

# THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

Divine Wisdom

Brotherhood

Occult Science

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## “I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE”

This statement by Jesus, like others made by him, expresses the consciousness of the demigod functioning in a relatively perfect human personality. Personalities differ as star differs from star in glory. A two-carat diamond is not as valuable as one of ten carats yet be a perfect stone and for its size compare with it in lustre and brilliance. We are told that Jesus was first-born among many brethren, but more important was his assurance to his disciples that they were the light of the world. He neglected no opportunity of reminding them of their equal potentiality with himself. They, like ourselves, were slow to understand their latent possibilities. OUR Father is identical with MY Father, and we are all Sons of the same Father. The Prodigal is as dear to the loving and tender father as the elder brother of the parable. Jesus in the central chapters of the Gospel of John strives to impress his disciples with the identity of their lives and interests with those of himself and of the Father. How else could it be? They and we, each and all of us, form a part of the manifested solar universe, the physical raiment, the garment, as Goethe says, by which we see him, the Lord God Almighty's illusion body. The fact is so simple yet so obvious and so astounding that ordinary minds are dazed and ordinary church goers are so confused with theological twaddle that they are unable to grasp

the simple truth—"in him we live and move and have our being." In *John xvii.* we read—"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us . . . . that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Each of us is a cell in the great cosmic body, as each cell in the human body, whether with honour or dishonour, in blood or brain or bone, in lung or liver or limb, for each of these has its parallel in the vast as in the minor organism. Thus through expansion and evolution we attain from the lowest to the highest and noblest. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Even if this language be largely figurative the essential meaning is plain. In presence of this unity of life and consciousness all theological dogmas become vain and futile. Let me repeat once more the verses from Ephesians iv. which I quoted last November. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherein ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace . . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the

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## H. P. BLAVATSKY, WHITE LOTUS DAY 1947

When all 'the shouting and the tumult dies' concerning the personality of H. P. Blavatsky, one fact of overshadowing importance will emerge like a great rocky crag dominating a countryside—she founded the Theosophical Movement in the modern world.

She may have been unconventional; she may have done all manner of things that shock the sensitivities of persons who have had no experience whatever of the cyclonic force of the human creative spirit in action;—but she did change the world's thinking.

The success of her mission did not arise from any personal failings or faults; its still increasing crescendo is due solely to the fact that the fundamental teachings which she brought to the world are true and are being recognized as true by more and more persons in each succeeding generation. Many Theosophical writers and lecturers are now drawing the attention of their fellow students and the public to the amazing corroboration in modern atomics of the Secret Doctrine teachings respecting the nature of matter and force. Only in this century could such corroboration be found. In the past century there was nothing in the materialistic science of the day to justify H.P.B.'s position—it was as though someone were talking about sunlight to a people who had lived in darkness. No wonder she was scoffed at and derided, this presumptuous breaker of sacred scientific images! All that is now changed and the impartial student can read the Secret Doctrine in terms of modern science and find that at least one of the bases of the Doctrine teachings has been substantiated. The eternal duality of matter and force has been resolved as H.P.B. predicted and 'the illusive nature of matter' is now admitted.

We should remember however, that there are other dualities mentioned by H.P.B. which have not yet been so resolved by modern science. That life and consciousness ride upon and are inseparable from, matter and energy is another fundamental Secret Doctrine teaching. This is something which science has not yet touched upon and perhaps the world must wait for another century before this can be demonstrated in a scientific laboratory, or be accepted as an hypothesis essential to scientific philosophy. That a new philosophy will be born out of modern research is inevitable.

That new philosophy—or rather, an old philosophy told in terms of its age—will also be affected by the changing attitude of the world toward world brotherhood and religion. Think of the tremendous changes which have occurred in these fields since 1891! The first straggling rays of a sense of global responsibility and world unity presage the dawn of a new era. No one can say definitely that all this came about because the Theosophical Movement was founded, but equally no one can deny that it did happen after the Movement was born into the world.

Every once in so often there comes into incarnation a man who leaves his mark on his generation. Such a man may lead a very ordinary outer life in a small community and in his whole life, nothing really outstanding ever occurs. He is born, lives and then dies, leaving perhaps a reputation as a kindly, wise and just man. And yet something very important does happen because he was in the world. As a shopkeeper, or an artisan, as a doctor or teacher, he may have set a high standard of probity, judgment, tolerance and selflessness which affected and profoundly influenced—without anything being said

about it—a judge, a councillor, a member of parliament or some other person in high authority. Something which he said or did may be remembered in a cabinet meeting, and without anyone knowing why or how it happened, that man's attitude towards life may become embodied in the laws of the land.

And such I think, has been the effect of the movement founded by H. P. B. Quietly, little groups of students of Theosophy all over the world, have been thinking and talking about the teachings and endeavouring to put them into practise. And now after seventy-two years, it is no longer strange and queer to think that way. Many more persons today are influenced by the Theosophical attitude that can be estimated from the Society's membership rolls. One of these days, that attitude will be the norm and those who then cling tenaciously to former tight little frames of reference will be regarded as subnormal.

White Lotus Day is the time when Theosophists remember especially their debt to H. P. Blavatsky, the Light Bringer. Every Theosophical Lodge in every Society in the Movement, owes its existence to the fact that she lived and gave her life to the task of bringing the Ancient Wisdom to modern men. In this age, when the concepts of reincarnation and karma are appearing daily in contemporary literature; when science is moving ever closer to occult postulates; when philosophical writers are giving serious attention to mysticism; when psychologists are investigating man's extra-sensory perceptions and when the necessity of world unity is forcing the nations to consider some practical form of world brotherhood, the message of H.P.B. is bringing fruit. The Theosophist, like St. Paul of old, can declare with confidence in spite of all adverse criticism. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every

one that believeth . . . . For therein is revealed the righteousness of God by faith to faith."

D. W. B.

### MRS. WILLIAMS' "PRIESTESS"

(Concluded from Page 52)

Readers like an honest book. Mrs. Williams' production cannot lay claim to such a character whether as a record or as a critical estimate. Even the title is misleading and intended to mislead. There is not and never was anything of the priestess about Madame Blavatsky; she had neither creed nor dogma to propagate nor pardon for sin to dispense. The statement that she founded a new religion is a deliberate lie. Readers must be prepared to check up on such falsehoods; all one can do is to warn the enquirer that Theosophy is the truth underlying all religions, and will be the cornerstone of all future religions. The work of Madame Blavatsky was a study of comparative religion, a scientific attitude which all the churches abhor. Hence the thousands of passages she quotes, designated plagiarisms by Mr. Coleman, who probably did not know any better. When I was a little boy or seven or eight, I was recovering from an attack of croup. Sitting in the bedroom by a fire in an open grate, I was asked what I would like to read. The Book of Revelation, I replied. It always had a fascination for me, I did not know it was made up of what Mrs. Williams would call "plagiarisms", but which are intended to illustrate the unity and universality of the Secret Doctrine. The Apocalypse is a perfect patchwork or mosaic of texts from the Old Testament and the Book of Enoch. It is in fact a study in comparative religion. And this is what Mrs. Williams' one talent is lent to denounce. No wonder *The Voice of the Silence* is beyond her range.

When, after studying Theosophy for two years in Edinburgh, I crossed the Atlantic once more determined to spend my life for truth. I never met Madame Blavatsky so was not glamoured nor hypnotized by her. I felt unworthy to enter her presence. Perhaps Mrs. Williams could explain what sort of experience in life causes one person to see mud and another to see stars. Not long since I re-read *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, and I have been wondering what sort of a dish of carrion Mrs. Williams would present if she applied the method to Augustine which she used on Blavatsky. Count Tolstoi also had a rakish youth and with such historic detail what might she not accomplish when she has made so much out of mere gossip about Blavatsky.

There does not appear to be any direct record of the number of pieces of silver which the Madras missionaries were willing to pay the Coulombs to betray their mistress. But the transaction was effected and the Coulombs, having nothing to betray, had to invent something. So they forged some letters and designed a trick letter box which was to be placed in the wall of Madame Blavatsky's room, so that, as alleged, Mahatma letters might be dropped in from the next room with the pretence of phenomenal delivery. Coulomb was interrupted in his nefarious work which was never completed. Mrs. Williams seems to think that this story with various embellishments lends corroboration to her theory that Madame Blavatsky was a fraud. The Coulombs knew better, and finding that the missionaries had no more cash to dispense, soon disappeared from view.

Mahatmas are a delusion in the opinion of Mrs. Williams. This is unfortunate for her as it narrows her conceptions of life and of the potentialities of evolution. As a child I was familiar with the idea though in my early vocabulary they were called prophets. Life

is very wonderful and has produced Orpheus and Plato and the Buddha and Lao Tze and Jesus and Francis Bacon and the promise was pledged that even greater things should be done, for the resources of life are illimitable. Nor can anyone suppose that rank or condition or poverty or any kind of circumstances can prevent the appearance of the Wonder Men of life when the time has arrived for them to do their stimulating and inspiring work. Melchizedek and Balaam, Moses and Joshua, David and the two Isaiahs, Elijah and Elisha, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Jonah and Daniel were all household heroes in my childhood, and when I often asked the question why are there no prophets now, my mother was wiser than Mrs. Williams and replied, perhaps it is because we are not ready to meet them. The churches do not encourage real prophets or mahatmas, and there is a well-founded objection among the laity to yield divine honours to those who lay claim to such distinction. Distinct instruction is given on this point in the Book of Revelation, xxii. 9, when the angel or messenger who showed John his vision and John had heard and seen it, he fell down to worship at the feet of the messenger who in verse 16 reveals himself as Jesus and tells John: See thou do it not for I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren the prophets . . . It is this spirit of true humility that distinguishes the true prophets from those who may not enter the city of peace, the outcasts "and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

Fifty years or fifty millenia make little or no difference in the nobler ideals of the human race. They are maintained and supported by the brightest and rarest of men in incarnation. But to lower intellectual levels where moral standards are less stable in their variations often falling far below the lofty altruistic conceptions of unselfish human service and the Golden Rule, yielding to the pressures of the moment

and to such shoddy catchwords as the so-called law of supply and demand, and leading eventually to envy, hatred and malice and all uncharitableness and the ruinous wars of commercial and military competition. Ruin to the race lies in this direction. Every shallow intellectualist who thrusts his spear into the moral ideals of his time risks endangering the whole structure of human evolution.

Mrs. Williams' beautifully printed and well-appointed volume is such an attack on the ideals and heroism of the human race, humanity owes it to itself, and the publishers (Knopf) owe it to humanity to give equal currency to the Message of the Mahatmas, the profoundest appeal made in our age to the spirit and power of the human heart.

A. E. S. S.

## PROFESSOR WOOD AT MONTREAL

*Editor, The Canadian Theosophists*—Dear Sir, Having long awaited and anticipated the visit of Professor Ernest E. Wood, it is very satisfactory to find that the realization was much greater than the anticipation.

We had good attendance and very appreciative audiences in Montreal. Two public lectures were given at Victoria Hall, Westmount; we had two lectures in our Lodge, also a social gathering on Sunday afternoon.

The lecture on "The Resurrection of Man" given at the "Church of all Nations" on Easter Sunday was most inspiring. Professor Wood drew a picture of man having already developed an appreciation and love of nature, who had also gone a long way in the understanding and the love of animal life, and it now remained for man to learn more of Brotherhood, and the love of man to his fellowman.

Professor Wood does not share the opinion held by many that the development and use of atomic energy would bring catastrophe and ruin to humanity. The knowledge of the devastation that would be incurred should atomic energy be wrongly used has brought millions of people to the realization of the common danger and has awakened a feeling of compassion and love in their hearts. Herein lies our safety, our growth as well as our goal, for "God is love", and as Professor Wood expressed it, "Love is God". In the future as in the past man will be led by Divine Power to greater manifestations of love and brotherhood.

I am sure that all who heard Professor Wood appreciated his clarity of thought, the natural fluidity of speech; and sincerity born of conviction. He spoke not in terms of theory, for theory is old and grey; his words were alive as the green tree of life.

Yet it was in my own home and that of my friends that I learned most from Professor and Mrs. Wood; what is practised is more eloquent than what is only preached.

There came but one shadow over my mind, I thought of brother Theosophists throughout Canada, in Edmonton, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver and other cities, who were not privileged to meet Professor and Mrs. Wood. I trust that when they come back to Canada (may it be soon) that the General Executive will find ways and means of arranging that Professor and Mrs. Wood visit all the Lodges in Canada, so that every member may have an opportunity to meet them, and know some thing of the fullness and richness of the life as expressed by these two noble characters who have lived among many people and in many lands.

D. B. Thomas,  
President, Montreal Lodge.

## "I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE"

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stature of the fulness of Christ." How are we to attain the measure of this stature? St. Paul in his epistle to Titus, iii. 5, recalls how we are saved by the washing of reincarnation. He uses the technical Greek word, as Jesus does, *palingenesis*, but, the bishops and translators render it "regeneration"; thus concealing the truth. A. E. S. S.

## WALT WHITMAN

*Poet of American Democracy*

"In order to protect the liberties of a nation, we must protect the individual. A democracy is a nation of free individuals. The individuals are not to be sacrificed to the nation. The nation exists only for the purpose of guarding and protecting the individuality of men and women. Walt Whitman has told us that: 'the whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single individual—namely to YOU'."

The above quotations are taken from Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll's lecture, *Liberty in Literature* which he delivered as a benefit to Walt Whitman on October 21st, 1890. Ingersoll was a friend of many years' standing and at Whitman's funeral service he gave the final moving oration, ending with the simple words, 'I loved him living and I love him still.' Whitman died on March 26th, 1892, at Camden where he had resided since 1873, following a serious illness—a full cycle of nineteen years.

Whitman was born on Long Island on May 31st 1819, and with his birth there came into incarnation a soul possessed with one great ideal. A short edition of his *Leaves of Grass* appeared in 1855 and was either ignored or scoffed at until Emerson recognized the genius that flamed there. Emerson was but one of the great men of the age who saw in *Leaves of Grass* a new and vital mes-

sage for mankind. He and Thoreau often visited Whitman. Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke (of *Cosmic Consciousness* fame) John Burroughes, Edward Carpenter, Colonel Ingersoll, Tennyson, Rosseti, Swinburne, John Addington Symonds, were but a few of his many friends. His works were translated in his lifetime, into German, Italian, French, Danish and Russian, and in each country there were men and women who responded to his spirit.

What was the peculiar genius of this man? One might as well ask, What is the genius of the Universe, for Whitman expressed the cosmic life force permeating all forms and reaching its most complete manifestation in men and women. Above all he was concerned with the dignity and importance of the individual as an essential part of the universe, insisting upon the right of the individual to *be* an individual, while at the same time reserving to all *other* individuals their own freedom of growth and expression. This he called Democracy and it is the existence of this freedom-equality concept which gives to political and social democracy its curious fluidic and contradictory quality, now tending to one extreme and now to the other. John Buchan in *Memory-Hold-the-Door* said, "It (democracy) is primarily a spiritual testament, from which certain political and economic orders naturally follow."

For his universal ideas, Whitman required a form of poetry which departed from all previous literary forms, one which abandoned rhyme but moved in a deep, surging rhythm of its own. *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*, one of his great poems, is a splendid example of this, and so also is *When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloomed*, one of the loveliest things he ever wrote.

To honour the memory of this great companion of the way one might quote from a number of his poems, but *To You* seems very appropriate.

## TO YOU

Whoever you are holding me now in hand,  
 Without one thing all will be useless.  
 I give you fair warning before you attempt me further,  
 I am not what you supposed, but far different.

Who is he that would become my follower?  
 Who would sign himself a candidate for my affections?  
 The way is suspicious, the results uncertain, perhaps destructive,  
 You would have to give up all else, I alone would expect to be your sole  
 and exclusive standard,  
 Your novitiate would even then be long and exhausting,  
 The whole past theory of your life and all conformity to the lives around  
 you would have to be abandon'd,  
 Therefore release me now, before troubling yourself any further  
 —Let go your hand from my shoulders,  
 Put me down, and depart on your way.

Or else, by stealth, in some wood, for trial,  
 Or back of a rock, in the open air,  
 (For in any roof'd room of a house I emerge not—nor in company,  
 And in libraries I lie as one dumb, a gawk, or unborn, or dead)  
 But just possibly with you on a high hill—first watching lest any person,  
 for miles around, approach unawares,  
 Or possibly with you sailing at sea, or on the beach of the sea, or some  
 quiet island,  
 Here to put your lips upon mine I permit you,  
 With the comrade's long-dwelling kiss, or the new husband's kiss,  
 For I am the new husband, and I am the comrade.

Or, if you will, thrusting me beneath your clothing,  
 Where I may feel the throb of your heart, or rest upon your hip,  
 Carry me when you go forth over land or sea;  
 For thus, merely touching you, is enough—is best,  
 And thus, touching you, would I silently sleep and be carried eternally.

But these leaves conning, you con at peril,  
 For these leaves and me, you will not understand,  
 They will elude you at first and still more afterward—I will certainly elude  
 you,  
 Even while you should think you had unquestionably caught me, behold!  
 Already you see I have escaped from you.

For it is not for what I have put into it that I have written this book,  
 Nor is it by reading it you will acquire it,  
 Nor do those know me who admire me, and vauntingly praise me,  
 Nor will the candidates for my love (unless at most a very few), prove  
 victorious,  
 Nor will my poems do good only—they will do just as much evil, perhaps  
 more;  
 For all is useless without that which you may guess at many times and not  
 hit—that which I hinted at;  
 Therefore release me, and depart on your way.

# "BROTHERHOOD MUST PREVAIL"

BY DAVID ROCKEFELLER

In New York City, the home of the United Nations, International House has demonstrated for many years that international fellowship can and does work. It provides a convincing answer to those of little faith who feel that the United Nations cannot succeed because of clashing national, political or religious differences. The student centers at International House, New York, and its sister institutions in other cities represent veritable self-renewing United Nations in miniature.

Here the experience of 23 years has proved that men and women students from as many as 72 different nations, representing every culture, faith and skin-colour on the globe, can live, work and play together in harmony and enthusiasm, melting their contrasts and upbringing and beliefs into wholesome and wholehearted good fellowship and into a rich and productive sense of world citizenship.

That is the encouraging lesson of the International Houses. The New York House at 500 Riverside Drive overlooks the Hudson River and serves as host to students attending New York colleges and universities. It has alumni in virtually every country in the world. In addition to the New York House which was founded in 1924, there are now three other International Houses. One of these, opened in 1930, forms part of the University of California at Berkeley. Another is associated with the University of Chicago. A third, *La Maison Internationale*, is part of the *Cite Universitaire* in Paris.

### A Chance Greeting

These experiments in international living began on a spring morning in 1910, when Harry Edmonds, a YMCA official of New York, flung a cheery "Good Morning!" to a Chinese student

he didn't know. The student turned impulsively to the stranger who had hailed him and said: "Do you know that you are the first person who has greeted me in the three weeks I have been in New York?"

That incident was the inspiration which led to regular Sunday Suppers at the Edmonds' home for many of the hundreds of lonely foreign students in New York; to the founding a few years later of the Intercollegiate Cosmopolitan Club; and, in 1924, to the opening of International House, New York, made possible by a gift of over \$2,500,000 by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Later gifts from Mr. Rockefeller were used to start the similar Houses at Berkeley, Chicago and Paris.

In terms of the mutual understanding that it has brought to an ever increasing body of students from every land, the investment has been justified many times over. For International House, New York, quickly made one thing clear: while students from different countries naturally bring with them some of the prejudices, and even hostility, of one country or region toward another, these prejudices tend to disappear after a few months of living together, working on what they discover are common problems and toward common goals.

### The Art of International Living

Any student from any country in the world may apply for admission either as a resident or nonresident member of International House. The only considerations that determine the question of his or her admission are: individual merit of the applicant, a desire for a broad geographic representation, and limitations of space.

The Boards of the various Houses seek to give the students the broadest



possible opportunities for individual development, both in their fields of study and in the practical art of international living. There is a considerable measure of student government at International House, and various student bodies participate in discussion group programs, language classes, study groups, international libraries and a film forum.

Today, scattered to the four corners of the earth there are at least 35,000 people who have lived in one of the four International Houses and have thus had the very real experience of international living. The New York House alone has 20,000 alumni. Quite a number of former residents are today active in the United Nations, both as members of the Secretariat, and as national representatives.

#### The Philosophy of International House

The philosophy underlying International House is based on the precept that peace is the product of knowledge and understanding and that brotherhood must prevail throughout the world. Men and women who have lived under its roof know that the peoples of the world can live in harmony, despite prejudices and differences, just as they, as students, lived with fellow students of every race, religion and political philosophy.

The students, the alumni and the trustees of International House feel that today they face a challenge to crusade for the cause of fellowship among nations. They are mapping out an educational program which will strengthen the experience of international living by providing ever wider knowledge and understanding of the problems which the world must solve if it is to survive.

International House, which started as an experiment in international living, has proved that the experiment works.

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The author, David Rockefeller is the youngest of the five sons of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and is the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of International House, New York.]

## SPIRIT AND MATTER ARE ONE

There are a number of sincere, thoughtful and kindly students of Theosophy who maintain that the first three chapters of the Gita may be taken literally, in justification of war. How is this conclusion arrived at? and is it tenable?

Many Hindus, we are told, take the Gita quite literally with regard to performing one's duty in going to war. A great many professing Christians sanction war by their scripture, also. These views do not justify the student of Theosophy for doing likewise; for thoughtful searching into the scriptures of the world reveals that they are allegorical portions of the one "Eternal Gospel". This, all the great commentators have assured us to be true. One quotation will be sufficient, perhaps to confirm this statement: "In short, no Egyptian papyrus, no Indian olla, no Assyrian tile, no Hebrew scroll, should be read and interpreted literally." (Blavatsky-S.D. Vol. 1).

The apologist for a literal interpretation of these three chapters generally argues somewhat like this: "It is possible to consider that one's so-called enemy is part of the One Life, the God-consciousness, and yet be able, coolly and deliberately to kill the physical body, because it is *only* the physical body which died, and which one kills, as a supposed duty to his nation; and moreover, one knows well that what happens to the physical body is of no consequence

whatever—'never the Spirit was born' etc."

This opinion can be countered with the suggestion that, having achieved the state of consciousness where all men are realized as parts of the God-consciousness, it would be utterly impossible to kill, for no one would be an enemy. "Well," comes back the reply to this objection: "what would you do if your mother, sister, wife or sweetheart were assaulted? Do you mean to say that you would stand still and watch, and not protect them? A fine man you'd be." This reply scarcely ever varies, so deeply embedded is the suggestion, in the subconscious, apparently. It seems to be *the* reason par excellence for war.

Apart from this hypothetical problem being a purely personal one, and the reaction also being purely personal—just what has the protecting of the physical bodies of ones female relatives against assault to do with going to war, at the command of the government; to kill the bodies of men, women and children whom one has never seen, to protect the physical body of the nation?

It is true, of course, that the assault argument has been used, as stated above, to whip up proper zeal, as many other suggestions are used to prepare the young, idealistic youth. Men would not go to war unless they were conditioned, emotionally. In 1914 they went "to make the world safe for democracy" and in 1939 for "our way of life" and in the third war, which seems to be starting in Greece and Turkey (in order to prevent Russia from possessing the Dardenelles) it is "To save the starving people from the 'Red Menace'" that money is being poured into these countries for military purposes. The money strangely enough, is not going for food for the starving Greeks. Soon there will be a Crusade—a Holy War against Russia—for "religious freedom" no doubt, and to this end our press and

priests will propagandize the young men again.

Is it logical and consistent to argue for war on the grounds that it is only the physical body and not the real man who is killed; and show concern for the physical bodies of one's female relatives? After all, according to this argument it is only the body which will be assaulted—the insult cannot touch the real self. "The same thing applies to the nation or country.

Should the one who holds the bodies of men lightly, feel perturbed for the physical body of his country? the rivers and forests, mountains and valleys and colonial possessions? The real country is the untouched inner selves of its many people, and cannot be harmed.

There are those commentators of the Gita who would not agree that the first three chapters possess a literal meaning. Charles Johnston and Shri Krishna Prem would not agree with this rendering of the allegory of the battle. Where does it come from then? Mrs. Besant seems to be the main source of a literal interpretation, and she has obviously influenced many students. This is not to say that she does not see the deeper significance too—it would be most unfair to charge her with that blindness. She implies a literal meaning together with the allegorical one, and many persons have perhaps misunderstood the implication, and have been content to rest there, instead of thinking the thing through, and getting behind the symbolism. Mrs. Besant says, for instance: "Have no personal interest in the event; carry out the duty imposed by the position in life; realize that Isvara, at once Lord and Law, is the doer, working out the mighty evolution that ends in bliss and peace; be identified with Him in devotion, and then perform duty as duty, fighting without passion or desire, without anger or hatred; thus ... yoga is accomplished and the soul is free." If that much of her commentary is really

studied it makes very little sense if taken literally. Compare it with the following words, taken from an article, in the first bound volume of the "Word" magazine, by Dr. Frantz Hartmann (p. 311) "Cold blooded killing, even if legalized by law is a worse crime than a murder committed in the heat of passion, and as according to the law of Divine justice, the consequences of every evil falls on its originator, those consequences consist in creating impurities in the spiritual atmosphere of the country, which produce moral and even physical diseases . . . Even a superficial acquaintance with the constitution of man in his aspect as an ensouled being goes to show that the power which lifted the arm of the murderer and caused the killing, namely his will and thought, cannot be destroyed. Ideas cannot be killed, and the instinct or will-force which executes them survives after the death of the physical form. Not only does an evil thought not die when the body dies; but it becomes more free in its action after such an event and is then no longer restricted or guided by reason. It becomes a blind force, a current of thought capable to enter any sensitive organism and thus obsess and induce other persons to commit a similar crime. . . ." This is perfectly good doctrinaire theosophy; and together with teaching on karma (which can be described in three words as: "means determine ends") makes a fairly complete and rounded out picture. Now, do we believe our own teachings? If we do, then surely we can see the futility of war, not to mention the inadvisability of taking scriptural utterances literally.

In going back to the Gita, suppose the emphasis is shifted to the ethical implications of the first three chapters. Try to read them literally with this in mind now: Arjuna is preparing for war. War in that period was totally different to what it is now. It was a matter of evenly matched men driving chariots;

and trained for the purpose. Castes were not all mixed up apparently, as they are now, where the sudra has to do most of the fighting. In spite of the circumstances, and of the more or less sporting chance for survival, Arjuna begins to question the ethics of war. That very questioning (taking it literally) made war, for him, unethical. It is only when men do not question their motive and really believe in the action that it is right for them to perform it, for they act through idealism or good faith; but it is no longer that when they argue as he does here. Arjuna is in despair and along comes Krishna (an avatar of the one Life, of Bliss, Peace, and Truth) and offers to be his charioteer. Substitute the chariot for a bomber and then try to think of the Lord Krishna at the controls, flying the ship while Arjuna drops bombs on helpless women and children in the course of a "saturation" raid. If the imagination will not permit us to picture such a blasphemous suggestion—let us go back to the Indian battlefield, and even here we will find it impossible to picture Krishna consenting to aid one man against all the other "sparks of the one flame". We can remind ourselves though, of the bishops who bless battleships and prayed to their god to give them the victory!

Arjuna says: "These would I not kill, though they slay me, O slayer of Madhu, even for the kingdom of the three worlds, much less this earth." and again: "How can we be happy if we kill our own kin . . ." Then Krishna comforts him with some of the most beautiful thought and philosophy of the Gita. For sheer poetic beauty there is no equal to some of these phrases: "Thou hast grieved for those who need no grief" . . . "Know that to be imperishable" . . . "The lord of the body dwells ever immortal in the body of each . . ." etc., etc. And then, to go on with the folly of taking this literally, Krishna, as an

anthropomorphic god, proceeds to tempt Arjuna, as Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. He implants fear by saying: "But if thou shalt not fight this righteous fight, then failing in duty and honour, thou wilt incur sin." He taunts him also with cowardice and appeals to his personal pride and ambition: "And men will tell of thy lasting dishonour, and for one who has stood in honour, ill-fame is worse than death. The warriors in their chariots will think thou hast retreated from the battle through fear, and thou shalt come to light esteem among those who held thee high."

Taken literally this would correspond to the personality saying to the Inner Self: "Don't bother trying to get rid of these faults, passions, vices, selfishness, conventional ways of living; because it will be too difficult, and people will mock you." But can any of this be taken literally? Surely there is no sense in the chapters whatsoever, if so taken. Are not these symbols age-old? The battlefield the conscious and unconscious nature; the chariot representing the body or personality; the horses the senses; and Krishna the Higher Self or Atma; and Arjuna the soul awakening to the Inner Light?

Those chapters, wonderfully condensed, compared to some allegories, and depicting the twofold meaning of cosmic truth and conflict within the soul of man, also show the conflict between the waking and subconscious states of man. One is reminded of Blake's "Jerusalem". The whole long, so-called "prophetic" work is just the same allegory; the same search and conflict, with a different symbolism, but strikingly like the Gita battlefield.

Just as the Gita teaches that "This lord of the body dwells ever immortal in the body of each" or in modern words, the immanence of God in man; that the body is the temple of the divine, so also Blake taught that everything

that lived was holy. His disciple, Max Plowman, arriving at the position of Arjuna, right on a battlefield, in 1917 wrote as follows, resigning his commission. This letter, from which extracts are made, was read at his court martial:

"I am resigning my commission because, while I cannot comprehend a transcendent God, I believe that God is incarnate in every human being, and that so long as life persists in the human body, soul and body are one and inseparable, God being the life of both. From which it follows that killing men is killing God. I believe that when it is realized that the body is the outward manifestation of God and that divinity and humanity are synonomous, men will hold in the utmost abhorrence the terrible sacrilege of war or capital punishment. Hence I believe if I now continue to act as a soldier I should be guilty of the greatest crime it is possible for a human being to commit . . . . Murder . . . rape . . . treachery are venial sins compared with the crime of calmly resolving to destroy the lives of unknown persons . . . for the solitary crime of being obedient to the laws of their own nation."

But, some will say: what about our duty to the country? Don't we have to go to war if we are commanded to? If, of course, duty to one's country comes first, and above all else, there is nothing to say. Some may love their country dearly and yet refuse to kill at the command of the government in power. For instance, read what Dick Sheppard and Lawrence Housman felt on this subject: From a book called "What Can We Believe?" the following letters were exchanged in 1939:

Lawrence Housman writes: "I suppose it is not usual to think of Rome, all through its history, as the matrix of one part of the body of Christ, and Greece of another, and England . . . of another; and of these as all having to

die and rise again from the dead before the true spiritual part of them can become manifest to the world. Most nations die, I suppose, because of their sins; but if one nation died of its righteousness, as the Christ of history died upon the Cross, what a wonderful new Incarnation that would be, and what a wonderful new faith it would prove to be for the troubled nations; it might convert nation-worship back to Christianity again."

To this letter Dick Sheppard replied: "I, too, believe that war can only be ended by some great Power laying down its life, as Christ did on the Cross, for the World's sake, and I too, who yield to none in love of my Country, would be proud if it went down for that great sake."

If these sentiments are too frightening, too terrible to contemplate, and we too fearful to entertain them—let us at least admit it. But, let us not call upon the Scriptures to justify our belief in war and nationalism.

And if we should forget that Spirit and Matter are one let us remember what Blavatsky said: "Matter after all, is nothing more than the sequences of our own states of consciousness, and Spirit an idea of psychic intuition." In another place in the same 1st Volume of the Secret Doctrine she states: "With right knowledge, or at any rate with a confident conviction that our neighbours would no more hurt us than we would think of harming them, two-thirds of the world's evils would vanish into thin air. Were no man to hurt his brother, Karma-Nemesis would have neither cause to work for, nor weapons to act through. It is the constant presence in our midst of every element of strife and opposition, and the division of races, nations, tribes, societies and individuals into Cains and Abels, wolves and lambs, that is the chief cause of the 'Ways of providence'."

Margot E. Dustan.

## ANOTHER'S WHEEL

Use carefully all that you have.  
Do not abuse your virtues.  
Cast not your tools  
Into dismay.

Destroy nothing but untruth;  
Construct with understanding

And you may.  
It does us ill to kill  
A love

That hovers over ever near,  
So does it do us ill

To waste away  
The usage of our tools.  
We only hamper and delay  
Ourselves

When we but throw  
Our tools into another's wheel.

For then  
We have no tools  
To build constructively,  
We must sit aside and wait  
Until some other tools appear.

Meanwhile,  
Time passes and with it  
Golden opportunities  
For lack of instruments  
Beneath our hands.

We sit and watch them pass,  
Sorrowful and grieving  
That they do.

But that is retribution,  
The reins in Karma's hands.

It is true and well we know  
We do not wish a thing

Until it's gone,  
And thus we learn

In action—  
How much easier it is  
To learn by looking on!

VIS.

Camp Hill, Penna.

✻ ✻ ✻

"Armed with the key of Charity, of love and tender mercy, thou art secure before the gate of Dana, the gate that standeth at the entrance of the Path."—  
The Voice of the Silence.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Much interest was aroused in Toronto by the visit of Mr. James S. Perkins the National President of the Theosophical Society in America. It was the first occasion since the formation of the Canadian Society that the head of the American Society has visited Toronto. I had the pleasure of introducing him to the members of the Toronto Lodge on Sunday, April 6th when a large and appreciative audience responded warmly to his engaging personality and extremely erudite address which included an Easter message full of hope and earnestness for a happy rapprochement between the Sections working alongside for the good of Theosophy.

\* \* \* \*

It is with much regret I report the passing of two members who died recently, Mrs. Lillian Wisdom of Vancouver and Mr. Harry Emsley of London, Ont. Mrs. Wisdom died on April 1st at the advanced age of Eighty-six years. She came to Canada from England in 1910 and joined the Toronto Lodge in 1920 being demitted to the Vancouver Lodge in 1922 when she left to be domiciled there. Always very active in the affairs of the Society she often contributed to the Canadian Theosophist, and some verses written by her not long ago sent to me by the President of the Vancouver Lodge have been passed on to the editor for insertion in a forthcoming issue. She left two sons to mourn her loss, one in Montreal, the other in Vancouver, to both we extend our sympathy and condolences. Mr. Harry Emsley was also an old member of the Toronto Lodge but resident for some years in London, Ont. He passed away after a long illness on April 5th. Our sympathy and condolences are extended to the family in their sad bereavement.

\* \* \* \*

That the United Nations Organization should have extended an invitation to the Theosophical Society to sit in on their Council on a "Consultative Status" is not only important in itself but is very encouraging in its implications by the fact that that great body has recognized us in the field of endeavour which is our first great aim and object. It recognizes the fact that the Theosophical Society is definitely of an international character, and rightly so, for it has forty National Societies in various parts of the world and over thirty thousand adherents. Its voice should therefore carry much weight and influence in the deliberations of that Department of Social Affairs which the U.N.O. is organizing for the purpose of bringing Peace and Brotherhood to this distraught and changing world. We look forward with intense interest to the outcome of these deliberations.

E. L. T.

## THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE

The General Executive met on Sunday afternoon, May 4th, at 52 Isabella Street, Toronto. Messrs. Barr, Dustan, Kinman, Smythe, Thomas and the General Secretary being present. The Financial Statement showed that only by very careful management could the immediate commitments of the Society be met. The effect of the General Secretary's appeal made after the previous meeting for funds was quite small and in view of the fact that the cost of producing the magazine will be considerably increased after June next makes it abundantly clear that very serious consideration will have to be given the matter if we are to carry on as heretofore. In a discussion as to the feelings of the Executive in regard to suggestions as to when and where the next Fraternalization Convention should be held it was considered that the most promising place and time would be at New York

or Boston sometime next spring. The magazine was placed in the hands of the Editorial Committee which was formed last year with Mr. Dudley Barr as Chairman and Mr. Frank Sutherland as an additional member. Correspondence from Adyar in relation to the Besant Centenary project was brought forward but no action taken. The next meeting was arranged for Sunday, July 6th, 1947.

### MISHAP TO A LETTER

The appended letter was mislaid and only turned up after months of delay. An explanation and apology having been sent to Mr. Krishnamurti, he replied courteously, leaving it to our judgment whether we should print it now. Our readers will be glad to have it.

A. E. S. S.

Ojai, California,  
September 26, 1946.

Dear Sir:

By chance I saw *The Canadian Theosophist* of May 1946, in which notes of Sarobia discussions of 1940 were published.

I hope you do not mind if I point out that those who really wish to spread these thoughts should enable the reader to go to the books from which extracts have been taken, then the impression is not given that these teachings are sectarian and especially theosophical.

Since you were good enough to print these notes, may I point out that the published source should have been acknowledged. In this way the reader could, if he so wished, acquaint himself with other Talks which have been published, as that also seems to have been your object in making these ideas known.

yours very sincerely,

J. Krishnamurti.

### THE BREAKERS OF MOULDS

In this May issue are presented articles on three individuals who in their age, broke the tight narrow moulds of human thought to set free the spirit that is within man.

H. P. Blavatsky was the lightbearer of this age who started her work in America in 1875.

Walt Whitman was born in America and all lovers of The Good Gray Poet honour his memory in his birth month.

Thomas Paine has been included because he too was a mould breaker and one who also performed the greater part of his work in America. H. P. Blavatsky came to that country and started a revolution in religious, philosophical and scientific thinking. Tom Paine came and started a revolution in political and social thinking; later he wrote *The Age of Reason*, smashing at the religious moulds which had been imposed upon mankind. He came to America in 1774 and in two months was editing a small magazine. His social ideas were very advanced. He wrote vehement articles against slavery, denounced war, urged an international federation of nations; he advocated old age pensions, more rational divorce laws and women's rights.

Tom Paine's chief writings, *Commonsense*, *The Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*, together with most of *The Crisis Papers* are printed in the combined books *The Selected Works of Tom Paine* and *Citizen Tom Paine* by Howard Fast, in the Modern Library series.

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## OFFICE NOTES

Isolated students and those unable to have access to Theosophical literature should avail themselves of the Traveling Library conducted by the Toronto Theosophical Society. There are no charges except for postage on the volumes loaned. For particulars write to the Librarian, 52 Isabella Street, Toronto, Ont.

\* \* \*

Saskatchewan's Bill of Rights Legislation designed to wipe out racial, religious and colour discrimination and to establish a code of fundamental freedoms, is of deep importance, not only to the Province which sponsored it but also to the other Provinces of the Dominion.

The act provides that every person in the Province, irrespective of race, creed, religion, colour or ethnic or national origin, shall enjoy certain rights—freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom from arbitrary imprisonment and freedom to vote according to one's conscience. "If these inalienable rights die in a country" said the attorney-general "democracy dies with them. To prevent them from being commonplace and platitudes, it is felt desirable to give them a place in our statute law." The residents of Saskatchewan are of thirty-three races and of various religions; against this background the advanced legislation should receive a fair test.

\* \* \*

The *American Theosophist* carries in its April issue an article by the President on the administration of Adyar Headquarters. The article is an answer to the question often asked "Why does the Society not live within its income; why are there annual deficits?" The President gives detailed, comprehensive answers, and points out that the problem of finances has been made more difficult this year by the imposition of taxes for the first time by Corporation of Madras.

\* \* \*

The United Nations World from which the article "Brotherhood Must Prevail" has been reprinted, made its first appearance in February 1947. It is a splendid magazine, 80 pages, well printed, illustrated and carrying articles of international interest. Its contributing editors are: Thomas Mann, Jawaharial Nehru, Vincent Sheean, Lin Yutang, Jan Masaryk. This magazine should make an important contribution to the cause of world brotherhood.

\* \* \*

Mrs. Anna K. Winner of Philadelphia, whose letter was quoted by Mr.



Smythe in his article last month on the Williams' book, has written in to say that the issue of the "Catholic Digest" referred to therein was that of February 1947. The original article from which the digest was printed apparently appeared first in the Nov. 29th 1946 issue of a Catholic paper, "Register", 934 Bannock St., Denver 1, Colo. The address of the "Catholic Digest" is 41 E. Eighth St., St. Paul 2, Minnesota. Mrs. Winner kindly sent this information so that readers of this magazine might get the original articles if they so desire.

### THE WILLIAMS BOOK AGAIN

In the March issue Mr. Dudley Barr with impersonal detachment looks askance at the moral and even mental inadequacy of Mrs. Williams to deal with H. P. Blavatsky; he rather refreshingly puts her book outside the pale of ordinary criticism. Yet I do not find such sweeping away at all in conflict with Mrs. Winner's intense and absorbed interest in *Priestess of the Occult*. It is because Mrs. Winner starts her fine letter to Mr. Smythe (April *Canadian Theosophist*) by intimating the Roman Catholic Church as the source of Mrs. Williams' inspiration. This, with Mr. Smythe's identical conviction, at once sweeps the clever devilry of the author back onto wider ground of utmost importance to spiritual evolution—that everlasting war in the heart of man so ably exploited by Mother Church. Mr. Smythe's reflection on the depth of malice of the Roman Catholic hierarchy toward the liberating forces of Theosophy that have permeated thought in every direction in this century, along with Mrs. Winner's reminder of H. P. B.'s attack on the Roman Catholic stronghold, the Jesuits, and the undying enmity between their work and hers—all this brings into high relief the need of modern Theosophists to realize and face the issue. Mr. Smythe's article is

the first open indictment of the Roman Catholic Church in connection with Theosophical work that I have seen in print. It is a great step toward essentials in a conflict in which no quarter is given or taken, and we can not be grateful enough for Mrs. Winner's straight deal.

In my reading of Mrs. Williams' book the point that stood out most clearly was that H.P.B. was made the butt to take missiles aimed at something more enduring than any personality. The real attack was meant to undermine belief in the very existence of Initiates and Mahatmas who had revealed as much of the truths known to their Lodges throughout the ages, as could be assimilated by a humanity emerging from degrading superstition only to become absorbed in gross materialism—where, as the Chohan put it some 65 years ago, "the white Dove of Truth has hardly room whereon to rest her weary unwelcome foot." He forthwith calls upon Theosophy to rescue a Christian world "left for 2,000 years to the regime of a personal god" and points out "that a Christianity which teaches self-redemption through man's own seventh principle . . . equivalent to regeneration or rebirth in spirit, will be found just the same truth as the Nirvana of Buddhism. All of us have to get rid of our own ego, the illusory apparent self, to recognize our true self in a transcendental divine life."

I quote at some length from the Chohan's letter on the Theosophical ideal of attainment to make clear how such a key-note must necessarily arouse priestcraft to fight for its very life, preferably by foul means since fair ones would expose and render useless its machinations.

H. Henderson.

The H.P.B. Library,  
348 Foul Bay Rd.,  
Victoria, B.C.

## THE SOUL OF THE LODESTONE

*The Soul of the Lodestone, by Alfred Still. Murray Hill, New York and Toronto.*

It is well for the Theosophist to delve into the literature of science and to become acquainted with its methods and terminology. Above all, it is desirable to become acquainted with the scientist's approach to reality, for while it is almost a trite saying that science is fast approaching the Eastern or occult point of view, it is doing so in its own way and in its own language. Particularly is this true of the modern electrical theory of matter with which the science of electro-magnetism is so closely linked. Unfortunately, however, it is not easy to find in the literature of science, books of suitable calibre, for on the one hand, those written by scientists for scientists are so abstruse as to leave even the intelligent laymen bewildered, while on the other those written for the lay public are for the most part overly simplified, misleading and inaccurate. The writer dealing with science in a popular way is for the most part one without much in the way of a scientific background.

It is refreshing, therefore, to pick up this present book written by one who is a recognized authority in his own field and in his writings is both intelligent and intelligible. Alfred Still, born in England of an English father and a French mother, emigrated early in life to the United States and soon became one of the better known teachers of electrical theory and engineering. For 21 years he held the post of Professor in charge of Electrical Engineering at Purdue University, and having recently retired is now devoting his whole time to an early interest in writing about the profession and industry in which he for so long played an important and an honoured part. One of his earlier books was the *Soul of Amber* which dealt with the progress of man's understanding of

the nature and manifestations of electricity.

What man in the past has thought about magnetism and the mysteries of magnetic attraction and repulsion is recorded in the *Soul of the Lodestone*. Still begins with the early Greek and Roman philosophers, Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes, Plato and Aristotle, Pythagoras, Empedocles, Ptolemy, Lucretius and the rest whose names are so familiar to us in the Theosophical literature, and from thence he traces what meagre thought there was on the subject down through the Dark Ages to the Renaissance. If the work of these early investigators had been allowed to bear fruit, the scientific era might well have been initiated some fifteen hundred years or so ago, but the bigotry, ignorance and intolerance of the Christian Church were unfriendly to science so it became neglected, or was forced to go underground, combining there with the mystical to produce astrology from astronomy and alchemy from chemistry. Of these arts Still has little good to say in view of the befuddled notions of those who professed to practice them.

Medieval times did produce the magnetic compass bringing it to a high state of perfection, but it remained for Gilbert, physician to Queen Elizabeth, to give serious study to the magnet and to its properties. Gilbert thus deserves to rank with Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton as one of the founders of modern science. With what he had to say concerning the Earth as a great magnet, others were enabled to give serious study to terrestrial magnetism and to develop the modern theory of magnetic action. A little over two centuries later Faraday demonstrated the close relation between electricity and magnetism, and conceived of the magnetic flux as being something in the nature of tubes or lines of force. Clerk Maxwell, clothed the intuitions of Faraday in mathematical vesture and in

doing so laid down the complete physical theory of light and electro-magnetism. Subsequent developments, aside from those which have come about since the advent of relativity have been largely concerned with investigating the magnetic properties of matter and with the developing of new magnetic materials of practical use in the arts. Of these practical uses, Still makes little or no mention and wisely so since he is more concerned with the historical and philosophical background of his subject.

The Theosophical reader will be pleasantly surprised to see that Still, contrary to most scientific writers makes mention of Mesmer, and Reichenbach in sympathetic terms, and maintains an open mind as to whatever connection there may be between physiological or vital processes and those strictly physical.

Mesmer was a well-educated, hard-working medical practitioner who effected cures by unconventional practices and so antagonized the pompous snobs of the medical profession. He conducted many experiments with steel magnets and tried to determine whether natural magnetism, apart from his own "magnetic fluid" was possessed of any curative properties. The reason for the many remarkable cures of those patients who submitted themselves willingly to his treatment was never clear to Mesmer who was constantly seeking a satisfactory hypothesis. He did not suspect that his success might be due to mental suggestion and felt at first that the supposed fluid that he controlled was identical with electricity; then it became "animal magnetism" and the use of magnets to effect certain cures lent support to this hypothesis. "One hundred years later, when Mesmer and his work had been forgotten and resurrected and again interred, J. M. Charcot, of the Salpetriere experimented with a large magnet on one of his hysterical patients. When the patient was in a cataleptic

condition, with rigidity on the right side of the body, the magnet placed against this part would cause the condition to be transferred to the left side. Scientists as a body have consistently disapproved of this type of experiment, presumably because they could offer no explanation which would dovetail conveniently into the structure of current hypotheses".

At a later date, Reichenbach, a much greater man than Mesmer in the world of science, suffered a similar fate. His work was not recognized by orthodox science because his experiments could not be repeated at will under the conditions imposed by his critics; because his "instruments" were abnormal human beings; and last, but not least, because the general acceptance of these findings as facts would have involved perturbing modifications to the structure of current theories. One of Reichenbach's sensitives was able to deflect a compass needle protected by a glass cover, through an angle of forty-five degrees with the finger tips of one hand. With her elbow she could deflect it as much as ninety degrees.

Reichenbach accounted for his phenomena by assuming that there existed a previously unknown force which is neither magnetism, electricity nor heat, but which fits in between them. It is to this force, fluid or emanation, that Reichenbach gave the name of *Odyle* or briefly *Od*. Persons that are sensitive to odylic manifestations can see in the dark, not only the outline of certain objects, but also the "odylic light" of certain crystals, of the human body (the aura?) and of magnets. "Whether Reichenbach's subjects," says Still, "were affected by the magnetism of the physicists, or by the 'odylic power' of the magnets may be an open question; but it is certain that they were aware of the proximity of strong magnets and that some of them were even influenced by terrestrial magnetism."

W. F. Sutherland.

## THE THEOPHILANTHROPISTS

If ever a universal religion should prevail, it will not be by believing anything new, but in getting rid of redundancies and believing as man believed at first.—THOMAS PAINE.

Often some "Adorer of God and Friend of Man" arises when "times that try men's souls" precipitate themselves in human history. Such an inspirer was Thomas Paine who helped masses of people to pass the test imposed and right the prevailing wrongs. The second centenary of his birth is being celebrated everywhere this month by lovers of liberty. (Written in January, 1937).

The works of Thomas Paine, the Internationalist and Spiritual Reformer, are well known, and yet *The Rights of Man, Common Sense and The Crisis* ought to be better known in these days when liberty of thought and freedom of speech are being suffocated. Paine's penetrating and convincing analysis of creedal Christianity, which is described as "an investigation of true and fabulous theology," is also well known; yet *The Age of Reason* deserves even today a wider circulation in Christendom, and the methods of treatment there used need to be properly applied also by religious reformers elsewhere.

One aspect, however, of Paine's constructive labours is not very widely recognized. While large masses readily accepted the political lead he gave, they were not prepared to follow him in matters of religion. Prejudice, which Paine compared to a spider, thwarted his attempt in this direction. His *Age of Reason*, published in two parts—in January 1794 and October 1795—failed to precipitate a mental revolution, for which he had probably hoped, similar to the political one which had followed the publication of *Common Sense* in January 1776.

If mental and moral upheavals often give birth to a real genius, the presence

of the latter awakens the slumbering intuitions of at least a few who gather round him. Such arose in his day, and with the co-operation of those kindred minds Paine founded the Society of Theophilanthropists. He delivered the inaugural address, the ideas and programme of which did not suit the ultra-radical atheists of France on the one hand, and on the other hand alienated from him the entire orthodox Christian world. Thus Paine met that which is ever the fate of the expounder of Divine Wisdom in every age and clime.

Thomas Paine and his companions called themselves "Adorers of God and Friends of Man," and looked upon the "study of natural philosophy" as "a divine study." His "Discourse" to them opens with a declaration which names fanaticism and infidelity as the two principal enemies of Religion, and to overcome them he advocates the use of reason, the cultivation of right morality and the study of natural philosophy.

What was the basis of this Society? In Paine's words:—

"It has been well observed at the first institution of this society that the dogmas it professes to believe are from the commencement of the world; that they are not novelties, but are confessedly the basis of all systems of religion, however numerous and contradictory they may be. All men in the outset of the religion they profess are Theophilanthropists. It is impossible to form any system of religion without building upon those principles, and, therefore, they are not sectarian principles, unless we suppose a sect composed of all the world."

The programme of the Society's activities was also outlined by him:—

"The society is at present in its infancy, and its means are small; but I wish to hold in view the subject I allude to, and instead of teaching the philo-

sophical branches of learning as ornamental accomplishments only, as they have hitherto been taught, to teach them in a manner that shall combine theological knowledge with scientific instruction; to do this to the best advantage, some instruments will be necessary for the purpose of explanation, of which the society is not yet possessed. But as the views of the society extend to public good, as well as to that of the individual, and as its principles can have no enemies, means may be devised to procure them.

"If we unite to the present instruction, a series of lectures on the ground I have mentioned, we shall, in the first place, render theology the most delightful and entertaining of all studies. In the next place we shall give scientific instruction to those who could not otherwise obtain it. The mechanic of every profession will there be taught the mathematical principles necessary to render him a proficient in his art. The cultivator will there see developed the principles of vegetation; while, at the same time, they will be led to see the hand of God in all these things."

The Religion of Deism for which the Theophilanthropists laboured looked upon God as "a first cause," "to be discovered by the exercise of reason."

What was Paine's conception of Deity?

"Incomprehensible and difficult as it is for a man to conceive what a first cause is, he arrives at the belief of it, from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving it. It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end; but it is more difficult to conceive an end. It is difficult beyond the power of man to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time; but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time."

Not only does Paine use the symbols of Space and Duration but also that of Motion. He says to his companions

that "the universe is composed of matter, and as a system, is sustained by motion. Motion is not a property of matter, and without this motion, the solar system could not exist."

Thomas Paine was a mystic, and he was a politician because he was a philosopher. We give below a few short extracts which show the trend of his own Religion:—

"I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church."

"I had no disposition for what is called politics. It presented to my mind no other idea than is contained in the word Jockeyship. When, therefore, I turned my thoughts towards matters of government, I had to form a system for myself, that accorded with the moral and philosophic principles in which I had been educated."

"It is from the study of the true theology that all our knowledge of science is derived, and it is from that knowledge that all the arts have originated."

"All the principles of science are of divine origin. It was not man that invented the principles on which astronomy and every branch of mathematics are founded and studied. It was not man that gave properties of the circle and triangle. Those principles are eternal and immutable. We see in them the unchangeable nature of the Divinity. We see in them immortality, an immortality existing after the material figures that express those properties are dissolved in dust."

"It is only in the CREATION that all our ideas and conceptions of a *word of God* can unite. The creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they be. It

is an ever-existing original, which every man can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not; it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this *word of God* reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of god."

"The structure of the universe . . . is an ever existing exhibition of every principle upon which every part of mathematical science is founded. The offspring of this science is mechanics; for mechanics is no other than the principles of science applied practically. The man who proportions the several parts of a mill, uses the same scientific principles, as if he had the power of constructing an universe: but as he cannot give to matter that invisible agency, by which all the component parts of the immense machine of the universe have influence upon each other, and act in motional unison together, without any apparent contact, and to which man has given the name of attraction, gravitation and repulsion, he supplies the place of that agency by the humble imitation of teeth and cogs. All the parts of man's microcosm must visibly touch; but could he gain a knowledge of that agency, so as to be able to apply it in practice, we might then say that another *canonical book* of the Word of God had been discovered."

"Any person, who has made observations on the state and progress of the human mind, by observing his own, cannot but have observed, that there are two distinct classes of what are called Thoughts; those that we produce in ourselves by reflection and the act of thinking, and those that bolt into the mind of their own accord. I have always made it a rule to treat those voluntary visitors with civility, taking care to

examine, as well as I was able, if they were worth entertaining; and it is from them I have acquired almost all the knowledge that I have. As to the learning that any person gains from school education, it serves only like a small capital, to put him in the way of beginning learning for himself afterwards. Every person of learning is finally his own teacher; the reason of which is, that principles, being of a distinct quality to circumstances, cannot be impressed upon the memory; their place of mental residence is the understanding, and they are never so lasting as when they begin by conception."

Seekers and students of the Universal Wisdom, which Paine calls "real theology" and the principles and doctrines of which are of "divine origin" have laboured from age to age—sometimes in secrecy and silence like the persecuted Rosicrucians of the fifteenth century; sometimes publicly as did the Theosophists taught by Ammonius Saccas in the third century or by H. P. Blavatsky in the nineteenth; sometimes the work is forwarded by agents who are unconscious of their blessed mission, while others, like the famous Comte de St. Germain, work with full vision and understanding. But behind all such individuals or organisms are the true Theophilanthropists, Adorers of Immortal Spirit and Friends of mortal men. Of Them and Their companions and apprentices, of whom he himself seems to have been one, Walt Whitman wrote:—

That we all labour together transmitting the same charge and succession,

We few equals, indifferent of lands,  
indifferent of times,

We, enclosers of all continents, all  
castes, allowers of all theologies,

Compassionaters, perceivers, rapport  
of men,

We walk silent among disputes and  
assertions, but reject not the disputers  
nor anything that is asserted,

We hear the bawling and din, we are reached at by divisions, jealousies, re-criminations on every side,

They close peremptorily upon us to surround us, my comrade,

Yet we walk upheld, free, the whole earth over, journeying up and down till we make our ineffaceable mark upon time and the diverse eras.

Till we saturate time and eras, that the men and women of races, ages to come, may prove brethren and lovers as we are.

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### EXCHANGE MAGAZINES

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following exchange magazines:

Norsk Teosofisk Tidsskrift, March-April.

Ensenazas Teosoficas (Cuba), Feb. The Sun (Belgaum Lodge), Feb. and March.

Theosophy in New Zealand, January-March.

Sociedad Teosofica, Feb.

Life, a Review of world thought-currents, Oct.-Dec.

The Theosophist, Adyar, Jan. and Feb.

The Link (Pretoria), Feb.-March.

Revista d'o Pensamento (Sao Paulo), Feb.

Revista Teosofica Cubana.

The Middle Way, March-April.

The Theosophical Forum, April.

The American Theosophist, April. East & West, May-June.

Teosofica (Santiago), April.

Theosophia (Denmark), April.

The Aryan Path, March.

Revista Teosofica (Argentina), Mar.-April.

The Theosophical Movement, March.

### THE CREATIVE MAN

(This article is from an unpublished manuscript "*Whitman to America: The Study of an Attitude*" by F. B. Housser.)

There is need at this time for observation and investigation of the subjective experiences of the creative life in North America. Fundamentally the subjective life of creative individuals is the same in all lands and in every age. But in each individual nation, as in each individual man and woman, the problems of the creative life present themselves differently. So that time, as much as place, makes the problems here unprecedented. If, as Proclus once said, "everything which is corrupted, is corrupted by the incursion of something foreign to its nature, and is corrupted into something foreign to its nature", surely the creative individual in North America is in greater daily danger of corruption than he ever was in former ages and in other lands. I am not merely referring here to the problem of the melting pot. I refer more particularly to the manufactured ideas planted in us by the syndicated press and moving picture industry, the radio, the organized ballyhoo of advertising, the everchanging theories of science and other uniquely modern phenomena. Under this bombardment the creative individual, as distinguished from the one who passively conforms to the conventional life around him, finds it a bewildering and difficult thing to plow a straight furrow to his own integrity. No wonder it is difficult to find one of Whitman's full-sized men "unconquerable and simple".

The good life is the creative life. It may be defined as the "life of the soul", soul being used in the Whitmanic sense. It is evident that the life of the soul living on the American continent has

special features local to American civilization. We may learn much about the soul's life from the Hindu Vedas and Upanishads, and from our own Bible, but as will be shown, none of these speak of it in terms fully satisfying and comprehensible to man born and living here in America. We have a democratic attitude towards life which, as Whitman showed in "Democratic Vistas" makes necessary a revaluation and restatement of all the institutions, philosophies, arts and religions which monarchial man produced. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament contain a body of wisdom and data on the subjective experiences of the creative life acquired over a period of time by individuals who successfully lived and explored it on other continents and in other ages. This knowledge became a *mythos* to the peoples for whom it was recorded. From it arose religions, literatures, arts, sciences, cultures and civilizations. Whitman saw that the race in America needed a new *mythos* in terms of its own creative life before it could hope to create a grand civilization and produce the great individuals which he declared was her real and final purpose.

The word *mythos* as here used may be defined (1) as a body of scientific spiritual knowledge concerning the true nature of man, and the subjective or mystical experiences of the life he must lead in order to gain a first-hand knowledge of his true nature; and (2) as the religion, art, literature, and science growing out of this body of knowledge. When I speak of the need of an American *mythos* I refer to what Whitman called "a new world metaphysic." He says "the culmination and fruit of literary artistic expression and its final field of pleasure for the human soul, are in metaphysics, including the mysteries of the spiritual world, the soul itself and the question of the immortal continuation of our identity". In another place

he speaks of this *mythos* or metaphysic as "the stock element of religion" without which, in his opinion, there could be "no sane or complete personality, nor any grand and electric nationality, no poetry worthy of the name". Again he refers to it as "the science of God, what we call science being only its minister."

Whitman believed it was the job of the American poet or creative artist to create a *mythos* for America. "Never," he says in *Democratic Vistas*, "was anything more wanted than today . . . the poet of the modern is wanted or the great literatus of the modern." This task calls for a revaluation of the creative life itself. Conventionally we have come to think of the creative life as the life merely of the artist. Whitman defined it as the life of the soul which any man or woman is free to live, whatever their occupation.

Whitman says that if American poets were to give a *mythos* to America they must be living the creative life in the larger, religious sense. They must "be" before they can "do". Behind what they write must be integrated individuals who not only believe in a soul but who know the life of the soul as a first-hand experience.

This is why he places the American poet on the highest pinnacle, demands of him the qualities of seership and makes him the equal of Plato's philosopher-kings.

The churchmen will say that religion fulfills the part of a *mythos*; the scientific thinker will assert that science does or can perform the function; many artists will claim that art answers the challenge. The answer is that none of these do or can take on the functions of a *mythos* until they become one and equal in the creative life. Whitman showed that they all existed for and served the soul. The separation of art, science and religion reflects the bewilderment of man before the mysteries of



life which can only be dispelled by recapturing, first, his faith in, and then his certainty of, the soul as a reality through the cultivation and clarification of his inner life.

It is by going back to attitudes that we may see the bond which exists between art, science and religion, the three branches of the true of life. The creative minds in each of the three fields are actuated by the same motive, a devotion to truth. There may be differences of opinion between them as to how to find truth and what it is, but the desire to find it is equal in each. It is only those artists, scientists and religionists who are in search of something other than truth, or those who believe that truth has already been found, who think they see opposing purposes in the trilogy. In a co-ordinated search for the verities of life, religion and art would become scouts for science. Even now science is daily proving what creative minds in religion and the arts have already perceived through mystical experience. A scientific mysticism can only come through a *mythos* laboriously recorded from the subjective experiences of the creative life of a number of individuals. Given this, the creative arts, the sciences and religion could become matched parts of a seamless robe of philosophy.

In emphasizing the uniqueness of new world creative experience it must not be thought that all old world and past experience need necessarily be rejected. It is of inestimable value. Though the terminology and symbols in every *mythos* may be different, the discoveries of the creative life, wherever lived, are the same. The founders of every great *mythos* all claimed to have discovered certain fundamental truths, including the unity and beneficence of life, the universality of the self, the divinity of and in man, the immortality of the soul, the wisdom latent in man and the ecstasy he experiences with these discoveries.

Canada occupies a larger portion of North America than the United States, although her population is less than ten per cent of that below the border. America is a continent, not a country and I like to think that when Whitman used the word "America" he meant it in a continental sense. Of special interest to me, as a Canadian, was Whitman's interest in Canada, a visit to which he described in *Specimen Days*. "Come", he said, "I will make the continent indissoluble". The St. Lawrence and the lakes, he wrote "are not for a frontier line, but for a grand interior mid-channel." He refers to Canada as "a grand, sane, temperate land". The problems of this country's creative life, though different in form, are almost identical with those of the States. The message of Whitman is for Canada as much as for her big southern neighbour.

The craving for self-expression is part of the creative life. In undeveloped, unintrospective individuals it usually makes itself felt in a restlessness they do not understand, which promotes unhappiness and a wish to be forever doing something, the doing of which does not satisfy. If the aesthetic faculty is awakened, they frequently go into the arts, but even among creative artists, it is rare to find men and women who are in any marked degree analytical of the inner process by which they work. It is enough for them that something moves them and they respond. If they do look into themselves and become philosophical, they usually adopt some form of mysticism, for they discover that whenever they create what they know to be a good thing, they have the feeling of not having done it, but of having been only a channel for some impersonal power not commonly identified with their personal selves in everyday life. This power is what the Platonic philosophers call the Muse and what Whitman, in his poems, calls the soul.

Before attempting to explain and

clarify the creative life, let us try to get a clear conception of what is here meant by its opposite, the life of conformity. To be unconforming is not necessarily to be creative and it most assuredly does not follow that because one does not conform to the conventions, he or she is living the creative life. No life is more conventional, within its own circle, than the one which often prides itself on being unconventional. It is not there that one need go to study the life creative. The life of conforming may be defined as a life lived in accordance with the theory that happiness and permanent satisfaction are dependent on the possession of externals, represented by wealth, fame, social position, amusements, leisure, comforts, objects of art, admiration or friends. The liver of the conforming life is imitative of the mode of life of his immediate sphere of association, he being too infatuated, too indolent or too weak to be an independent law unto himself.

Life itself is a creative force, but our manner of living is not always creative. The creative life is natural. The imitative life is unnatural. To live naturally is to live without conscious effort; but because of the pressure from without which besets us in our daily doings, it seems more natural to be imitative than to be creative. For this reason the creative life is neither understood nor popular. The minority who attempt to live it are generally considered to be unnatural and willful by the majority who live a life of imitation and conformity.

Life, being creative, is constantly changing. Circumstances, relationships, beliefs and opinions, are forever altering in accordance with the law of life. The majority of people do not trust life. They fear change and desire stability. In their effort to prevent change they struggle to defeat the law of their own being, which is life. In proportion to the intensity of their effort in this direction, they cease to

live or to be creative and become sentimental and conforming. When this grows habitual it seems natural. The habit can only be broken by consciously taking and maintaining a creative attitude and rediscovering the natural self which does not fear change, but trusts the law of life, knowing it to be beneficent.

It may be said that there are four stages to the finding and living of the creative life. The first is the taking of the creative attitude, or a ceasing to fear life whether it hurts or not. The second includes a faith or trust in the beneficent purpose of life. The third is a gaining of an understanding of the beneficent purpose of life. The fourth is the allying of oneself with that purpose.

The attitude of the conforming life is one of possession, so we may say that the creative attitude is possessionless, for when one ceases to fear life, whatever it may do to him, he, in effect, no longer fears loss and desires nothing else but a fullness of living.

It will be seen that the creative life in its most absolute form is one of taking no thought for the morrow and implies what the New Testament means by losing one's life to find it. In western society it is difficult, if not impossible, to do this without wanting for the bare means of sustenance. It cannot be done all at once, but slowly, by the process of creating for one's self new standards and values and by making one's desires more single and less diversified. It cannot be done at all without an increasing trust in the beneficent purpose of life.

To understand the purpose of life is to realize, as Whitman said, that all things are for the sake of the soul. To ally one's self with that purpose is to work, as he said, with those eternal laws "which run through all time, pervade history, prove immortality, give moral purpose to the entire objective world and the last dignity to human life". It

is not necessarily freedom of action, but freedom *within* action, freedom from concern with the result of action, never doubting "that whatever can possibly happen anywhere at any time, is provided for in the inherences of things".

It is evident that the creative life cannot be explained in any but metaphysical terms, as an attempt to identify one's self with the universal. From this process emanates religion, aesthetics, ethics and morals, none of which the race in America yet has in terms of the new world. But the process has started and works on, whether or not we are aware of its development. America, in the search for her own integrity, will create her own religion, art and ethics in her own terms. Only by so doing can she find her place in and relation to the universal family of nations and races.

*(To Be Concluded)*

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### THE THREE TRUTHS

There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech.

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit.

The principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen, or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

Each man is his own absolute law-giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

These truths, which are as great as life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.—Idyll of the White Lotus.

## "CREATIVE THINKING" CREATIVE THINKING AND HOW TO DEVELOP IT

BY WILLIAM H. EASTON

*(Continued from Page 57.)*

### The Working Mood

The way in which one gains interest in the uninteresting is well exemplified by the crossword puzzle.

Solving such a puzzle is, in itself, pointless, and few attempt it if they have anything else to do. But in an idle moment, fill in the diagram with the obvious words and then work out a new word from the definitions and the letter sequences. This snaps a trap! Success in solving the little problems arouses interest, which immediately attracts the imagination, and, from then on, all one's mental energy is devoted to the business of finishing the affair.

The same principle applies to arousing interest in one's work. Mere random thinking about it is useless; the attention must be deliberately concentrated on solving some problem connected with it.

It matters not what the problem may be. The writer, for example, may set down various titles for a proposed composition and select the one that seems most appropriate; the scientist may work out a diagram of the apparatus to be used in an experiment; and so on.

Solving one problem reveals another. When this is disposed of, another appears. Continue this process, and sooner or later, by some psychological miracle, the job will become the most interesting thing in the world.

When this happens, the thinker is in the working mood. His imagination, now wholly occupied with the subject in hand, is subject to his will and pours ideas into his mind. His other mental powers co-operate, and he becomes

absorbed in his work, oblivious to his surroundings, to distractions, and even to pain.

As he cannot work when he is in any other state of mind, the creative thinker, who wants to be master of his mental machinery, must be able to force himself into the working mood by the process described whenever the need arises.

It is never an easy operation, however, because it demands the deliberate concentration of attention, which is always unpleasant and, to some people, almost intolerable. Nor can it be done quickly if one is deeply interested in some other matter. Sometimes one must struggle for hours or days before the imagination can be gotten under control.

Indeed, many independent writers, artists, and scientists never subject themselves to this ordeal. They engage only in work that interests them, and, if their interest in it fails at any time, they drop it.

But many creative thinkers have no such easy escape from unattractive labour. These are the people who work on assignments that are not of their own choosing, such as industrial research men, illustrators, advertising men, and others in commercial lines. These people are often given work that does not interest them and may, at times, be positively distasteful; and they must be able to force themselves to become interested in such projects, or they will neglect them indefinitely.

As a matter of fact, if interest were not aroused by anxiety as well as by the pleasurable emotions, much commercial work never would be completed. Let a commercial man neglect a job long enough to become actually worried about it, and he will soon be sufficiently interested to get busy on it. This, however, is not the way of efficient workmanship.

#### Preserving the Working Mood

Once in the working mood, the thinker will stay in it for the duration of the job, unless something that arouses stronger interest intervenes. Occurrences of this kind are, of course, often beyond control, but, to prevent losing hold of his work, one should, as far as possible, protect his interest in it from competition.

Normal recreations and activities during nonworking hours do not interfere, but anything of importance that grips the imagination should be avoided, especially other lines of creative thinking. To attempt to carry on two creative projects at the same time is like trying to work for two masters. To serve one, the other must be neglected.

Leonardo, for example, engaged in so many different kinds of creative work that he could rarely retain interest in anything long enough to complete it.

This restriction does not apply to non-creative thinking. Thus, a blindfold chess expert can play a dozen games simultaneously, because, as Binet has shown, according to Hadamard,<sup>6</sup> he does not have to think about each move. He is familiar with a large number of chess positions and knows what moves to make in each case. But if an opponent works out a combination that is new to him, he must give it his undivided attention or lose the game.

#### The Creative Thinker's Working Day

When engaged in creative thinking, the mind is under a strain. Eventually, the imagination tires, and it takes an effort to think up something new. At this point, it is time to stop. If anything further is attempted, it will be done poorly.

<sup>6</sup> "The Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field," by Jacques Hadamard, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1945.

Thinkers, of course, vary widely in mental endurance, but there are few who can profitably devote more than six hours to continuous creative activity. That is the maximum length of the working day for most writers, and many restrict themselves to shorter periods.

Noncreative thinking, which does not call upon the imagination, is another matter, and one can turn to it with relief when wearied with creation. Thinkers should bear this point in mind and so arrange their work that they can fall back on noncreative operations whenever their creative power begins to flag. Phenomenal workers, like Edison, undoubtedly follow this practice.

### III—INSPIRATION AND AUTOMATIC CREATIVE THINKING

Not all creative thinking is of the deliberate type discussed in the last chapter. Sometimes the mind will be suddenly thrown into a high degree of creative activity, with no effort on the part of the thinker and, often, with reference to some subject he never thought of before. This kind of thinking is caused by inspiration.

Many outstanding creations in every field of art and science have been due to inspiration.

A storm at sea gave Wagner the basic idea for his opera "The Flying Dutchman." Mendelssohn heard the theme of his "Hebrides Overture" in the lapping of the waves at Fingal's Cave.

To amuse a boy interested in drawing, Robert Louis Stevenson drew a map of an island with intriguing coves and headlands and named it "Treasure Island." "Immediately," he tells us in his *Juvenalia*, "the characters of the book began to appear in the imaginary trees."

By a not uncommon accident, a bacterial culture plate being prepared by Alexander Fleming became contaminated with a blue-green mould, penicil-

lium. Examining the plate, which was well covered with colonies of bacteria, Fleming noticed that each spot of mould was surrounded by a clear space. This gave him an idea: "The mould must produce something that interferes with the multiplication of bacteria;" and, impelled by this thought, he carried on research that resulted in the isolation of penicillin.

#### The Characteristics of Inspiration

Inspiration is an agreeable experience. It brings the thinker automatically ideas that are wholly new to him, and what is of equal importance, it arouses an intensity of interest that sets his imagination racing. The inspired thinker does not have to force himself into the working mood. His one desire is to drop everything else and devote himself to developing his new conception.

This experience is a gift of the gods; its occurrence is wholly beyond control and is always unexpected. But one must be prepared for it. "Happy accidents," leading to notable creations, befall only those whose minds are stored with ideas that are ready to crystallize into some concrete arrangement in response to the right kind of stimulus. Others can be exposed to the same stimulus without the slightest effect.

Thus, no layman would have found inspiration in Fleming's culture plate; and, though all bacteriologists frequently handle just such plates in the course of the work, not one, before Fleming, gained a constructive thought from the contamination.

Inspiration is often the result of a discovery, as in Fleming's case, but it is perhaps well to point out that a discovery and the creative thinking that may follow it are quite different things. Fraunhofer, for example, made the important discovery that certain black lines cross the solar spectrum; but he merely announced their existence and

positions and created nothing. The creative work that later connected these lines with the chemical elements in the sun was done by Kirchoff.

Though inspiration is uncontrollable, the chances that it will occur can be increased by enlarging the stock of ideas in the mind and by multiplying observations.

Some people deliberately hunt for inspiration as one hunts for game. They go where they are likely to find it; they keep constantly on the alert for it; and they are ready to take advantage of it when they do find it. Typical of those who can profitably follow this practice is the artist who wanders around the country on the lookout for inspiring combinations of form and color; but, in many fields, game is too scarce to make this form of sport worth while.

However, a determined thinker will sometimes decide to seek everywhere in the hope of discovering a stimulus that will give rise to some desired combination of ideas.

As is well known, Charles Goodyear adopted this plan in his attempt to develop a method of producing rubber that would not get soft and sticky in hot weather and hard and brittle in cold weather. After years of effort and privation he achieved success; but countless others have failed in similar undertakings.

If hunting for inspiration is often a waste of time, passively awaiting it always is.

Anthony Trollope, in his Autobiography, expresses himself forcibly on this point. "There are those . . .," he says, "who think that a man who works with his imagination should wait till—inspiration strikes him. When I have heard this doctrine preached, I have scarcely been able to repress my scorn."

It is to be noticed that Trollope's scorn was not directed at inspiration but at waiting for it. This is something

he never did. He trained himself in a routine that kept him always in the working mood and enabled him to get up at 5 a.m. every weekday morning and write for two hours with machinelike regularity. He had inspirations and welcomed them, but he never depended upon them.

There are, however, those who habitually depend upon inspiration to incite them to creative activity. Such people dislike the labour involved in deliberate creative thinking and want "bright ideas" to come to them without effort on their part. They may do brilliant things occasionally, but they are certain to be erratic and unreliable producers.

They are also handicapped in another way: Inspiration rarely supplies enough material to finish the job it starts. After the ideas it contributes automatically are exhausted, new ones are usually needed to continue the project; and, if inspiration is the thinker's sole reliance, he is helpless because inspiration cannot be made to repeat.

The starting of many things that are never finished is a sign of the inspiration-controlled thinker.

Hence while the creative thinker who strives for efficiency should seek inspiration in new experiences, his regular working tools should be his controllable mental powers. Otherwise his output is likely to be meager.

#### IV—ILLUMINATION, THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

James Watt's condenser for the Newcomen steam engine was one of the greatest inventions of modern times. It was merely an accessory for an already developed machine (he did not invent the engine itself as is commonly supposed), but it opened the way for the general application of steam power.

Watt became interested in improving the engine when he discovered, while repairing a model at the University of

Glasgow, that its method of operation was extremely inefficient.

Power for each stroke was developed by first filling the cylinder with steam and then cooling it with a jet of water; this cooling action condensed the steam and formed a vacuum behind the piston, which was then forced to move by the pressure of the atmosphere.

Thus with every stroke, the cylinder was alternately heated and cooled, and calculation showed Watt that this process wasted three fourths of the heat supplied to the engine. Therefore if he could prevent this loss of heat, he could reduce the engine's fuel consumption by more than fifty per cent, an accomplishment that was obviously worth while.

He worked over this problem for two years but could find no solution to it. Then, "on a fine Sabbath afternoon," he took a walk; and, according to Usher,<sup>3</sup> this is his account of what happened.

"I had entered the green and had passed the old washing house. I was thinking of the engine at the time. I had gone as far as the herd's house when the idea came into my mind that as steam was an elastic body it would rush into a vacuum, and if a connection were made between the cylinder and an exhausting vessel, it would rush into it and might then be condensed without cooling the cylinder . . . . I had not walked further than the Golf house when the whole thing was arranged in my mind."

The essential points in this experience, from the standpoint of creative thinking, are the following:

Watt had set up for himself a problem, which, after two years of work, his reason and imagination had failed to solve. One day, while indulging in a reverie during the enforced idleness of a Scottish Sabbath, the solution of the problem came to him, unexpectedly, without effort, and without possibility of inspiration.

This experience is typical of illumination.

Other thinkers have left accounts of the action of illumination.

Hadamard<sup>6</sup> cites the following incident: "On being very abruptly awakened by an external noise, a (mathematical) solution long searched for appeared to me at once and without the slightest reflection on my part . . . and in a quite different direction from any of those I had previously tried to follow."

Henri Poincaré<sup>7</sup> relates several similar experiences. In one case, an important conception came to him while he was boarding a bus; in another case, while he was idly walking by the seaside; in a third, when he was in military service. In all cases, the conceptions advanced incompleting work that had been laid aside temporarily and came with the same characteristics of brevity, suddenness, and immediate acceptability.

Another case that may be cited is that of the "benzene ring." The structure of the benzene molecule had baffled chemists for years. They found that it did not consist of a chain of carbon atoms, which was the only structure for this class of compounds they knew about, but no one could suggest an alternative arrangement that was satisfactory. Friedrich Kekulé worked on this problem without success until one day, when he sat daydreaming before his fireplace, the thought came to him that a closed ring of six carbon atoms would meet the conditions. This conception has proved to be one of the most valuable contributions to organic chemistry.

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<sup>7</sup> "Mathematical Creation (1908)," by Henri Poincaré, translated by George Bruce Halsted, The Foundations of Science, Science Press, 1913.

## The Action of Illumination

These accounts stress the fact that illumination supplies desired ideas after the thinker's other resources have failed; but they may suggest that this mental process acts only on rare occasions and with certain people. If so, they give the wrong impression, for illumination is a normal factor in creative thinking.

Two examples, illustrating extreme cases, should help to show how it acts under ordinary circumstances.

In the first case, one who is working on a creative project by means of deliberate thinking runs along smoothly until he strikes a problem that halts his progress. He is well aware that the difficulty is a trivial one, but to his annoyance, hard thinking fails to overcome it.

After a few minutes of earnest thought, he relaxes his mental tension momentarily by stopping work and letting his attention dwell on something else. Then, "out of a clear sky," the desired ideas come to him, and he is able to go on with his work.

This manifestation of illumination is not particularly impressive, but it is identical in principle with that which occurs with striking results in the following case.

In this case, the thinker encounters a problem of great difficulty; but, as he has no way of knowing this in advance, he proceeds as usual, expecting to clear up the matter without much trouble. This, however, he fails to do. The problem resists all of his initial efforts to solve it, and, before long, he discovers that he has run into a serious obstacle.

This is a critical point in his work. If he were like most people, he would stop here, giving up the problem as hopeless. But, being a creative thinker, he refuses to accept defeat, so he works on.

But no amount of deliberate thinking gets him anywhere. He develops and applies every promising method of solving his problem he can imagine, but all

prove failures.

After struggling for hours, he runs out of ideas. Further thinking is useless, but his intense interest in the matter prevents him from stopping. Yet all he can do is to mill old ideas around in his mind to no purpose. Finally, frustrated and utterly disgusted with himself, he throws the work aside and spends the rest of his day in misery.

Next morning he wakes oppressed. His problem is still on his mind and he thinks about it gloomily. But as the fog of sleep clears from his brain, the tenor of his thoughts changes.

If, now, nothing distracts his attention, he soon finds that exactly those ideas he strove so hard to grasp the day before are now flowing through his mind as smoothly and easily as a stream flows through a level meadow. This is illumination.

## Evoking Illumination

Even the thinker who is familiar with experiences like the foregoing is rarely able to account for them. They seem to happen erratically and without cause or reason.

*(To Be Continued.)*

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