

CHAPTERTWELVE
John Ballou Newbrough
And *OAHSPE*

The first edition of *Oahspe*, an immense “Revelation,” was printed in 1882 in New York City. It had 856 pages, on 7 X 9 inch page, double column, with approximately 730 words per page, for nearly 625,000 words. My copy is a photo reprint of the first 1882 edition published by Ray Palmer in Amherst, Wisconsin in 1960.

The *Book of Oahspe* had a singular purpose: to preempt and pervert the impending *Urantia Revelation*. Caligastia knew of the imminent gift to mankind. He attempted to distract and deny the true Revelation.

The title page of *Oahspe* is styled thus:

OAHSPE
A
NEW BIBLE
IN THE
WORDS OF JEHOVIH
AND HIS
ANGEL AMBASSADORS

The title page continues with:

A Sacred History of the Dominions of the Higher and Lower Heavens on the Earth for the past TWENTY FOUR THOUSAND YEARS, together with a synopsis of the cosmogony of the universe; the creation of the planets; the creation of man; the unseen worlds; the labor and glory of gods and goddesses in the ethereal heaven — with new commandments of Jehovih to man of the present day. With revelations from the second resurrection, formed in words in the thirty-third year of the Kosmon Era.

The date of publication is given as Anno Kosmon 34 for 1882.

The book had no table of contents but carried a publishers synopsis which listed the sections:

- Book of Jehovih
- Book of Sethantes, Son of Jehovih
- First Book of the First Lords
- Book of Ah'shong, Son of Jehovih
- Second Book of Lords
- Synopsis of Sixteen Cycles
- Book of Aph, Son of Jehovih
- The Five Lords' First Book
- Book of Sue, Son of Jehovih
- Book of Appollo, Son of Jehovih
- The Lords' Third Book
- Book of Thor, Son of Jehovih
- The Lords' Fourth Book
- The Lords' Fifth Book
- Book of Osiris, Son of Jehovih
- Book of God's Word
- Book of Fragapati, Son of Jehovih

And so on.

Note that this list contains a mixture of names — from the Bible, from pagan mythology, and invented (neologisms): Jehovih, Ben, Osiris, Thor, Appollo, Aph, Fragapati, and Es.

Each book is divided into verses with an obvious attempt to imitate the Bible. The first verse reads:

After the creation of man, the Creator, Jehovih, said unto him: That thou shalt know thou art the works of My hands, I have given thee capacity for knowledge, power and dominion. This was the first era.

The book is filled with dark and morbid illustrations. It contains numerous strange symbols in scripts which are a blend of Chinese, Egyptian hieratic, ancient Semitic, and fanciful. There appears to be no sensible thread behind these various symbolic presentations, except to influence ignorant minds with seeming erudition. All illustrations could have come directly out of the unassisted mind of Newbrough.

Throughout the book insidious statements are made to denigrate God, pervert religious teaching, or otherwise misguide the reader. For example, on page 8 the chief of angels is named God. Sethantes is the first God of the earth and her heavens. These are revelations from the second resurrection. And so on.

The most notable attribute of this grotesque work is its attempt to preempt the revelation of the *Urantia Papers*. From the many inhabited planets in the universe, to a universe administration, to the intimate relationship of divine beings with this world, the parallels are strong. But the motive of Caligastia was more. He used *Oahspe* as a vehicle to degrade that future presentation. He conditioned minds to macabre pictures of the heavenly realms, thus setting the stage for rejection of the true Revelation.

For example, as can be seen from the above list, the book contains sections which denote "Sons of Jehovih," implying the concept of divine Sons of God. The fact of multiple Sons of God is plainly indicated in the Bible but is not part of Jewish or Christian theology. Such presentation on the heavenly realms is one of the most noble and most informative revelations of the *Urantia Papers*. Fortunately, by the time of the true Revelation, general social awareness of *Oahspe* had faded.

Another perversion is in time perspectives covering many thousands of years, again an attempt to anticipate exposition and revelation on long evolutionary human history.

Yet again, *Oahspe* attempts to anticipate exposition of divine judgments. Although not explicitly or clearly discussed, it carries ideas of destiny in its presentations of Prophecy, of Judgment, and of God's Kingdom on Earth.

It is not my purpose here to discuss these teachings from *Oahspe*. I merely provide examples to indicate how the Dark One has been at work. Different Section Synopses provide examples of the *Oahspe* teachings, a reflection of the darkness of the origins. Following are two examples.

Book of Cosmogony and Prophecy

The plans of the corporeal worlds; overthrow of the doctrine of attraction of gravitation; no force existing from one planet to another; neither light nor heat comes from the sun to the earth; the atmospherean vortices; the solar vortex; the great serpent (phalanx); defection of man's measurements of heavenly bodies; defections of the observations; magnifying power of vortices; cause of the photosphere, polar lights, velocities, magnetism, life, growth; meteors, nebula, clouds, wind and wind currents; ocean currents; how to regulate the temperature of the earth by man; how to bring rain showers; cause of tornadoes, waterspouts, famines, epidemics, and how to prophesy by astronomical knowledge.

Book of Judgment

God's judgment upon the Brahmins, Buddhists, Christians, Mohammedans, Confucians and Jews; the numbers of judgment, in the words of God; of the Jews; of resurrections; a day of judgment; God decreeth against infidelity; of the Father's kingdom on earth; God showeth how to judge the angels that minister to mortals; of the second resurrection; of ascetics; God judgeth charities; God showeth how to do charity; God judgeth the missionaries; God judgeth dominions; judgment against the man of promise; against war; God judgeth of exclusiveness; China and Japan thrown open; God declares against the government of man.

PERSONAL HISTORY

John Ballou Newbrough was born June 5, 1828, on a Springfield, Ohio farm. He grew up to be a big man, powerful, vigorous and adventurous. After college he went to the goldfields of California and Australia. He settled in New York City where he became a dentist. He married and became the father of a son and a daughter. A second marriage gave him another daughter. He had an interest in spiritualism from early manhood. Together with a friend, Edwin Augustus Davis, he interviewed many mediums, even entertaining them in his home in an effort to learn all he could of the occult. Davis was a photographer and cooperated with Newbrough in taking pictures of spiritual phenomena. However both men were dissatisfied with the calibre of spirit communications being received and Newbrough particularly felt that there must be something more interesting and practical. He earnestly desired to know how the angels lived, the plan of the universe, and the true facts of spiritual existence. He believed that if he purified himself he might establish higher contacts.

Two different accounts exist of the origins of *Oahspe*. I offer both to provide a more thorough examination of the performances of Caligastia. In addition, I offer a description of another sordid spiritualist event to obtain a broader view of how the Devil operated a century ago.

The first account came from a diary of the grandson of Edwin Augustus Davis. Following is that account. It has obviously been edited to reflect good literary style. Ray Palmer included this account as an ADDENDUM in his photo reprint of *Oahspe*.

THE ORIGIN OF OAH SPE, VERSION #1

One morning in 1870, Newbrough went to the home of his friend Davis who lived on Sixth Avenue, near the old Hay Market, and said:

"I've come for your advice. I had quite an experience about 4 a.m. this morning. I was sleeping nicely when I felt a hand on my shoulder." A voice said, 'Wake up doctor. Everything is all right. I only want to ask you a question and we will go.' "I sat up and answered, 'Yes, if I can'. The voice said, 'Would you like to perform a mission for Jehovah?'"

"I rubbed my eyes and saw that the room was lit up with pillars of a soft light so pleasing to the eyes that it was indescribable. I saw great numbers of beautiful spirits, or angels. They did not have wings. I spoke, 'What is the mission, so that I may know whether to say yes or no.' The answer came back, "Jehovah would like you to live spiritually for ten years and at the end of that time we will come back and tell you what it is that we desire, for your body and mind are not sufficiently perceptible now. You must be pure.

"What do you mean by living spiritually?"

"We want you never to kill anything, or eat anything that breathes; meat, fish, birds, reptiles, etcetera. Live on nuts, fruit, vegetables. You don't need so much food, as you are too heavy now; you need to lose weight. One other thing is very important: you must help people; give your services to people who need dental help, without pay, if they cannot pay. Do charity work; by individual charity you change the person's thoughts. They will think of you as a good man, and will send out good thoughts to you. You will need all the good will you can get.'

"I answered, 'This will be quite a change of living for me. I will let you know.'

"We already know your answer; it will be yes!' the voice said, and then the lights dimmed and went out, and the atmosphere changed back to its normal darkness. I got up and wrote down everything that had happened, then I drank a glass of milk and came over to talk to you."

Davis and Newbrough discussed the matter for hours. During the conversation Newbrough revealed that he thought he had recognized three of the spirits, although he had not had a good look at them. He asked Davis if he thought the adventure was real, or only a dream.

"John," said Davis "I don't believe it was a dream." I'd say, go ahead. I myself don't like meat or fish and would have no objection to going on the same diet so that you will have assistance in keeping to it, as it will certainly be hard on you to be so different in public eating habits. Perhaps the ten year wait will be worth it when you find out what it is that you are to do."

At 4 a.m. one morning late in 1880, Newbrough was awakened from his slumber to find the same mysterious and beautiful lights filling his room. He sat up and demanded: "Am I worthy?" The same voice spoke, "You have done well. You have passed our test. We know that you feel more healthy. Now we want you to buy a typewriter and place it on this table. We will thereafter awaken you one hour before dawn each morning and you will sit in this chair before the typewriter and put your hands on the keys. You will buy plenty of paper and keep it always ready to use"

"I don't know how to use a typewriter."

"We will control your hands and arms, and perform the task for you, so don't worry. You must not look at what is written until it is finished."

There was further discussion and instruction, then the pillars of light dimmed and went out.

On the morning of January 1, 1881, having followed all instructions, the first writing session began at 4 a.m. As Newbrough later told it to his friend, Davis: "To my amazement as I sat in the chair, my hands went up and started to pound at the keys. It seemed to me that I was half asleep but I saw everything I was doing. I saw no spirits but I knew they were using my body and thought. I looked at my hands and fingers; they were going like mad. Then it occurred to me that it was fantastic.

"The papers seemed to pile up fast on the right side of the typewriter. As the days went by, I was doing more and more. At first I was thinking what am I writing about? My mind seemed blank, but I had never felt better in my life. I always locked my door after me and it was locked when I came back. I noticed, though, that there was a blank paper over the pile I had finished and a paperweight on top. It was oblong in shape. As I left my room the next morning I took particular notice of how the paperweight lay on the stack of finished work. When I returned that evening I wanted to see if it had been moved but it had not. But to my surprise my bed had been made. Everything had been dusted and cleaned. I said to myself: 'The spirits are certainly working hard around here.' I heard a loud laugh and the voice said, 'We are. We don't want you to worry about a thing. We are taking care of you, and no harm can come to you. Remember this!'"

Every morning, before sunrise, until December 15, 1881, Newbrough wrote at his Sholes typewriter, at a speed physically almost impossible, considering the crudity of this first typewriter. Finally the manuscript was complete.

In 1882 the book was published. Newbrough kept the very first copy off the press and presented the second copy to his friend Edwin Augustus Davis in appreciation for his assistance over the years.

HOW OAH SPE WAS WRITTEN, VERSION #2

The following account was addressed as a personal letter from John Newbrough to the editor of *The Banner of Light* in Boston Massachusetts. It was placed as a detached insert within the pages of the photocopy version of the 1882 edition printed by Ray Palmer, Amherst, Wisconsin, 1960.

“Some two years ago, Oahspe was mechanically written through my hands by some intelligence other than my own. Many Spiritualists are acquainted with this automatic movement of the hands, independent of one’s own volition. There are thousands and thousands of persons who have this quality. It can also be educated, or rather, the susceptibility to external power can be increased. In my own case I discovered, many years ago, in sitting in circles to obtain spiritual manifestations, that my hands could not lie on the table without flying off into these “tantrums.” Often they would write messages, left or right, backward or forward; nor could I control them any other way than by withdrawing from the table. Sometimes the power thus baffled would attack my tongue, or my eyes, or my ears, and I talked and saw and heard differently from my normal state. Then I went to work in earnest to investigate spiritualism and I investigated over 200 mediums, traveling hundreds of miles for this purpose. Often I took them to my own house and experimented with them to my heart’s content. I found that nearly all of them were subject to this involuntary movement of the hands, or to entrancement. They told me it was angels controlling them. In the course of time, about ten or fifteen years, I began to believe in spiritualism. But I was not satisfied with the communications; I was craving for the light of heaven. I did not desire communications from friends or relatives, or information about earthly things; I wished to learn something about the spirit world; what the angels did, how they traveled, and the general plan of the universe. So after a while I took it into my head that wise and exalted angels would commune better with us if we purified ourselves physically and spiritually. Then I gave up eating flesh and fish, milk and butter, and took to rising before day, bathing twice a day, and occupying a small room alone, where I sat every morning half an hour before sunrise, recounting daily to my Creator my short comings in governing myself in thought and deed. In six years training I reduced myself from two hundred and fifty pounds down to one hundred and eighty; my rheumatism was all gone and I had no more headaches. I became limber and sprightly. A new lease on life came over me.

“Then a new condition of control came upon my hands; instead of the angels holding my hands as formerly, they held their hands over my head, (and they were encloded with sufficient materiality for me to see them), and a light fell upon my own hands as they lay on the table. In the mean time, I had attained to hear audible angel voices near me. I was directed to get a type-

writer which writes by keys like a piano. This I did, and applied myself vigorously to learn it, but with only indifferent success. For two years more the angels propounded to me questions relative to heaven and earth, which no mortal could answer very intelligently. I always look back on these two years as an enigma. Perhaps it was to show me that man is but an ignoramus at best; perhaps I was waiting for constitutional growth to be good. Well, one morning the light struck both hands on the back and they went for the typewriter, for some fifteen minutes, very vigorously. I was told not to read what was printed, and I had worked myself into such a religious fear of losing this new power that I obeyed reverently. The next morning, also before sunrise, the same power came and wrote (or printed rather) again. Again I laid the matter away very religiously, saying little about it to anybody. One morning I accidentally (seemed accidental to me) looked out of the window and beheld the line of light that rested on my hands extending heavenward like a telegraph wire toward the sky. Over my head were three pairs of hands fully materialized; behind me stood another angel with her hand on my shoulders. My looking did not disturb the scene; my hands kept right on, printing — printing.

“For fifty weeks this continued every morning, half an hour or so before sunrise, and then it ceased, and I was told to read and publish the book Oahspe. The peculiar drawings in Oahspe were made with pencil in the same way. A few of the drawings I was told to copy from other books, such as Saturn, the Egyptian ceremonies, etc.

Now during all the while I have pursued my vocation (dentistry), nor has this matter nor my diet (vegetables, fruits, and farinaceous food), detracted any from my health or strength, although I have continued this discipline for upward of ten or more years. I am firmly convinced that there are numberless persons who might attain to marvelous development if they would thus train themselves. A strict integrity to one’s highest light is essential to development. Self-abnegation and purity should be the motto and discipline of every one capable of angel communion.

J. B. NEWBROUGH

New York, January 21, 1883

The differences between the two accounts are obvious. Either the grandson of Davis did not have a good record of the conversation between Newbrough and his grandfather, or Newbrough is styling his report to condition the response of his audience.

These descriptions broaden our view of “spirit” performances. He not only comes as “an angel of light,” he can come as multiple “angels.” He can create beams of light and, seemingly, mechanical effects, although the making of a bed and cleaning of a bedroom does not seem the kind of task in which a spirit being

would engage himself. These, and the placing of a paper weight upon a stack of papers, may have been from Newbrough's imagination, given his intense concentration, or later faulty memory.

The intensity of Newbrough is obvious. He was dedicated. How truly unfortunate he did not understand the source of these "miracles."

ASORDID SPIRITUALIST ACCOUNT

The following account was presented by Newbrough as part of the *Commentary* at the end of *Oahspe*. The first introductory statement is his. The remaining paragraphs are those of the reporter.

I have myself seen angels take on corporeal forms, to all appearance, by the side of mortals. But, rather than boast of my own experience, I here introduce two well-known men of indisputable integrity, Rev. Francis Monck, a natural sar'gis, and the Rev. Archbishop Thomas Colley, M. A, (formerly of the Royal Navy, England). Mr. Colley says:

"Standing forth thus plainly before us, the psychic or spirit-form was seen to grow out of his left side. First, several faces, one after another, of great beauty appeared, and in amazement we saw, and as I was suffered to stand close up to the medium, even touching him, I saw most plainly, several times, a perfect face and form of exquisite womanhood partially issue from Dr. Monck about the region of the heart. Then, after several attempts, a full-formed figure — in a nebulous condition at first, but growing solid as it issued from the medium — left Dr. Monck and stood, a separate individuality, two or three feet off, bound to him by a slender attachment as of gossamer, which at my request, 'Samuel,' in control, severed with the medium's left hand; and there stood embodied a spirit-form of unutterable loveliness, robed in attire, spirit-spun, a meshy web-work from no mortal loom, of a fleeciness inimitable, and of transfiguration whiteness, truly glistening.

"But Dr. Kennedy was now invited to draw equally near and realize more closely with me the marvel of the separate identity of the spirit-form from the medium, and as we stood, looking with all our soul upon the mighty fact of spirit-birth from mortal man, Dr. Monck, still entranced, placed the lovely visitant from the inner world between us, and affording it the support, each of an arm, we advanced with our sweet spirit-companion some steps further into the room. Meanwhile, holding the hand of the spirit-arm that rested on mine, I felt the wrist, palm, fingers and finger nails; it was in every respect a living hand, answering to my touch, yielding to pressure, having nature, weight and substance, and all things pertaining to humanity, but it was damp and stone-cold; and the thought passed through my mind, how, like steam, first invisible, congealed, is then seen as cloudy vapor, which precipitated, may finally take solid form in ice, this figure at my side and, by a somewhat analogous process, been rendered visible and tangible from the vital force, viewless and imponderable

of the medium, being, under the chemistry, not yet understood of the higher life, congealed into the nebulous condition instanced of the form's first appearance, further to solidify into the lovely creature we supported and wistfully beheld.

"Then, after a few minutes further stay, sliding back into the medium, the angel gradually disappeared.

"The next form was none other than Dr. Monck's old earth-friend, fellow-student, brother minister and chief spirit-control, 'Samuel Wheeler.' When he, in like manner issuing forth, first stepped from the medium into separate being, Dr. Monck was unconscious, under control of 'Lily,' and her voice through him contrasted very markedly with the voice of the materialized form — it, to the very syllable, being the voice of 'Samuel' as when speaking through the medium. But this did not satisfy our spirit friend, for the marvel of the night's effort had yet to culminate. Conditions being so good, 'Samuel' thought he might dematerialize and awake Dr. Monck, and then be able to rematerialize with the medium in his normal state, fully alive to all that transpired, and conscious of the astounding fact we were to witness; and successful, beyond all conception of the mystery, was this most unique experiment, for, after the first alarm, Dr. Monck had passed away, and after the pain and nervous snatchings he felt in the process of his friend's evolution from himself had subsided, medium and spirit-form conversed naturally together, and the astonishment and glee of the former was only equaled by our profound sense of inability adequately to grasp at first the vast significance of this amazing demonstration of occult power. Equally with the child-form did 'Samuel Wheeler' show all the attributes of humanity; and, in his case, reason and ripe manhood, as in hers, girlishness and simplicity. He was not unlike the medium in stature, form and bearing; and one of our company having intimately known 'Samuel' in the earth-life (being frequently one of his congregation when our spirit-friend was, as our medium also was, a Baptist minister), unhesitatingly declared that this 'Samuel Wheeler' was that Samuel Wheeler, and none other .

"And now a new sensation was in store for us. A spirit-form, eight inches taller than Dr. Monck, grew from him by degrees, and building itself up into giant proportions, with muscular limbs developed like statuary of bronze, and of the color, there came into disconnected, independent, vigorous life, apart from the medium, an ancient Egyptian. From its general aspect, dress and manner, I addressed it as such at once without a moment's doubt or hesitation. For Ancient Egypt has been a favorite study with me, and in modern Egyptians I have, when in the East, endeavored to trace the ancient masters of Israel and the sciences, and have dreamed amid the ruins of the Temple of Isis, and sketched the blue tuniced and turbined descendant of the Pharaohs, and have pleasant recollections of an Egyptian Fellaah, Zozab, who used to accompany me through the bazaars, and pioneer me through the intricacies of the Suez;

and, if ever Bulwer's Arbaces the Egyptian, in the 'Last Days of Pompeii,' had existence other than in the mind of the author, it was here embodied in the materialized form I handled and closely scrutinized last night.

"The vitality and power of the spirit were remarkable; it walked with manly step and dignified carriage round and about the room, before and behind us, without fear or hesitation; appeared curious about, and leisurely inspected, the furniture and ornaments of the room; took up a chair and placed it on the table; brought us books and other things, and then, taking the chair from the table, placed it close to mine and sat down at my side. Meanwhile, I closely introspected it, and felt its anatomy, the medium standing at my left side while 'Mahedi' (the Egyptian) was seated at my right. I now got the spirit to measure hands, placing its palm on mine. The hand (stone-cold, while the medium's was burning hot) was small, like all Easterns, and the wrist was also small, but the arm was massive, muscular, bronzed and hairy. Its eyes were black and piercing, but not unkindly; its hair lank and jet, and moustaches and beard long and drooping; its features full of life and expression, yet Sphinx-like. Its head-dress was very peculiar, a sort of metal skullcap with an emblem in front, overhanging the brow, which trembled and quivered and glistened. I was suffered to feel it, but, as I did so, it seemed to melt away like a snow-flake under my touch, to grow solid again the moment after."

This report adds to our catalog of spirit performances. Here the apparitions are in more intimate physical contact. They also are in finer "definition." Was this the result of a more experienced medium? Was it due to greater belief on the part of the audience?

The contradictions encountered in this report show a lack of reliable witness on important details. However, those contradictions do not deny the validity of the phenomena.

Several questions arise about these sordid performances.

- The spirit voice of a young woman was used in all three spiritualist sessions: Sylvia, Twilight, and Lily. The purpose of this practice by Caligastia is to set a friendly tone for the meeting. Most individuals in our social order do not perceive a threat from a playful, roguish young woman, or one who exhibits "girlish simplicity."
- There is an obvious concern about severing the ectoplasmic connection to the medium. When Mrs. Daiches walked up and down the room with her ectoplasmic "mother," "father," and "son," did the connection trail behind them? Did Mr. Colley provide a true report of such severing, or did he falsely attempt to confirm the reality of ectoplasmic forms?
- If strict instructions are given to not touch the ectoplasmic forms, since they emanate from the body (mind) of the medium, and touching will disturb the medium, did those "spirit" forms lay their hands upon Mrs. Daiches' arms without her touching them? If so, did Mr. Colley once again distort his report

to demonstrate the reality of those forms? If he reached for the emblem on the skullcap of the Egyptian to find it fade beneath his touch, why would the hands of the "spirit" forms possess such solidity? Were the fingers and nails, "cold to the touch," mere elaboration to once again support the phenomenon he witnessed? Is the ectoplasmic substance part of the mental substance of the medium? Did Marcus Bach really feel the wispy enfoldment and kiss from his "sister?"

- The condition of the spiritualist performance depends upon the trance state of the medium. The medium must release control of his mind to be possessed by the spirits. Therefore, it is not probable that Dr. Monck was able to produce Samuel Wheeler in a fully conscious state and to converse freely with his own mental production.

Many puzzles confront us in our attempts to obtain a tighter grip on the power of this fallen Prince.