopis, diabolus est; si vero forma humana bona Angeli, vel beati, vel Dei, tunc consideranda est operatio, si ex genere suo est improba, at blasphemiae, superstitionis, mendacij, homicidij, luxuriae &c vel dolosa ex modo operationis ut si primo congressu laetitiam adferat asimo, & tranquillitatem, postea horrorem & turbationem vel desolatione, vel etiam magno cum foetore, strepitu, vel clade abeat, diabolus est."(58) Dee may have applied such tests during his conferences, but if so he made no explicit note of them, nor any other indications that would imply any general doubt on his part as to the benevolence and innocence of the spirits he dealt with. It is as though he regarded the purity of his own intentions as a complete safeguard against evil or delusion. In this he perhaps consciously reflects Apuleius Apology, who in answer to charges of sorcery and magic, never seems to deny the fact of his practises, only the interpretation that was put on them; his justification is always that he could have no dealings with evil, or ever thought to be associated with wicked spirits, since "We of the family of Plato known nought save what is bright and joyous, majestic and heavenly and of the world above us. Nay in its zeal to reach the heights of wisdom, the Platonic School has explored regions higher than heaven itself, and stood triumphant on the outer circumference of this our universe."(59) Dee's apparent lack of consciousness, or at least the slight recognition he exhibits here and elsewhere, of the dangers of evil as a force existing in the universe, outside the individual soul, is perhaps in some measure a result of the familiar neo-Platonic teaching in regard to the problem, which implied a rejection of the view of two positive poles of Good and Evil, equally existing, from which derived qualitatively opposed corresponding hierarchies of spiritual powers to the medial, indifferent realm of matter and the world, which was their battlefield, the no-mans land in which man's existence was passed; and which instead recognised only a single descending gradation of existence, corresponding morally to increasing limitations, restrictions purely negative in kind, of the fully realised unified Good, which was also equivalent to Essence and Existence. Thus Plotinus writes of the intelligible world: "There is no paradigm of evil there. For evil here happens from indigence, privation, and defect. And evil is the passion of matter frustrated of form, and of that which is assimilated to matter" (60); the doctrine found its way into Augustine's Christian teaching; one of the causes of his early errors, and of his entertaining the possibility of the truth of Manichean doctrines, arose "because as yet I knew not that evil was nothing but a privation of good, up to the point at which a thing ceases altogether to be" (61). In the sixteenth century, such a view was by no means confined to a few profoundly speculating philosophers. It is set forth, for instance, in Mornay's The Trueness of the Christian Religion, which Philip Sydney translated, where we are told Plato, Plotin, and other great Philosophers of all Sects, are of the opinion that Evill is not a thinge of itselفة nor can bee imagined but in the absence of all goodness, as a deprivation of the good, which ought to be naturally in everything. That evill is a kynd of not being, and hath no abyding but in the good, whereof it is a default or diminishing."(62) If malignant, or irresponsible "spirits" were admitted from such a standpoint they would have to be looked upon as beings of a low and limited kind, of very restricted powers and probably mortal in nature, as in fact Plutarch and many others following him had described them (63). The point at which conflict with orthodox Christian dogma would seem most readily to arise here, is upon the reality of Hell: in this respect it is interesting that Dee's description of the last judgment made at this period contains no mention of it directly, does not speak of damnation or the future pains of the wicked, but only refers to "the second death" that awaits condemned souls; at the second coming he envisages the Elect "Passing per Aquam et ignem in refrigerium, to possess the renewed and sanctified earth eternally; they and their posteritie who shall not dye but be translated from life to life"; while the reprobate pass "into everlasting death."(64) For Avicenna, adapting a Platonic ontology to the framework of Mahommedan religious teachings of personal survival and rewards and punishments, the soul after death approximating to the condition of pure intelligences, its eternal happiness lay in an Act of Knowing, the faculty for which was developed during its earthly existence, while Hell the fate of the wicked, was represented only as the privation of the knowledge of the intelligibles (65), and there had not been lacking Christian theologians who had doubted, denied or paid little attention to Hell in its material or local figuration, claiming it rather to be a state of mind, resulting from separation from communion with God (66). The existence of some kinds of evil spirits would not, of course, be altogether incompatible with such views, but if Dee's opinions were largely similar to these, then his various

rejections of Kelly's offers to summon up devils, and his reproof of him for confessed attempted dealings with them, should probably be interpreted as reflecting his condemnation of the intention displayed by the agent in such an occupation, rather than his fear of the immediate dangers, or even his belief in the possibility of success, in these prohibited practises, while this would also be an attitude thoroughly concordant with those Paracelsian doctrines in which Dee was steeped (67).

Nevertheless it should be noted that though the doctrine of the hierarchy, or of the omnipresence, of various kinds of spirits and angels, considered either as mediators between God and man, guides and assistants of mortals, or as independent natural creatures, was relatively frequent in the sixteenth century, approval for the practises such beliefs might suggest, of the type on which Dee engaged, is far more rare. Though all the elements for composing a case in justification of such conduct as Dee's might be gathered from conventional teachings in natural philosophy and religion, it is not usual to find such activities openly spoken of without distrust and suspicion, even when not absolutely prohibited. Thus various contemporary works on sorcery reproduce the decisions of Paris University of 1398 "super quibusdam superstitionibus noviter exertis," (68) which emphatically condemn a number of beliefs involved in Dee's spiritual practises, or related to them. The ninth states "Quod Deus, per artes magicas, & maleficia inducatur compellere daemones suis incantationibus obedire, error est." The tenth "Quod boni Angeli includantur in lapidibus, & conserrent imagines, vel vestimenta, aut alia faciant que in istis artibus continentur. Error & blasphemia." The twenty first condemned the belief that images of gold or bronze could be consecrated by this art, and at certain times (according to the stars) and then possess "Virtutes mirabiles" as "Error in fide, & Philosophia, & astronomia vera." The twenty-third "Quod aliqui daemones boni sint, alij omnia scientes: alij nec damnati, nec saluati, error," and the twenty-fifth, condemned the belief that daemons were Kings of the North, East, South and West. Again the Aristotelian physician Libavius in a work which severely criticises some passages of Dee's *Monas*, attacks the Cabalists and Paracelsians, with whom he classes Dee, for encouraging operations with spirits, whose natures their writings leave suspiciously vague. Angels, he declares, have no power of themselves to affect matter: "Angeli autem non ludunt in rebus siquidem ex Dei praescripte agunt, & mente. Quid restat praeter diabolium? Licebat hic Paracelso & Cabalisticis confugere ad adiunctos genios, varios spiritus, Salmandros, Saganos, Sciaolas, & nescio quae portenta, quae si praua sunt omnia diabolorum classes continentur, si bona, angelorum." (69) Dee would probably have described his "conferences" as "Theurgy"; which he regarded as legitimate, but Leloyer prohibits this as strongly as any other branch of necromancy, seeing in "Theurgy" only a practise in which devils "se presentent sous lenom de Dieu, Anges, saintes, ames & Heros" (70) and indeed in seeking to obtain Dee's reverence and worship of Dee's "Angels" resemble in some sort a class of malicious daemons Trithemius had warned against — "Horum demones quidam exemple terrae magis affixi, & qui circa homines nimis inquieti, quos veteres appellere bacuceos...nihil magis aestimatione divinitatis a mortalibus quaerunt." (71) The extreme piety Dee evidenced throughout was regarded generally as no protection, if genuine to the operator who embarked upon such courses, but is usually referred to as merely a favourite disguise of the necromancer, and would not have excused him in the eyes of many of his contemporaries. Thus Bodin declares one of the principal devilish impostures — as practiced willfully by Wier and Trithemius — was "soubs le voile des choses saintes & sacres, faire passer toutes les impietye qu'o peut imaginer. Fernel dit avoir veu vn sorcier, lequel en disant des oraisons & mots sacrez avec des mots barbares, faisoit voir en vn mirouer ce qu'il vouloit." (72) "The sum of the orthodox contention, as presented by James and Bodin," West observes, "is that a man, be he artful or simple, can have wilful traffic with spirits, but only with evil ones and only by some degree of alliance and to his ultimate damnation." (73)

Nevertheless a certain tradition of doctrine can be found in which Dee's practises have a legitimate place. Probably Trithemius' statement of it was one which he would have cited in self-justification. A constant theme of Trithemius is that "bonae valuatatis consummatio bonos homines spiritibus pares facit angelicis...Similitudine vero amicitiae familiaritas introducitur." He stresses that evil men becoming like devils are admitted into their society, and will appear to command them since they then have similar wills to their diabolic associates, and he explains how men may do miracles if they approach the angels in purity: "Quanto enim mens nostra in fide Jesu christi confirmata per dilectionem purior euaserit, tanto sanctis angelis effecta similior, eoru familiaritatem maiorem assequet....Reuelant enim sancti angeli hominibus puris & in dei amore seruentibus arcana caeteris abscondita, & multa faciunt eis manditio creatoris manifesta. Nam prope est dominus invocantibus eum in ventate...vuis enim gratiam cum Christo vxitus est, angelorum crebra visitatione reficitur: & saepius cu necessitas expostulat, eoru ministerio signis & virtutibus illustratur." (74) This doctrine should probably be viewed as a particular extension of the familiar

position of Renaissance neo-Platonists, set forth by Ficino, Pico and others (75) that affirmed man's capacity for approximating, by the efforts of his will, to higher or lower grades of beings; and an echo off it, as developed by Trithemius is still to be heard in Browne's declaration "I do think that many mysteries ascribed to our own inventions have been the courteous revelations of spirits; for those noble essences in heaven, bear a friendly regard unto their fellow natures on earth."(76)

The more important communications Dee received through the angels and other spirits were also not unexpected in character. They consisted largely of the laborious dictation to him of "books" in apparently incomprehensible jargon or seemingly meaningless sequences of numbers. The first professed to be in the Angelic language, and to contain the secret names of things imposed by God in the beginning. Dee showed himself as well satisfied to receive these works; that such names existed, and formed the master key to nature, was in accordance with the teachings of Reuchlin in De Verbo Mirifico (77) and other Cabalists; Agrippa, the authority most frequently cited by Dee in his notes to the "conferences," had spoken in the Occult Philosophy of these divine names, imposed neither by men nor angels, but sanctified by God himself to be, according to their "numbers," and the immutable shapes of their characters, holy vehicles of all divine power (78); much of his first book he had devoted to showing the power of words, that the essence of each thing was concealed in its proper name (79); and had described how direct angelic assistance could be procured in the search, by means of charms (80), a subject more fully dealt with in Book 3 where methods of deducing the names of angels themselves from the Scriptures are described (81); and in de Nobilitate et Prae excellentia Foeminei Sexus he had gathered a number of texts for the proof of the truth and importance of this doctrine (82); "As his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him" (Isaiah XXV, 25); and Christ is "made so much better than the angels as he hath obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb. I. 4). This is familiar Cabalistic doctrine, that has been previously examined, in which "The various divine names are not arbitrary combinations of sounds, they conceal a miraculous power in their letters. So too do the names of the Angels. By uniting these names, and combining these letters in various ways men may achieve the power to influence the course of nature and to bring about Miracles."(83) Dee's chief point of difference from other Cabalists in this pursuit lay rather in the manner in which, following Agrippa's magical instructions, he set about securing the knowledge of these names, hoping thereby for a personal and peculiar revelation to be made to him by God, and what Kelly provided him with in this kind was sufficiently superficially similar to what was to be found in contemporary learned works on ancient languages to lend an air of genuineness and credibility to the communications (84).

There were various standard "mechanical" or ritual means of assistance open to Dee to employ in his endeavour to establish communication with spirits. It is not impossible that he may have employed mirrors (85) at some time, but for the most part he made use of a crystal globe following a procedure of considerable antiquity (86): a skryer acted as intermediary and Dee recorded his visions, and conversed through him with such spirits as appeared in, or entered the room through the crystal. Such a crystal was a familiar property in the laboratories of the day (87), and was sometimes put to similar uses to those Dee made of it. At least one record of similar "conferences" held in England, somewhat before Dee's investigations (it is dated 1567) is known (88). This, Gabriel Harvey describes on the M.S., as "The visions of Sir Thomas Smith himself as is credibly supposed," which indicates that another prominent mathematician of the day was at least suspected of pursuing the same courses as Dee engaged upon, while the probable identification of the H.G. who conducts the conversations with Humphrey Gilbert, and J.D. the skryer with John Davis, adds two further scientifically well reputed names to the list of such investigators. Other contemporary Englishmen are known to have made similar experiments (89). But though descriptions of the procedure usually make a great point of the preliminary prayer to God and the general piety requisite (90), crystal gazing is a practise almost universally condemned by such published works on magic of the time as attempt to define its legitimate boundaries (91). Even Trithemius only makes mention of devils appearing through crystals (92), and never of angels so doing, though the visitors may not be of a particularly malevolent variety. Those that do, and they correspond in some respects with Kelly's "spirits," according to Trithemius are chiefly of the "terrestrial" variety: "Hoc autem daemonam genus raro est maleficis familiare propter inconstantiam affectionum & levitatem, qua territare multas gaudent patius quam vnius malierculae subesse imperio. Commorantur tamen interdum vt pollicentur vesanis, in vitro vel in crystallo siue in specule, & carminibus concitati, responsa dant mulieribus, & si quis venturas eis male dixisset in via, praenunciant."(93) (The crystal indeed, despite its use by more highly motivated persons, seems to have become by this time part of the standard equipment of the conjuror (94).)

Nevertheless Dee's occult activities would seem to bear the same relation to the "science" as they do to accepted theology of the time (it is indeed hardly proper to attempt too rigid a separation of these in regard to general theory); that is, they emerge and develop from these, rather than arising as anything wholly distinct or contradictory to them; it has been well observed that "Though occultism is not orthodox, it is seldom heretical; it vociferates rather than challenges the basic principles of the religion that gave it birth."(95)

Such activities were probably found to be largely barren of results. It is noteworthy that Agrippa's "magical period" occurred in his extreme youth — his Occult Philosophy was written when he was only twenty-four, he had been twenty-three when he composed his commentary on Reuchlin — thereafter he passed onto other pursuits, and, from his letters, progressively more empirical investigations into natural philosophy. Dee embarked on the spiritual conferences late in life; and after years of vain labour with his skryers, when the lack of hope for any successful issue to the process must have become increasingly apparent, he seems to have clung to his faith in the "Angels," and in the future revelations they would make sometime to him, with something akin to desperation, rather than admit to the wasting of such a large portion of the little time now left to him in which to acquire wisdom on earth. Initially these courses appeared to him as the climax to all his studies; previous learning had been but a preparation to the reception of this divine knowledge. J.R. Bailey, writing of Dee's life at Manchester, comments (96): "At the time of his being made Warden he had long forsaken the exact sciences, having exhausted their study; and had devoted himself to the blighting influence of occult investigations, mingling with them in credulous simplicity what remained in him of the Christian faith." The significant phrase here is "having exhausted their study," for this indeed seems to be what Dee felt of himself at the time; there are passages in these "Spiritual Diaries" on the hopelessness of satisfying the mind with uncertain mundane knowledge, which strikingly recall Agrippa's de Vanitate; what he has learned in the past is looked upon as only of value in so far as it assists the comprehension of what will now be taught by the angels. In the De Heptarchia Mystica (97), a book he compiled from what was revealed to him in these conferences, he has inserted a moving prayer to God from "they simple servant John Dee," recounting all his labours in search of "some convenient portion of true knowledge and understanding of thy Lawes and Ordinances, established in the Natures and properties of thy Creatures," and now beseeching some direct assistance and enlightenment. A similar prayer explaining his venturing at this time to attempt to lay hold on truth by these occult means, opens the first surviving book of Conferences (98); he sets out his past labours in the cause of science and goes on: "But (to be brief) after all my foresaid endeavour, I could find no other way, to such true wisdom atteyning but by thy extraordinary guift and by no vulgar Schoole Doctrine or humane invention." He has been encouraged to enter these courses by the examples of Enoch, Moses, Abraham and others, and by "considering the Shewstone wch the High Priests did use, by thy owne ordering, wherein they had light to judgements in their great doubts." Dee's state of mind emerges clearly in another passage (99) in which, after Kelly threatened to abandon skrying, declaring he would "not thus loose his tyme but...study to learne some knowledge whereby he might live...and that he dwelleth here as in a prison," Dee sets out his reasonings with him, which persuaded Kelly to remain: "And where he complained of want, I said my want is greater than his: for I was in debt almost 300 pounds, had a greater charge than he; and yet for all my 40 yeares course of Study, many hundred pounds spending, many hundred myles travelling, many an incredible byte and forcing of my wit in Study using to Learn or Bowit out some good thing etc. yet for all this I would be very well pleased to be deferred yet longer (a yeare or more) [i.e., from the angelic revelations which had not up to then been very promising in character] and to goe up and downe England clothed in a blanket, to beg my bread, so that I might at the end be assured to attaine to godly wisdom, whereby to do God some service for his glory. And to be plaine, that I was resolved, either willingly to leave this world presently, that so, I might in Spirit, enjoy the bottomless fountains of all Wisdom, or else to pass forth my daies on earth with God's favour and assurance of enjoying here his merciful mighty blessings, to understand his mysteries, mete for the performing of some actions, such, as might set forth his glory, so as it might be evident and confessed that such things were done, Dextera Domini." The religious and mystical implications that informed Roger Bacon's whole view of the nature of the sciences and particularly of the ends of experimental investigations have been brought out fully by the studies of Carton (100). Dee adopted an almost identical attitude as comes out clearly in his treatment of "Archemaistrie" or "Experimentall Science" in the Preface (101) which he calls "The chief and finall power of Naturall and Mathematicall Artes," for "Wordes, and Argumentes, are no sensible certifying: nor the full and finall frute of Sciences practisable," where he cites the writings of Bacon (and of Cusa) "the floure of whose worthy fame, can never dye nor wither," on this subject. Archemaistrie includes,

but has far wider connotations than, what has come to be meant by “experimentation.” It is the end, not the beginning, of knowledge; the final practise which at once certifies, and, in what it produces, justifies all previous learning; the experiences it leads to are as much those of the soul as of the senses; for in its action men come directly into contact with the “reality” of the universe, the being, and truth, of which seems to mean in this science little less than some aspect of God himself; it deals with such things that Dee has to implore the reader not to be incredulous of them, since they are “so unheard of, so mervaylous and of such importance.” Thus under “experimental science” so interpreted, Dee classes the little magical work of the semi-mythical Artephius, of which Cardan has left a description (102), (whose title was used by Francis Bacon as synonymous with Theologia Naturalis) which consists of a number of experiments to be made in natural philosophy which, rightly regarded, reveal theological truths. Dee also mentions in an obscure phrase an activity which it seems probable may refer to scrying, though if so, it is the earliest indication (1570) we possess of Dee’s interest in this precise practise. He writes of Archemaistrie then, and a subordinate branch, Science Alnirangiat: “Under this, commeth Ars Sintrillio by Artephius, briefly written. But the chief Science of the Archemaster, (in this world) as yet knowen, is an other (as it were) OPTICAL Science: Whereof, the name shall be told (God willying) when I shall have some, (more just) occasion, thereof, to discourse.”

III. One reason why Dee should have plunged so wholly into this pursuit, just at this period of time, and perhaps also why he should have been ready at the command of the angels to leave England by night with Kelly and his family, secretly and suddenly, without even apparently attempting to obtain official licence for his departure, to follow the brilliant fortunes predicted for Laski, and to prophecy before the Emperor, can perhaps be conjectured with some probability, and connected with the view he had long held of the age in which he lived. The apocalyptic note in his declaration of the imminent future of Britain, the relation of this with the great purposes of God at work in the world, his belief in the coming Imperial status of Elizabeth, accompanied perhaps even in the close future with universal dominion, has already been noted. His vast and sanguine plans for the conversation and annexation of "Atlantis" were perhaps not unrelated to the general vision. He may well have believed that the striking astronomical events witnessed in the decade of the seventies were divine preliminary signs and tokens of this approaching destiny; for the General and Rare Memorials is dated according to the year since the appearance of the new star. Indeed there are some surprising points of similarity in the situation to be observed with the ancient sybilline prophecies of the portents preceding the universal dominion of a final ruler, who is to be a woman, which ushers in the Golden Age, and (according to early interpretations), the coming of the Messiah, and the end of all things; prophecies which indeed a later associate of Dee's, Francesco Pucci, in his angelic conferences, had specifically interpreted as referring to Elizabeth (103).

But before examining the details of the importance of 1582-1583 in this respect, the general view of history Dee tended to adopt should be noted. Trithemius in de Septem Secundeis had divided world history into cycles of 354 years, each governed by one of the seven chief angels, associated with one of the planets, and therefore forming a period whose general characteristics could be foretold. The scheme was fairly well known, and Cornelius Gemma sets it out at length, and though finding it superstitious makes similar suggestions of his own (104). According to Trithemius' schedule, a new age had commenced in 1525, governed by Gabriel and the female "planet," the Moon (105). This was, however, according to Trithemius, only the penultimate cycle in the world's history, the final one, which would witness the establishment of a universal empire was not due to commence, under Michael, until 1879. That Dee inclined to some such cyclical theory is indicated by a note to the early spiritual conferences (1582) he held, through Barnabas Saul, with Annael (according to Talmudic tradition, the "answering Angel," who made God's secrets known to men); he notes that Annael is — thus showing a discrepancy between his own views and Trithemius' system, in which Gabriel held the function at that time — "the chief Governor General of this Great Period, as I have noted in my booke of Famous and rich Discoveries." (106) (A further discrepancy is that on Trithemius' reckoning, 1576 would not be Anno Mundi 5540 as Dee dates it, but 6783).

Another figure that should be mentioned, as his teachings may probably bear on Dee's assumption of the legitimacy in this period of seeking a personal revelation from God by direct contact with his spiritual ministers, and also the view of the "universal church" embracing all sects, that recurs in the "spiritual diaries" and perhaps accounts for the willingness with which Dee entered into catholic practices on the Continent, or any other forms of worship or communion prevailing in the place where he found himself at this time, is Joachim of Flora, whose prophecies Dee had cited in the Preface (107) as "good profe," of the wonders that could be done by the understanding of "Numbers Formall." Joachim's scriptural exegesis had been essentially prophetic in its object, rather than moral or dogmatic; the details of the similarities between his methods and his general teachings and Dee's thoughts and the probable extent of his influence, will be set forth in the subsequent study of the Preface. Here it may be remarked that he viewed history as a progressive religious revelation taking place in three stages, and the third of these, which was rapidly approaching, was the age of the Spirit, in which man would know God without mediation of earthly institution or intellectually received dogma, and every man would become a priest and conscious vessel of the holy spirit. Now "the premisses of Joachim and his conception that the spiritual man of the third age would know the truth without veil, and receive directly from the spirit all the charismatic gifts necessary to perfection, implied the abolition of the church as an organisation for the guidance of the soul, as well as of the sacraments as channels of grace." (108) But until this period commenced, the authority of the church was recognised provisionally, but it was not to be regarded as the final form of revelation or as the only way to salvation, prescribed for ever, "usque ad consummationem saeculi." Joachimism was therefore early connected with the rise of mystic groups, practising prophetic exegesis, expecting the dawn of the new era, and claiming the individual as the source of all religious authority, which last position Dee, secure in his angelical direction, also seems to have maintained, from his readiness to lay aside orthodoxly prescribed dogma, or moral conventions, at the dictates of the spirits. And this general view may

be associated here with that propounded by another similarly minded person to Dee and probable influence upon him, that of the Cabalist Postel, who in *De Orbis terrae Concordia*, had set forth the principles of the developing scheme of world history and proclaimed the coming establishment of the universal church and the single government of the world, associated with this, which should occur in the seventeenth century. The third section of the work was devoted to proving “*Qod commune totus orbis tam jure humano quam divino habeat,*” and he anticipated a general conversion to take place by the influence of “natural reason” and further revelations.

As to the date of such great changes there would seem at first sight to be ample time left on Dee’s reckoning for them to happen in the indefinite future. He had given the year of the world in G.R.M. as 5540; the circular table of time given in the Calendar treatise allows, before a full circle back to Adam is reached, the conventional amount of 6000 years. His dating of current events on this scheme shows a difference of only 2 years from the figure of the G.R.M. computation; thus, though Elizabeth is comparatively fairly close to Adam on his diagram, there was nevertheless still a space of over four hundred years for the world to run through before it was wound up. However, there were particular reasons which made the years 1582-1583 of particular significance, for many, in the general historical scheme. The correlation of the rise of the great religions of the world with celestial changes was a not uncommon astrological doctrine. Albumazar had given influential expression to it, and, as has been shown, Roger Bacon had taken over and adopted his teachings, seeking the clue to the fates and characters of religions and empires in their governing planets — that of Christianity being Mercury. Pomponazzi in *de Incantationibus* had used the theory as a basis for his natural interpretation of magic, seeking in the stars the true explanations of the temporary efficacy of prayers, incantations, and symbols — such as the cross — belonging to the dominant religion in any period. The Copernican Gemma suggested the course of the great religions of the world might be related to the variations in the eccentric passage of the earth around the sun (109). That it led to such notions is one of the major reasons Calvin advances for his denunciations of astrology, for the astrologers, he says, “undertake to render a reason wherefore Mahomet and Ays Alcoran hat a greater dominion than Christe and his gospels: to wit, because the aspect of the starres is more favourable to the one than to the other. What an abomination is that? The Gospell is God’s Scepter by the which he rayneth over us.” etc. (110)

The usual basis for the cycles, though their time values were variously given, had been employed and set forth by Alkindi (111). The smallest cycle was of 20 years between the conjunctions of two major planets, which governed momentous events, largely internal to a country, changes in rule, rebellions, political crises, etc. A second was known as a Triplicity, or Trigon, representing three signs of the ecliptic or 120 degrees, and lasted 240 years (the time between the occurrence of a major conjunction within a trigon, and a similar conjunction in the preceding one), and governed great world revolutions, and transference of hegemony. The third and greatest cycle was of four complete trigons (the entire Zodiac), each of which represented one of the four elements, and which commenced with the fiery trigon, and the recurrence of which, including the effects of the other two, also implied the appearance of a new religion that would thereafter dominate the world in the ensuing great period. It lasted 960 years. (Its value has also been differently given as about 800 years, which would allow two complete world cycles to have been fulfilled since the birth of Christ by Dee’s time (112).) This scheme fitted well with the rise of Mahommedanism; Mahomet’s own birth in 567 had been forecast by the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Scorpio, and the first year of the Mahommedan era — the official proclamation of the religion — had been fixed as 622, when a major conjunction had taken place in the fourth or watery trigon, marking the close of an era, and the beginning of the fiery trigon. This cycle of 960 years should then be completed in 1582. Tycho Brahe in his interpretation of the new star based his prognostications on this same scheme. In April 1583, he announced, the watery trigon would close with a conjunction of the outer planets at the end of the watery sign Pisces. A new period commencing with the fiery trigon would open. The new star moreover belonged to the sign Aries, with which the fiery trigon begins, and hence was confirmation of the great political and religious changes that he confidently, though without precision of detail, predicted (113). This same fact was made much of constantly, by Cyprianus Leovitius, among many others, who, as has been seen, collaborated with Dee in the volume of 1558 in which Dee’s first printed work of any length appeared (the *Aphorisms*). He discussed its consequences in two works published abroad in 1564, and reprinted in London in 1573 (114). In the first he set forth the doctrines of trigons and followed their succession through history; he remarks “*Ceterum Jesus Christus recuperator Salutis nostre natus est ex Maria virgine in Bethlehem Judae, ut sacri vates praedixerant, circa finem Trigoni Aquei et principium Trigoni Ignes. Annis enim 6 nativitatem eius praecessit coitio magna superiorum planetarum in fine Piscium, et principio Arietis.*”(115) In the second he gives a

prediction from 1564 to the year of the conjunction to take place in 1583, at the end of Pisces and commencement of Aries (which he regards as a repetition of that occurring near the time of Christ's birth) when he confidently expects the end of the world, and ends his work with a summons to general repentance. To the objection that there has since Christ been one or other similar occurrence, without catastrophe following, he replies (116): "Sed sub carolo Magno fini mundi esse non potuit, quia tum nondum quinque millia annorum completa fuerunt. Jam vero, durantibus minimum operationibus huius coniunctionis magnae, numerus ad sex mille annos inclinabit, qui cum prophetia saara consentit, affirmante quod mundus sex mille annos stare debeat, cui summae annorum ipse filius Dei aliquid detrahit." The time of the next major conjunction is eighty years further ahead, and could hardly be regarded as the event presaging the close of history, for by this date, 1663, the allotted span of the world must have run out; 6000 years would on this scheme have been exceeded "quod cu prophetia manifeste pugnat."

Again a similar system is to be found expounded by Postel in a work he issued with Cornelius Gemma (117) on the new star of 1572: "Ex philosophiae naturalis mysticaeq; Theologiae penetralibus deprompto Judicia." In it, his chronology is closer to Dee's dating of the star than many other reckonings of the day. Postel, who had long been confidently looking for the appearance of a universal French Empire, much as Dee had been anticipating the establishment of an English one (118), observes that the star belongs to the constellation of Cassiopeia which, he claimed, governed the first empire in the world, that of the Aethiopians, who had been skilled in pious ceremonial magic as they possessed all Adam's writings on the subject (119). Hence it indicates the appearance of a similar final religious empire. History is ruled, he claims, by cycles commencing at approximate (he allows a variation of some years or decades either way) intervals of 790 years, according to great conjunctions that take place then. The world is at present in the seventh, which is only thirteen years from its end in 1572 when nature makes this new star (120). (This reckoning, applied strictly, would mean that 1585 is Anno Mundi 5530, which is close enough perhaps to Dee's reckoning in G.R.M. to suggest that he was working upon some similar system). To show that other calculations approximately concur with his own, Postel points out that the year of the world according to the Jews is 5573, and that the Zohar puts its end (by which Christians mean the Second Coming) at A.M. 5566, he himself works out the values of the time, time and a half of Revelations according to his own system: "Quam auummum si colligas, quinquies mille, quingenti quinquaginta anhi prodeunt a condito mundo ad nostra usque tempora, cum CHRISTUS INTRA nos habitare coeperit...Intro nos autem oportet venire ut Actrium tertio videtur ad tempora Restitutionis omniu ut serio & non solis verbis Evangelici vivi reperiantur prius quam ad ultimam iudicium veniat visibili corpore, etiam Angelis tunc formidabilis" (121) (a period to commence on Dee's reckoning therefore, if he inclined to entertain a similar calculation, about 1586).

1583 thus became for astrologers a date of considerable significance, nor had preliminary signs of approaching change been wanting, the new star of 1572, the great comet five years later, two others that followed (122), and the earthquake in 1580, which Dee's acquaintance Thomas Twyne, translator of semi-religious works, announced as indicating the beginning of the last judgment (123) and perhaps the partial eclipse of the sun in Cancer on June 20, 1582, were viewed as preliminaries to the great conjunction, and the widespread concern evoked is evident from the works produced with a design to alleviate it, such as that of Heth (124). That some few, like Richard Harvey, made themselves ridiculous by predictions of immediate catastrophe, rapidly falsified by the event, was not enough to shake the faith of more cautious but equally convinced astrologers, who were content to detect in slighter signs the fact that a new era had been inaugurated in the world. We have no direct pronouncement of Dee's on this matter. That he should have held similar views to such men as Leovitius or Brahe is not in itself improbable, but it is largely an inference from his actions — his throwing aside of all his former manner of life to adventure with Kelly in 1583, and the frequent impression given by the spiritual diaries, that his conferences mark the beginnings of a new form of religion which shall complete the old, in an age of which he is precursor, and in which all men shall live in the manner of himself and Kelly, in personal communion with the spiritual ministers of God.

IV. Dee had always been fascinated by the mysteries he now directly attempted to explore, regarding them as an essential part of philosophy (125), and there had not been wanting those who had attempted to exploit his interests (126). Some time before the arrival of Kelly, Dee had apparently established a pattern of procedure in regard to skrying, and clearly expected results of a certain kind. When Kelly appeared on the scene he had at first little to do but fit in with Dee's prearranged scheme, and if it be judged that he was in some measure an imposter, Dee was nonetheless at the time ready to welcome such deception and accept the first plausible person professing such powers as he felt he had need of, who presented himself. The diary entry reads for May 25, 1581 — and it is our first clear statement of Dee's activities in this kind (though there are indications that he had been considering them since 1569 (127)), as well as being almost the only occasion Dee found any power of clairvoyance in himself — "I had sight in offered me and I saw." By the end of the year he was employing a former licensed preacher, Barnabas Saul, as a skryer, using "my stone in a frame which was given me of a friend," and was told by an Angel on Dec. 22 that he should learn many things in the future "by him that is assigned to the stone." Barnabas Saul became involved in a criminal charge, and when Dee attempted to regain his services after his indictment at Westminster, he, very prudently, "confessed that he neither heard or saw any spirituall creature more." (128) Two days later a friend of Dee's, Clerkson, arrived at Mortlake with Kelly, then passing under the name of Talbot, who at once exhibited his "powers," for the Diary notes, he "told me before my wife and Mr. Clerkson that a spirituall creature told him that Barnabas had censured both Mr. Clerkson and me." An assertion that was later proved true, as Saul had become one of Dee's many slanderers. To him, in private, Dee then "confessed myself long tyme to have byn desirous to have help in my philosophical studies through the company and information of the blessed angels of God," and on March 10, Edward "Talbot" began to act as Dee's skryer (129).

The early life and exploits of Kelly have been effectively concealed or rendered uncertain by the rapid accretion of rumours or wantonly fabricated anecdotes — so frequently the consequence of a later notoriety, when more and more colourful information is demanded to supplement unsatisfactory and meagre data respecting youth passed in comparative obscurity. There have been innumerable accounts of Kelly (130). By the seventeenth century he was already an almost legendary figure submerging in a growing body of myth (131). He was born, it seems, at Worcester in 1555, but he has been variously reported as having served as an apothecary's apprentice, as having stood in the pillory for forging title deeds, and as having lost his ears for coining (132), before he is pictured as arriving at Mortlake with the mysterious phial of red powder and indecipherable book he had discovered in the ruins of Glastonbury.

Kelly was not entirely unschooled — though he made frequent complaints that the time spent on skrying with Dee was preventing him from learning any liberal arts, languages, or useful trade by which he might earn an honest livelihood. Wood, as has been noted, suggests that he had even served for a time as Thomas Allen's secretary. He had sufficient knowledge of Latin to read alchemical works, and for the Angels to hold intercourse with Dee through him, in that language — but such conversations were not very elaborate in style, and the Angels displayed a noticeable preference for delivering set speeches rather than engaging in dialoguq when the use of Latin was, for any reason — as by Laski's presence — found necessary; though it must be admitted that they increase in fluency through the years. It is of interest too, that the angels sometimes expressed themselves in Greek fragments, a language of which Dee certainly believed his skryer to be totally ignorant, since anything that he wished to conceal from Kelly — in his diaries or records of conferences — he wrote in Greek characters (133). Kelly, it is clear, was of that melancholy disposition which Agrippa had specified as being most adapted to these pursuits, since sufferers from an excess of this humour were wont to be seized when still awake, with a prophetic madness, their melancholy drawing down celestial spirits into their bodies, who then through them delivered miraculous oracles, and predictions and divine messages (134). His readings when he was calm seem often to have been of a darkly tinged, "enthusiastically" religious nature. We catch a glimpse of him deriving spiritual comfort from "a little prayer Booke (in english meter)," entitled "Seaven Sobs of a Sorrowfull Soule for Sinne." But at other times he was mightily troubled by devils (135). They constantly tempted him to doubt and heresy — and finding such thoughts intruding almost involuntarily into his mind, he imagined himself the greatest blasphemer living. In Sept. 1584 he suffered from a tempter "who denies any Christ to be" and asserted "that as the heart received comfort of all the Members of the Body," so did God from the Members of the world (136). He underwent several conversions while he was with Dee, after which he would be calmer, and useless as a skryer for some time. Thus Dee entered on June 8, 1584, after Kelly had repudiated various diabolically inspired errors,

Conversio E.K. and Deum, abdicatus) Nihil apparuit
) hodie

Omnibus Diabolicus experimentis)

(137). Not until ten days later (June 18) were they able to resume successful Angelic communion. Hell was a topic almost constantly in Kelly's thoughts. On one occasion at least, he was granted a visible glimpse of its terrors (138), though this seems only to have rendered more agonised, and done nothing to prevent, his future indulgences of "sinful" thoughts and practices. He suffered continually from imaginary persecutions, frequently warned Dee of secret enemies, especially among his friends at court, and he complained that he was railed at in the streets when he went out (139). Ezekiel-like, if there were anything for which he had a particular aversion, the angels were sure to discover it and command him to do it. Worse still, when he had miserably brought himself to obey their orders, at some subsequent time, as though having forgotten what they had previously directed, or, at best, denouncing the earlier message as a delusion, the angels upbraided him and visited him remorselessly with further misfortune, or prophesied their approach, for having done these same things (140). He came, small wonder, to distrust all that the spirits said, since they were so ready to contradict themselves. Thus, after many "angelic" assurances over a long period, of the good fortune that awaited them if they followed Laski, Kelly announced at the last moment that he would not go, as a spiritual creature on his shoulder had just told him he would certainly be hanged if he made the journey (141). However, it is probable that Kelly had an interest in exploiting such discrepancies, for by such conflicting commands he managed to shift all the ultimate responsibility for their actions onto Dee's shoulders. Kelly's belief that the spirits were in any case devils — and he seems to have been unconcerned at any difference there might have been between actions with alledged angels and recognisably evil spirits, remaining convinced that either he had incurred damnation — probably explains his frequent offers to Dee to summon up acknowledged devils (142), offers always rejected by Dee. Kelly on many occasions was only led to continue the actions after long persuasions, or after Dee had gone through a ritual of "pawning" his soul to him that their visitants were of God. But he seems never wholly to have been convinced. From his self-tortured mind poured, often for many hours daily, a medley of jargon, oracular utterances, sermons, and direct prophecies, interspersed with a number of large scale "visions," elaborately realised and strikingly described, that would be impressive on any standards, and were miraculous on Dee's (143).

Kelly's later fame is of course largely the result of his alchemical exploits. It is probable that a considerable motive leading him to seek out Dee's society originally, was desire for instructions in the Art, to gain which he exploited Dee's own interest in the spiritual powers he could display. His growing impatience with skrying, on the continent, exactly reflects his increasing attention to alchemy in the same period. It has been often said that he arrived at Mortlake already in possession of a powder, discovered at Glastonbury, that would effect transmutation (144). Even so, these same reports usually indicate that he was then still ignorant as to how to employ it. Certainly it was not until some years later that Dee and Kelly discovered the right manner of its employment, and Dee records Kelly's manufacture of gold with the red powder. Contrary to what has been a usual supposition, that Kelly was the prime mover in all their alchemical investigations, is Dee's own statement on the matter: "At which tyme (1585) and tyll which time I was chief governour of our philosophicall proceedings." (145)

V. With Kelly, Dee began a series of more successful investigations than he had achieved with Barnabas Saul. The Shewstone of crystal was placed on a tablet of wax, as were the legs of the table on which it stood; these tablets (146) and the table of practice being engraved with the pentacle and seven secret names of God. Dee transcribed what Kelly witnessed in it, for despite his own one ocular experience, that has been noted, he seems never thereafter to have been blessed with direct vision during the conferences (147) (the one subsequent occasion suggests a careful engineering by Kelly (148)) though on two occasions he “heard” (149) and once he “felt.”(150)

Through the stone the angels entered the room and at first made Dee large promises of universal knowledge, civil power and wealth (151), though on a number of occasions these smacked so strongly of ungodly temptations, that Dee utterly rejected them and their accompanying advice (152). He observed also, at last with some perplexity, that the spirits proved unable or unwilling to warn him of accidents that befell him in his day to day life (153), and if pressed for further information on topics that interested him, evaded his enquiries (154). On rare occasions, however, some specific minor miracle was vouchsafed (155), or a definite prophecy made which could be taken to coincide with some later event (156), as proofs of the angels’ true powers.

Dee was at this time hard pressed financially. He had previously, as has been noted, applied unsuccessfully to Burleigh for a licence to discover hidden treasure. It was not long before he asked the spirits for assistance in such a scheme. One of them, Prince Bornogo, had declared “Behold the Bowels of the Earth are at my opening”; “whereupon,” writes Dee, “I requested him to helpe me with some portion of Treasures hid, to pay my debts withall and to buy things necessary.”(157) But on this occasion, Dee was merely reproved for being a worldling, and informed that earth’s treasures were being saved for antichrist. Shortly afterwards however, a mysterious “Macedonian” arrived at Mortlake, and held consultation with Dee about a joint enterprise for the excavation of treasures (158). Kelly perhaps scenting unwelcome rivalry, promptly had a vision — even Dee saw a black shadow — showing this man with a Greek word “written in great letters....about his hat,” which signified “macularus” or “condemnatus”; Dee then broke off negotiations with him (159). Thereafter, the spirits, communicating through Kelly, proved more liberal in their promises, and Dee was informed that he would be guided to the right spots by “Il.”(160) Dee protested at this time that he had no licence from his Prince to dig, but it would seem that any efforts he may then have made were not wholly frowned upon by the authorities, for when on May 8, 1582, Kelly returned with earth from eleven parts of the country for testing, Dee gave thanks to the spirits for help received “of late of the Governour and Assistants for the Myne Royall” (161); and a note of two years later refers to “my part in Devonshire mines: and of the Danish treasures which were taken out of the earth,” (162) which last would seem to indicate that his ventures were not wholly unsuccessful. It is possible that Dee’s original and independent plans for treasure seeking involved some such device as the divining rod described by Agricola; but the methods employed with Kelly were far more sinister and appear in some cases at least to have involved the binding of, though perhaps not the direct dealing with, evil spirits — but this is a later development to be discussed in connection with Dee’s Continental journey — yet even these practises do not seem unusual in the tie and were often conducted with a great show of piety (163).

In general, apart from the angelic books, the communications of the spirits were fragmentary and somewhat rambling in character. Occasionally they represented in show some specific science — as the seven youths who appeared with seven balls of different metals, symbolising Dee’s future discovery of the Philosopher’s Stone, of the seven princes, each characterised plainly as a stage in transmutation, who informed Dee of their particular powers at length, though their practical directions were unprecise and unhelpful (164). More usually they dilated conventionally or incomprehensibly on the mysteries of various numbers and letters. They reflect of course to some extent Dee’s known views; he is assured, on the a priori, that “secrets there are none, but that are buried in the shaddow of man’s souls,” and the spirits continually stress the importance of mathematics in the Universe. They affirm “There is nothing but Quantity (Believe, the World is of Necessity: this necessity is governed by supernaturall Widome)”; “For all things are limited with a full mensuration, and unsearchable foresight: Yea I say already unto ye end,” and “All things shall be brought into a uniformal order” (165) and spirits appeared bearing measuring rods which gave them power over all things by the knowledge of the divine proportions revealed by their use (166). But of the information usually retailed by them, the following portion of a rhapsody of Michael’s upon 7, is representative: “Marcke this Mysterie. Seaven comprehendeth the Secrets of Heaven and earth. Seaven knitteth mans Soul and Body together (3 in Soule and 4 in Body). In 7 thou shalt find the Unit. In 7 thou shalt find the Trinity. In 7 thou shalt finde the Sonne and the proportions of the Holy Ghost. O God, O God, O God. Thy Name

(O God) be prayed ever from they 7 Thrones, from the 7 Trumpets and from thy 7 Angels: Amen, Amen, Amen.”(167) Sometimes letters received similar attentions, sometimes a “game” of obscure cross references was played in which Dee seems to have provided all the intelligence and labour. Thus the spirit announces his name and refers Dee to Marcus Hermitas’ de lege spirituale. Dee after some search finds there, in answer to this clue, the Sigillum Almeth and the name Ilemese. “He (El) then asked me wch letter of this name I liked best, and I said L. because it contained the names representing God” etc. (168)

There were a number of obvious imperfections in the communications. In addition to their frequent vagueness, Dee was troubled by the fact that the Angelic Mathematic was rendered even more obscure, by the spirits’ use of technical terms in a very different sense from that permitted by their earthly definitions, and the spirits’ obstinate refusals to provide adequate explanations of these (169). Too often, the spirits themselves exhibited a perplexing levity, and an unwillingness to engage upon serious conversation (170). Worst of all, there were occasional “diabolical” intrusions into the stone — though Dee, as has been stated, in contrast to the horror they produced in Kelly, was inclined to dismiss them rather lightly, and treat such interruptions as being of no great moment. Once some spirits appeared ringed with fire, and, as they spoke, “All Serpents Dragons, Toads and all very ugly and hideous shapes of beasts” appeared and assaulted Kelly, at the same time fawning upon the spirit councillor Galvah (171). Sometimes malign spirits are detected and disposed of fairly easily. At Lubeck appeared “one very brave like a preacher”; Kelly was at once suspicious and said: “I take him to be an Evil one.” The spirit proceeded to mock at the very idea that angels would ever descend into the stone, though at the same time declaring himself to be “good.” The record continues: “_. Ergo thou art a lyar for thou saydst, No good angell would or might come here into this stone. Thus will God be glorified against wicked Satan and his Ministers. His fetch was very subtle: as, to bring in doubt all the actions performed in this stone. What canst thou answer?

“E.K.: He sayeth no thing: Neither can he say anything. He seemeth to be a very foolish Devil.

“_: Mendacem oportet esse memorem. Now be packing hence.”(172) But at other times Dee and Kelly were more seriously deceived. Thus, after they had laboured to make a table with painted figures, to bear the stone during the conferences, according to directions received from the spirits, the Angels made the horrifying revelation that “A Wicked power did intrude himselfe, not only into yor Society, but also into the Workmanship of God’s Mysteries. Sathan dare presume to speake of the Almighty. These Characters are devilish: and a secret bond of the divill.”(173)

But Dee’s enthusiasm throughout was remarkable and unquenchable. He declared to the spirits after a session of some hours: “I have byn long at this tyme in my dealing with you. I trust I do not offend you therewith. But for my parte, I could finde in my hart to contynue whole days and nyghts in this manner of doing: even tyll my body shold be ready to sink down for weariness before I wold give over.”(174) He excused or overlooked all imperfections. When the Angels spoke in faulty Latin he corrected them, but accepted the explanation that Kelly had mangled their words in his ignorant delivery (175). When “Michael” did not understand the Hebrew Dee quoted, Dee translated it into Latin, and blamed his own deficiencies for the failure in communication; “I am not good in the Hebrue Tongue; but you know my meaning.”(176) Frequently in difficult points, Dee is invited first to express his own opinion, which the angels then merely confirm (177). While he brought at first all his learning to bear on the subject, honouring any of the angelic statements that would permit of this with cross references to works in his library, expanding, or explanatory of, the remark — Reuchlin and Agrippa are among the authors he most frequently drew upon (178) — later this practise diminished and finally seems to have ceased, Dee finding, perhaps, that the communications he received could not profitably be related to any previously revealed system of knowledge, and submissively forbearing to confront the angels with all too frequently opposed human authorities, such as Trithemius, that he had hitherto accepted (179). Not Dee, but Kelly alone, ever entertained doubts as to the nature of the spirits. Dee had frequently to reassure him, and indeed pledged his soul as to their truth. For when the first intimations were received that the spirits desired their “cross matching,” Dee wrote “Hereupon we were in great amazement and grief of minde, that so hard, and (as it yet seemed to me) so impure a Doctrine, was pounded and enjoyed unto us, of them whom I alwayes (from the beginning hitherto) did judge and esteem undoubtedly to be good Angells: And had unto E.K. offered my soul as a pawn to discharge E.K. his crediting of them, as the good and faithful ministers of Almighty God.”(180) But in general Dee’s credulity, if it is so to be called, was only in proportion to the spirits’ promises to him (181); and he seems to have regarded it only as a test of his faith when they proved so niggardly in small material matters, certainly never doubting that they had

power to perform what they declared, in spite of the adverse indications that continually occurred (182).

The chief subject of the conferences was, however, the angelic books. Dee already possessed one mysterious work he called Soyga, which he was unable to read, nor ever succeeded in deciphering, and this book, which “Michael” always referred to as “Adam’s Treatise from Paradise,” was the subject of his first enquiries to the spirits after Kelly joined him (183). Kelly is traditionally reputed to have brought another magical work in cipher with him, in addition to the “red powder,” on first coming to Mortlake. Subsequently he made various journeys, returning with other “writings” he had found: a scroll and a book he discovered “by spiritual direction,” in the company of John Husey, at “Huets Cross, Northwick,” which Dee managed partially to decipher (184). But the books the angels delivered through Kelly, Dee does not seem ever to have succeeded in interpreting. The first was the Book of Enoch (185); of 49 tables, each of which in Ashmole’s words “consisteth of 49 lines or rows, and ever Row of 49 words or letters. The first 40 of this Page [the first] have a worde in every little Square, wch could not well be contained in the little cells of a Square Table in this Book. Therefore they are writ thus at large as you see. But the 9 last Rows of this Page had but one letter apiece and are accordingly set down at the end hereof.”(186) Casaubon says of it in his preface to the printed conferences: “By what I have seen it doth appear to me a very superstitious, foolish, fabulous writing, or to conclude all in one word Cabalistical, such as the Divil might own very well, and in all probability was the author.” The angels described it somewhat differently. By means of it, Dee is told, he “will have as many powers subject to him” as there are parts of the book, in which

“Every Element hath 49 manners of understanding
Therein is comprehended so many Languages

They are all spoken at once, and severally by themselves, by distinction, may be
spoken.

Untill though come to the Citty thou canst not behold the beauty thereof.”(187) Some years later when the book was still being dictated, the spirit Ave told of eight powers with which it will endow its possessor. Among these are “all humane knowledge”; “The knowledge of all elemental creatures amongst you”; the power of “moving from place to place (as into this Country or that Country at pleasure)”; “the knowledge of all crafts mechanical”; and “Transmutatio formalis sed non essentialis.”(188) Uriel declared of it: “Out of this shal be restored the holy Bookes which have perished even from the beginning, and from the first that lived. And herein shal be deciphered perfect truth from imperfect falsehood. True religion from false damnable Errors. With all Arts which are proper to the use of man, the first sanctified perfection: which when it has spread awhile, Then cometh the End.”(180)

It was the laborious, and lengthy, reception of this and similar works, which gradually drew Dee away from all his other activities and interests, absorbing all his time, and totally subduing his critical faculties in the process, since the least objection he dared to raise immediately precipitated all the wrath of the spirits upon him. Thus, since every square table contained (at least) 2401 letters dictated one at a time, Dee, after several days’ work, ventured a mild remonstrance: “If every side,” he said, “conteyne 49 rowes, and every row will require so much tyme to be received as this hath done: it may seem that very long tyme will be required to this doctrine’s receiving: But if it be God’s good liking we would faine have some abridgement or compendious manner whereby we might sooner be in the worke of God’s service.” But immediately at this “The Chaire and the Table [that Kelly saw in the Stone] are snatched away, and seeme to fly toward Heaven. And nothing appeared in the stone at all. but was all transparent cleare.” (In the margin, Dee writes here “Note and take heede from hence forward.”)(190) Only after many prayers and apologies did the spirits consent to return. worst of all, Dee was ordered to learn this jargon, or rather, what is better called, apart from the first page of words, this disorderly succession of numbers and letters, so that he could speak it “without book.” A few days later he was reproached for not having performed this task; he tried to excuse himself: “You perceive that I have divers affaires, wch at this present doe withdraw me from peculiar diligence using to these Characters and their nowe learning by heart. And therefore I trust I shall not offend if I bestow all the convenient leisure that I shall get about the learning hereof.”(191) But his plea was brushed aside by the offended spirits, and eventually it was only by a sad neglect of all else in his life that Dee found he could continue to enjoy their favour; a favour by which he set so much store that on days when nothing appeared in the shewstone he was reduced to pitiful straits, seeking to discover some often quite imaginary offence in himself which by penance and repentance he might purge, and become again worthy of the angelic visitations (192). Other books were dictated during the Continental journeys, to the number of about twenty-six; many are totally unintelligible, nor do

they seem to be closely enough related to any usual Cabalistic or numerological system to be even partially “interpreted” on any ordinary methods. Some are made up of prayers, charms and incantations that may be employed on various occasions; others were in similar tabular form to the book of Enoch, and for some of these, instructions were also given as to how angelic names might be extracted from them, by permutations and systematic selection of their characters (193).

The sittings were not absolutely private to Dee and Kelly. Early permission (March 26, 1583) was given for Adrian Gilbert to join them. This was clearly connected with Dee’s projected colonisation of America, which the spirits had promised to assist: “Then this Adrian Gilbert,” exclaimed Dee, “shall carry the Name of Jesus among the Infidels, to the great glory of God, and the recovery of those miserable people from the mouth of Hell into which for many a hundred years past and yet continually they doe fall” (194); but proceeding, “may we require descriptions of the countries for his better instruction etc.?” Dee got no satisfaction. It would appear indeed from a record of a few days later, that Gilbert was the Angels’ choice for this venture rather than Dee’s own, for Dee remarks “there might be some doubt in common extrenall Judgment of his aptness to the performance of the voyage with the appurtenances,” and commits himself to the guidance of the spirits on the matter, but they merely replied “See thou counsaile him and be his Father.” At the same time, Dee enquired about the patent they had applied for in respect of the enterprise, “and as for the privilege for Mr. Adrian Gilbert his voyage, I think not well of it that Royalties should not be granted,” but he only received the answer: “God respecteth not Princes particular, so much as the state of his whole people, For in Princes mouthes [all the underlinings are, of course, Dee’s additions] is there poyson as well as proverbs. And in one heart more sinn than a whole world can containe.”(195) The conclusion of this incident, insofar as the spirits were concerned, which commercially and geographically was to have such important consequences in its practical developments, came some months later; when the angels washed their hands of it, in the following dialogue: “__ As concerning Adrian Gilbert what pleaseth you to say of him and his intended voyage?

Madimi...He is not in the true faith

__ How hat it been said then that he should be the setter forth of God, his faith and religion among the Infidels?

Madimi That is a mystery.”(196)

VI. On May I, 1583, Dee entered in his diary that one Albertus Laski had arrived in England. Camden wrote on the occasion “E Polonia Russiae viciua hac aestate venit in Angliam, ut Reginam inuiseret, Albertus Alasco Palatinus Siradiensis, vir eruditus, corporis lineamentis, barba promississima, vestitus decoro & pervenusto, qui perbenigne ab ipsa, nobilibusque magno honore & lautitiis & ab Academia Oxoniensi eruditis oblectationibus, atque variis spectaculcia exceptus, post quatuor menses aere alieno oppressus, clam recessit.”(197) He was, wrote Burleigh to Hatton, “a personage of great estimation...few in the Empire of the greatest exceed him in sovereignty and power”; but though the queen hesitated to receive him “until,” wrote Hatton in his reply, “she be more fully informed both, of his quality and occasion of access” for “she seemeth to doubt that he departeth from his Prince [Stephan of Poland] as a man in displeasure,” since he had, in a letter to her, called her “the refuge of the disconsolate and the afflicted,” (198) and though also the purposes of his visit remained obscure, he was generally during his stay in England feted like a reigning monarch. Bruno disputed before him at Oxford, and Dee, with money, transmitted to him through Leicester from Elizabeth for this purpose, entertained him at Mortlake. On May 13, he notes in his “Diary”: “I becam acquainted with Albertus Laski at 7 1/2 at night in the Erle of Leicester his chamber in the court at Greenwich.” He visited Dee on May 18, June 15 (with Sydney “on purpose to do me honour” Dee notes in the Diary) and June 19; on at least one occasion, passing the night under Dee’s roof. He was admitted to the spiritual conferences, when his guardian genius Jubanlec appeared to Kelly. After one of his first visits he left three questions for Dee to put to the angels for him. These were: “1: De vita Stephani Regis Poloniae quid dici possit. 2: An Successor eius erit Albertus Laski, an ex domo Austriae. 3: An Albertus Laski Palatinu Seradiensis habebit regnum Modaviae.” To which he apparently received favourable answers (199). Thomas Allen had rejected Laski’s invitation to accompany him on his return to Poland, but Dee at Kelly’s earnest persuasion, and urged with increasing peremptoriness by the spirits, eventually consented; Kelly, perhaps, rightly surmising, that a more favourable field for his projected career as a Philosopher and an Alchemist, would open for him in the Empire than was possible in England, where his position was that of a protege of Dee’s, considerably overshadowed by the already established member of their partnership, and where he was known in other respects, if at all; perhaps merely — as tradition has always maintained — by a somewhat suspicious or even criminal record (200). On the Continent Dee and Kelly lived as equals; and Kelly’s unscrupulousness ultimately brought his independent rewards, that Dee would not have stooped to win, or wittingly have assisted Kelly in obtaining.

On September 21, 1583, Kelly and Dee embarked from England by night, for Holland (201). One of Dee’s last acts before leaving was to compile a catalogue of the immense library he was leaving behind him (202). Dee remained on the Continent until 1589, and it should perhaps be mentioned that there is little evidence to support the tradition that he acted as an official spy for Elizabeth during this period (203). He does not indeed appear even to have waited to obtain royal licence before his departure, nor does he seem to have maintained any close relations with his friends in England, until rumours of his success in making gold aroused the interest of the court and government at home, who thereupon, and in very amicable fashion, reopened communication with him. In England, Laski had appeared a person of immense and inexhaustible wealth, but his prodigality there had already strained his resources (204), and abroad his fortunes not prospering in accordance with angels’ prophecies, though Dee remained as faithful to Laski as Kelly would permit (205), they were driven to seek other patrons. The Angels offered a variety of excuses for this necessity. On June 11, 1584, Kelly had a vision of wax images being made, for magical purposes directed against Laski, and was told “this is the cause that Lasky is poor,” but that nonetheless “he shall reign and be King of Poland.”(206) Later it was announced that Laski had been rejected on account of his sins, and inadequate repentance, for this he should be chastised and reduced to poverty: “For he doubted of thy faith and laughed God to Skorn.”(207) Dee and Kelly then found a succession of other supports in the Emperor Rudolph, the Count Rosenberg, and Stephan, the reigning King of Poland, whom Laski was to have supplanted.

The history of Dee and Kelly’s continental adventures has been told too often to be dwelt on here, except in some of its more important aspects. It is of interest that Dee, despite his absorption in occult investigations, and prophetic visions, to some extent seems to have maintained relations with Continental scholars of repute in other fields, though his nomadic life probably limited the extent of these, as for instance with Peucer, who had bitterly attacked such practises as those in which Dee was now mainly engaged, with the mathematician and astronomer Hagecius, and with Tycho Brahe, who speaks of Dee several times in his letters (208). Dee and Kelly journeyed through Brill, Emden, Bremen, Lubeck, Stetin, Posen and Cracow, and came at last on Aug. 9, 1584, to Prague which they found a congenial city under the melancholic Rudolph II,

himself an alchemist, astrologer and reputed magician (209). Dee seems to have transferred to him the hopes of finding an emperor who should fulfil a divine destiny, that he had formerly cherished as regards Maximilian (as the preface to and the 20th theorem of the Monas indicate), and which had led him to propound the scheme for Elizabeth's aggrandisement. On Aug. 16 Madimi prophesied "with this emperor shall be thy aboad," and commanded Dee to write to him. This Dee did the following day, reminding Rudolph "Ambiverunt me (Juvenem) Illustrissimi Imperatores duo: Victoriosissimus ille Carolus Quintus, et ejusdem Frater Ferdinandus, vestrae Caesareae Majestatis Magnificentissimus Avus. Hic, Posonii, Hungariae: ille vero Bruxellae Brabantiae. Hic, An 1563. Ille autem Anno 1549." He sent with his letter a copy of the Monas (210).

Rudolph received him on the third of September (211). He said he had heard of Dee's fame from the Spanish Ambassador, "and commended the book Monas but said that it was too hard for his Majesty's capacity"; and what had Dee "to say to him Quod esset pro sua utilitate." Dee secured privacy, and alone with the Emperor, proceeded to exhort him, boldly and unexpectedly in the style of an Old Testament prophet — though it is perhaps more probable that he imagined he was rivalling the conduct of Synesius (212). "The Angel of the Lord hath appeared to me, and rebuketh you for your sins. If you will hear me, and believe me you shall Triumph: if you will not hear me, the Lord, the God that made heaven and Earth, (under whom you breathe and have your spirit) putteth his foot against your breast, and will throw you headlong from your seat. Moreover the Lord hath made this covenant with me (by oath) that he will do and perform. If you will forsake your wickedness and turn unto him, your seat shall be the greatest that ever was," and "the Devil shall become your prisoner." (All this was delivered with much ceremonious deference however.) Rudolph attempted to conclude the interview as courteously as he might: "The Emperour said he did believe me, and said that he thought I loved him unfainedly, and said, that I should not need so earnest protestations: and would not willingly have had me to kneel so often as I did." But when Dee then began to speak of his Angelic conferences, Rudolph requested him to defer this until another occasion, saying "he would henceforward take me to his recommendation and care, and some such words (of favour promised) which I heard not well he spake so low." On 12th Sept., Dee was informed that henceforward all communication with Rudolph must be made through an intermediary — Dr. Kurtz, and despite a letter to the emperor written at the command of the spirits, claiming he had discovered the Philosopher's Stone (Sept. 28), and another to the Spanish Ambassador (Dec. 31, after a short stay in Cracow), declaring how far he had progressed in incredible mysteries, which he was prepared to reveal to Rudolph, Dee was never successful in obtaining a second audience.

The following year Dee and Kelly, who found themselves in great want in Prague, proceeded for a third time to Cracow. Through Laski they obtained interviews with the King on April 17 and May 23. A preliminary discussion occurred (213), of interest as showing by direct testimony the manner in which Dee regarded "scrying." Stephan raised the objection against the divine assistance Dee claimed to receive, that prophecies had now ceased in the world, adding "Tamen si nihil in istis, contra Dei sit honorem, eo libentius sunt audienda: Et ego quidem haud dubito quin Deus nunc possit multis modis secreta quaedam hominibus detegere, ad haec usque tempora inauditis et inusitatis." Dee replied in an argument set out under three heads. First, he admitted that the race of prophets who were to prepare the way for Christ was indeed extinct, but in the Christian era itself a new kind had arisen — he cited the composition of the Apocalypse as evidence. Secondly, there was nothing in his own spiritual "actions" against the honour of God, on the contrary, they belonged to a special type of revelation which from now on would continue to be made increasingly to men, until all the world was of one faith; "Jam hac aetate nostra cum maxime sumus circa negotium fidei discordes, maxime videntur esse necessariae non Prophetiae solum sed etiam Revelationes valde expressae de Mysteriis Divinis." Thirdly, to convince Stephan Dee was prepared to exhibit 24 works in the Greek, Latin, Angelic and English tongues, communicated by the spirits.

On May 27th a "conference" was held in the presence of the King; the spirits, however, speaking in Latin, did nothing but rebuke Stephan for his sins. They vented many threats against him, telling him he was sunk in iniquities and that the hearts of his people were withdrawn from him. The almost foolhardy courage needed to conduct such an action displays the extent of Dee's confidence in his spiritual advisers. These, however, showed themselves unaware of the dangers into which they had led him on this occasion, unless, as would seem more plausible, ed has been mistakenly printed for ab, for just before the concluding "Blessing," a spiritual voice enjoined, addressing itself to Dee for the first time: "Adduc familiam tuam cum celeritate" (and Dee notes against this message in the margin "Anglicoe hoc dixit!")(214) However, the following day further angelic instructions were received in which Kelly's ambitions are clearly apparent. Dee

was informed, “Thus saith the Lord, though must answer Stephan according to the hardness of heart,” but “This done, be not afraid to open they mouth unto him as thou didst unto Rudolph in writing, Behold (O King) I can make the Philosophers Stone, for so they call it. Bear thou therefore the Charge; and give me a name within thy Court that I may have access unto thee: and yearly maintenance for us both.” Both in the case of Rudolph and Stephan, the angels promised that should his offer be accepted they would then make good Dee’s word, and reveal the secret of the Philosopher’s Stone to him, which he was of course not yet possessed of, and though on both occasions he eventually obeyed their orders, his delays and objections indicate that it cost Dee a severe mental struggle before he would lend himself even to this temporary deceit, that the spirits commanded. Perhaps as a consequence of this new claim, Dee secured a private interview with the King on June 4th, but what passed then, or any subsequent developments in their relations is unknown, for here a large gap occurs in the record, and the next entry is dated August 1st, at which time Dee and Kelly were again in Prague.

Despite Dee’s energetic attempts to secure the patronage of Rudolph or Stephan, he nevertheless refused at this time a liberal offer of a high position at the Court of Russia, the Czar, through the merchant Thomas Simkinson, promising a yearly salary of 2000L, and the “Lord Protector” an additional 1000 roubles from his own purse (215). It may be plausibly conjectured that Dee’s refusal was prompted by his spirit counsellors, for since Kelly was not apparently included in this invitation, nor, seemingly, prepared as yet for a complete break with Dee, they were unlikely to have encouraged an acceptance of the offer.

Full-scale operations now seem to have been begun for the discovery of buried treasure, and, possibly under the influence of the enthusiastic Count Rosenberg of Trebona, in whom they had found a generous and loyal patron, who gave them much financial assistance, and several times offered them a needed refuge in his domains, numerous persons seem to have been partially initiated into their mysteries. For an account exists of four occasions, and there were very possibly more, on which a considerable company seems to have been present for a formal “sceance,” at which spirits were called up, and other phenomena produced, in an attempt to obtain guidance as to the location of hidden hoards of gold (on Oct. 16, 1585, Thurs., 17 Sept., 1586, Fri., Sept. 18, 1586, Wed., 22 Sept., 1586). The extent of Dee’s participation is by no means clear; these operations are not mentioned in the continuous record he kept of their conferences, but there are large gaps in it in the portion covering these years, which leave his movements and activities obscure. This supplementary source manuscript does not seem to be in Dee’s hand, however, but is possibly in Kelly’s (216). On the first occasion those present gathered in a circle, the shewstone was employed, the narrator of this account then recited incantations from a large book, which was suddenly knocked out of his hand by an unseen power. Levitational phenomena then occurred, stones dropped into the holy water, and glass balls were seen to be transported from the room, and were later located in a wood some miles away. The party proceeded to dig here for the treasure they supposed this indicated, but came on nothing but a well. The meeting on September 8th is typical of the way in which at these experiments a strong hint of diabolism appears, contrasting with the platitudinous purely spoken angels with whom Dee found himself generally dealing. “At ii at night we begun action againe, and before we were well seated in the Circle, undoubtedly they were with us, for from the Fuming pan wch stood upon the Table there came 6: severall great Flashes of Fire one after another, and a pretty long space betwixt each Flash, and betwixt every flash a Blaze as blew as Steele and such a strong and damnable Stinck of Brimstone yssued from thence as was ready to choack us all.”(217)

Alchemy, Dee and Kelly continued to practise assiduously. The Angels obligingly supplied them with the formula for the Philosopher’s Stone (218), but as the constituents were described only by such names as Audicol, Deasod, Lulo of red Loxtan and Rlodnir, and the spirits would supply no help in the further identifications of these, it proved of little practical value. Dee, as has been noted before, seems to have been the instructor, a view for which such diary entries as Feb. 8, 1588 — “Mr. E.k....sent for me to his laboratory...to see how he distilled sericon, according as in tyme past and of late he had of me out of Riplay” — seem to offer confirmation. Nevertheless, and perhaps it is hardly surprising, it was, in the event, Kelly and not Dee who finally discovered the true receipt for the manufacture of gold; though it was not until some months before they separated that Kelly consented to reveal it to Dee (219). However, long before he was made aware of the means, Dee was fully convinced that gold was successfully being made at last (220). He wrote earnestly to Walsingham in May 1586, promising “if you send unto me Master Thomas Digges in her Majestie’s behalf, his faithfulness to her Majesty and my well liking of the Man, shall bring forth soe pieces of Good Service. But her Majesty had been better to have spent or given away in Alms, a million of gold, than to have lost some opportunities past.”(221)

A spur to such investigations was, of course, the multitudinous reports of striking contemporary successes, such as that of Augustus of Saxony, and though many accounts of Kelly's own transmutations are of late fabrication (222), yet his triumph was to be attested by unimpeachable observers, who could never thereafter be convinced that they had been deluded (223), and Gassendi was to cite Kelly's own feats — after a sceptical preliminary remark on how fraud might be credited not only by the simple but by eyewitnesses — as an outstanding example of well-accredited transmutations (224). Despite an unlimited supply of gold, they were frequently in extreme poverty — there is a pathetic petition drawn up by Jane Dee, who was not herself admitted to the conferences, but which she requested her husband to put to the spirits, beseeching some present relief “in this necessity, we are in, of sufficient and needful provision for meat and drink for us and our Family” (225); while despite his knowledge of the secret, Dee was always eager to meet with other people who could tell him of it, and gave a generous welcome to such claimants (226). However, Anthony a Wood's wondrous statement about Arthur, when a child in Prague: “It was usual with him to play at Quates with the slates of gold made by projection in the garret of his father's lodgings” (227), was “confirmed” by Arthur Dee's personal testimony (228)! Dee's chief interest however, remained the spiritual conferences, and it was hence only after their breach, that Kelly was able to devote himself to following his fortunes as a successful alchemist.

Throughout his time on the Continent, Dee had attempted to maintain great friendliness with the ecclesiastical authorities, so much so that he has even been denounced for becoming a Roman Catholic in this period (229). His vision of the great destiny his “actions” were to usher in for the “Emperor,” which would inaugurate the age when “all men should be of one religion” for which his “conferences” were preparatory, seemingly was quite sufficient to overrule in his mind any objections he might have felt to these courses; rendering of less significance to him the present temporary shells of religion and ceremonies of worship. Thus he writes, April 19, 1585, “I took Ghostly Council of Doctor Hannibal the great Divine, that had now set out some of his Commentaries upon Pymander Hermestis Trismegisti”; and, on the following day, “I received Communion at the Bernadines where that Doctor is a Professor.”(230) The spirits too encouraged Dee in these observances. Thus on Aug. 6, 1585 Uriel began his communication by denouncing individual interpretation of the Bible, for “whosoever doth understand the Scriptures must seek to understand them by Ordinance and spiritual tradition.” Uriel declared reason must be laid aside in favour of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which is delivered through “a visible church,” he denounced Luther and Calvin for “wilfully obstinately erring,” and concluded that anything not conforming strictly to what was “taught by His Apostles, nourished by the Holy Ghost, delivered into the world, and by Peter brought to Rome; by him, there taught, by his Successors, held, and maintained, is contrary to God and his Truth” (saying of the Pope “an evil man he may be and fall from his vocation; But he can never be Antichrist”) (231).

Nevertheless, it was at the instance of the Papal Nuncio that a decree of banishment went out against Dee and Kelly, ordering them to leave the empire within six days (May 29, 1586); though this was revoked in August, by the influence of Rosenberg (232) (and in Sept. 1586 they settled in Trebona under his protection). A dangerous “agent provocateur,” Francis Pucci (233) was also set upon them (though it is possible that he himself was largely an unwitting tool in this affair, his sincerity has been defended, and certainly, returning to Rome himself in 1592, he was seized by the Inquisition and burnt for heresy) and eventually was admitted to their conferences. When he had been with them some time, this man began to persuade them, by his interpretations of various obscure communications, that the spirits commanded them to go to Rome. Rosenberg had, however, warned Dee that letters from the Pope had arrived requesting that he and Kelly be sent prisoner to Rome. So Dee now replied, “well (quod we)...it is not meant (by that Speech) that we should corporally go to Rome; and so brake of that his reasoning.”(234) The next day Pucci arrived with an elaborately drawn safe conduct from the Nuncio, for Dee if he would go and confer with the Pope “de suis Revelationibus,” containing promises that he should be well received and treated with all charity on the way (235). But Dee noticed that the document was not signed, nor despite his efforts to obtain this, could he ever secure its signature. Nonetheless, he kept it thereafter, secretly, in a leather bag, for what it was worth. Pucci then changed his tactics and, hoping to lure Dee into indiscretions, began to speak of “this Monster of Rome whom my chief desire is, and long hath been, that he may be overthrown,” but Dee merely recorded in the margin of his account of this, “Pucci infidelitur manifestissima facta.”(236) Dee proved equally reserved when shortly afterwards there came a letter “ex Corde in Christi frater Philip Episcopus Placentiae Nuncium,” asking him to submit his angelic conversations for approval by the Lateran Council of the Church, in order that they and himself might receive due recognition and honour (237).

These testimonies to their importance were also indications of danger, and Kelly who had

long wearied of this unprofitable — and now perilous — business of scrying, and at the same time apparently feeling himself a sufficient master of the alchemical technique, to pursue his fortunes independently of Dee, sought to bring about a dissolution of their partnership. He first stubbornly refused to scry, then reluctantly agreed to make one more attempt as a result of Dee's earnest persuasions, but only to receive the angelic injunction that his way of life unfitted him for that holy service. Dee thereupon, apparently also at Kelly's suggestion, employed his son Arthur, then aged eight, as his scryer, but though according to traditional theory even better results should have been thus procured than with the adult Kelly (238), Arthur, whom Dee decided should "thrice in the day be put to the Exercise" after reciting prayers Dee composed for him, was able to see only enough to offer some slight evidence, supporting indifferently scepticism or credulity, according to the temper and initial inclinations of the witness (239). Kelly for some reason returned after Arthur's failure; perhaps not wishing the continued unskillfulness of the child to bring the whole course of past practise into suspicion, for although he desired a separation of careers, and urged also the diabolic nature of the spirits, he does not seem to have wished Dee ever to suspect fraud, since Dee's golden accounts of him in England would remain — as in fact they were — of considerable importance for him. On his return to scrying however, he sought a more effective way of engineering the desired breach. Thereafter at the shewstone, the spirits dwelt constantly on the single theme that Dee and Kelly should live holding all things in common between them, and the whole miserable business of what Dee called their "cross matching" was rapidly set in motion; Kelly being apparently determined that if he were driven by the spirits to commit what he knew to be a sin of the first magnitude, proof that these were evil counsellors would be so clear as to justify his breaking off conferences with them entirely on unimpeachable grounds of conscience. However, as in all his actions of this kind, much of what occurred seems to have come about despite himself, all his conscious reflections at the time causing him great, and finally unbearable, pain of mind (240).

Kelly when he first interrupted Arthur's unsatisfactory scrying, declared he had had a vision in which he "saw a great number going in and out of this Chapel at the little hole in the glass windo. I saw Madimi, II and many others that had dealt with us heretofore, but showed themselves in very filthy order, and Uriel appeared and justified all to be of God and good."(241) When it was gradually made plain what was meant to be signified by this and other shows, Dee would at first have none of it, as being "expressly against the Commandments of God: neither can I by any means consent to like of that doctrine." The spirits cajoled, tempted and threatened. Madimi declared "Behold you are become free: Do that which most pleaseth you." "Ben" told Dee he would be "led prisoner to Rome" if he did not comply. At last when Raphael had appeared to inform them that they had been chosen from all men to walk with God, to understand his mysteries, to execute and proclaim his justice, and spread his praises throughout the nations and peoples of the earth, Dee was won over. "I greatly rejoiced in spirit and was utterly resolved to obey this new Doctrine, to us, peculiarly of all peoples of the world enjoyed"; for, he reflected, "A privilege granted...doth not abrogate a law, but doth notifie the force of the law in itself otherwise."(242) Dee drew up various covenants with God to be signed by the four persons concerned (himself, Kelly, and their respective wives) in which the signatories pledged themselves to follow "this most new and strange Doctrine (amongst Christians)," which was recognised as "above our humane reason" and therefore, strange as it was, "notwithstanding we will bind captivate and tread underfoot all our humane timorous doubtings." The triumphant spirit voice that encouraged this fits well with the "diabolic" hypothesis of Casaubon: "Follow you that which you call unrighteousness even with gladness: for I can make you whiter than snow. Your uniting and knitting together is the end and consummation of the beginning of my harvest."

The whole pathetic story, with the exception of a few painful lines toward the end of the manuscript which Dee later partly blotted out, but which may still be read, is printed by Casaubon in the True and Faithful Relation (243). Dee found himself in a cleft stick. He had pledged his soul as to the "angels" truth, there was now no mistaking the unequivocal but seemingly monstrous nature of their commands, but any show of hesitation on Dee's or others' parts about accepting this particular revelation threw Kelly into a violent frenzy, when he would threaten to abandon skrying altogether, claiming his cause about the diabolic origin of the spirits to be proved. Thus Jane Dee and his own wife raised a shocked outcry when they were first informed of what was afoot, and Kelly took the opportunity to insist that if it were lawful for the women to harbour doubts of the spirits, then it was permissible to him to indulge his own, and vowed "I will from this day forth meddle no more herein." The "doctrine" was at last fulfilled; almost immediately afterwards there is a gap in Dee's record extending over nineteen years. But it seems that Kelly, his conscience unable to sustain the weight of sin imposed upon it by continued association and

conformity with such a besottedly deluded follower of the promptings of the devil as Dee, departed shortly after.

VII. In Dec. 1588 Dee himself turned homewards, "being favourably called home by her Majestie, from Trebon Castle in Bohemia," leaving with Kelly his "great glass so highly and long esteemed of our Queen and the emperor Rudolph the second, de quo in praefatione Euclidis fit mentio."(244) He travelled like a prince and was received like one at Staden, Hamburg, and at Bremen, where Dr. Christopher Pezelius celebrated him in verses which were printed and distributed to the citizens and students who had gathered to witness Dee's departure from there. He travelled with his family in three coaches, drawn by twelve horses, with a saddle horse accompanying each, as well as four "Swart-Ruiters," with three wagon loads of effects. He was escorted by twenty-four soldiers, and "six harquebusiers and musquetiers" (he justifies this by accounts of attempted waylayings of his party, for "eighteen enemies horsemen well appointed from Lingen and Wilshusen had laine five dayes attending thereabouts to have set upon me and myne"). The charges for this return journey to London, Dee estimated as 796L (245).

The subsequent history of Kelly is well known. No longer crippled by the intense mystic purposefulness of Dee, he gave himself out as merely an expert alchemist, and prospered greatly for a time. He travelled to Prague in great state (246) and Rosenberg and Rudolph financed his costly transmutations (247). This was the period of his alchemical writings, and his arrogant self confidence at this time is well illustrated by the opening injunction of the most famous of these:

"All you that faine philosophers would be

Goe, burn your bookes; and come and learn of me."(248)

His reputation in England after Dee's arrival there was great, and Elizabeth despatched agents to persuade him to return and employ his talents for the benefit of his country (249). But Kelly was now an "eques auratus," he held, according to Dee, "A barony in the kingdom of Bohemia," (250) he was a privy counsellor of Rudolph, and the Chief Regent over the lands and affairs of Rosenberg. He had been granted landed estates to an annual value of 15,000L; he was, also, virtually a prisoner. He wrote, however, to Burleigh, that he would make his escape if he were redressed for the injuries he would suffer by so doing, and Elizabeth would promise "to call me home to like honour [as he enjoyed in the empire], Assuring me of so much Lands of inheritance by yere to serve her, as I shall leave behynde me in Bohemia for her."(251) Dyer was sent to Prague, though without authority to make such pledges, to induce Kelly to return, but Kelly, pleading how impossible it was for him to get away in person, merely undertook to instruct Dyer in the secrets of Alchemy, that he might reveal them to Elizabeth and undertake successful transmutation himself at home (252). Dyer saw pewter flaggons almost daily turned into silver, and his reports excited the authorities in England considerably, and Burleigh wrote pleading letters to "good Sir Edward Kelley" that he send some of his "powder," if he might not come in person; urging him "to send for a token to her Majesty such a portin of it, in a secret box, as might serve, for a reasonable sum, to defray her charges that Summer for her navy."(253)

Rudolph's suspicions however were aroused by Kelly's constant associations with an English diplomat who claimed to be on a purely personal visit. Moreover, Kelly had not made him any large quantities of gold. When Kelly pleaded his shortage of "red powder," Rudolph, knowing full well that Kelly could make all the gold he wished if he chose, for his earlier unparalleled extravagance of life (254) as well as the host of witnesses to his feats seemed certain indication of his powers, dismissed the excuse as mere obduracy and unwillingness, smacking of lese Majeste, and treason, and put Kelly severely to the torture. Dyer was released from arrest only when Elizabeth made strong representations to Rudolph on his behalf, but Kelly's unwillingness to effect transmutation on a large scale — his abilities seem never to have been in question — brought him more than two years harsh confinement at Purglitz (255). At last he was brought to agree to fulfill his promises to Rudolph, and at once was restored to all the precarious splendour, wealth, and royal favour he had previously enjoyed. His glory, and spell of closely guarded luxury, was brief. In 1595 when it was seen that he intended still to prevaricate and delay the disclosure of his great secret, he was thrown back into prison until he should decide to become more communicative. He died the same year; it is traditionally supposed as a result of injuries sustained in a fall, during a last desperate attempt to escape.