

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

Divine Wisdom

Brotherhood

Occult Science

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VOL. XXIX., No. 9

TORONTO, NOVEMBER 15th, 1948

Price 20 Cents.

REINCARNATION AND THE POETS

The doctrine of reincarnation is still largely associated with the mystics of the East. Nevertheless, among the thinking people of the western world who believe in the immortality of the soul are many who have accepted the challenging question, *shall we live again on this planet but in another body, and its counterpart, have we lived before?*

There is nothing startling new in the belief or philosophy. Probably no lines of Wordsworth are more generally known than those referring to life before birth.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.

In a general sense, however, the doctrine they inculcate has been neither accepted nor repudiated but simply ignored and neglected. Such neglect has always been common to western thought. Many years have passed since Schopenhauer wrote in *Parerga and Paralipomena*: "Were an Asiatic to ask me for a definition of Europe, I should be forced to answer him that it is that part of the world which is haunted by the incredible delusion that man was created out of

nothing and that his present birth is his first entry into life."

In England also the philosophers have upheld the ancient philosophy of the East. In *Evolution and Ethics* Professor T. H. Huxley declared: "In the doctrine of transmigration, whatever its origin, Brahminical and Buddhist speculation found ready to hand the means of reconstruction a plausible vindication of the ways of Cosmos to man. This plea of justification is not less plausible than others, and none but very hasty thinkers will reject it on the ground of inherent absurdity. Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that transmigration has its roots in the world of reality, and it may claim such support as the great argument from analogy is capable of supplying."

During the years immediately before and after the close of World War I, there was a surge of interest in spiritualism. To that period belong the study and research of the eminent scientist, Sir Oliver Lodge, which became the basis for *Raymond* and other books which sought to prove the immortality of the soul. No reference was made to the broader aspects which are included in reincarnation. Yet David Hume in *Immortality of the Soul* maintained: "The soul, if immortal, existed before

our birth. The metempsychosis is therefore the only system of the kind that philosophy can hearken to."

A similar wave of spiritualism which became associated with World War II already appears to have receded; but the quickening interest in religion and in all matters pertaining to the spirit continues to grow. Will that new awareness of spiritual truths embrace the long ignored doctrine of reincarnation? That was the question asked by the Hon. Ralph Shirley in *The Problem of Re-birth: An Enquiry into the Basis of the Reincarnation Hypothesis*. "Is the time ripe for a reconsideration of this belief and its acceptance, if adequately supported by the evidence forth-coming, as part and parcel of the intellectual standpoint of the new age? Is it destined to obtain the same general adoption as an essential element in the thought of today as evolution did some two or three generations ago?"

Published in 1936, this volume by Mr. Shirley, a leader of philosophic thought in England, presented the doctrine of reincarnation with a modern freshness combined with the author's customary scholarly approach. Mr. Shirley complained that, while the western world has accepted the theory of evolution which is contrary to any idea of special creation, the vast majority of the same people refuse to believe that they are not created by a special fiat. A convinced reincarnationist himself, Mr. Shirley believes that birth but provides a new temporary dwelling-place for the soul in its eternal progress towards a still higher plane of experience.

It is peculiarly interesting — and deeply significant! — to learn that throughout the ages and in all countries this doctrine of rebirth has been accepted with the utmost equanimity by the poets. Readers who are acquainted with the poetry of Goethe will recall his sympathetic attitude. Very characteristically he compared the re-entry of a

soul into another body to that of a bather coming from his bath, re-invigorated and eager for the duties of the new day. Browning's views on the subject are well known. "One Word More" is an example of the many poems in which he referred to reincarnation.

This of verse alone, one life allows
me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give
you.
Other heights in other lives, God
willing—
All the gifts from all the heights, your
own, Love!

Not so well known, perhaps, is 'A Creed' by the Poet Laureate, John Masfield. The first two of the seven stanzas are quoted.

I hold that when a person dies
His soul returns again to earth;
Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise
Another mother gives him birth.
With sturdier limbs and brighter
brain
The old soul takes the road again.

Such is my own belief and trust;
This hand, this hand that holds the
pen,
Has many a hundred times been dust
And turned, as dust, to dust again;
These eyes of mine have blinked and
shone
In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon.

Although the poem as a whole is marked by a *John Bull* directness and simplicity, the last two lines as quoted are as sweeping in their suggestiveness as the following passage from *The Memory of Past Births*, one of several books by Charles Johnson, which are based upon the author's translations from the original Sanscrit. "Each of us, we are told, had passed through every race, every time, and clime. We were the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Indians; we were the ancient Romans, the

Greeks, the men of the Dark Ages; of the Renaissance, of modern days."

But the Poet Laureate has indirectly expressed the same views still more bluntly and realistically in prose. In *John M. Synge: A Few Personal Recollections he wrote*: "When I heard of his [Synge] death I felt that his interest in life would soon get itself into another body, and come here again to look on and listen."

Canadian literature is still very young. Nevertheless, our poets have already made a significant contribution to this particular facet of Eastern philosophy. Along the margin of the review of *The Problem of Reincarnation* by the Hon. Ralph Shirley, Sir Charles G. D. Roberts wrote: "This exactly states what I have believed since early boyhood and formulated more and more definitely and positively ever since. See my boyish verses, 'A Blue Blossom,' written when I was seventeen." There was nothing *boyish* about the philosophy expressed in the poem, however, as the following lines testify.

Methinks immortal memories
Of some past scenes of Paradise
Speak to my spirit through the flower.

Forgotten is our ancient tongue;
Too dull our ears, our eyes too blind,
Even quite to catch its notes, or find
Its symbols written bright among
All shapes of beauty.

In characteristic poetic imagery Arthur Stringer wrote of reincarnation in an early poem entitled "Memories."

Out of the Night we came, and we
shall go
Back to the Night; and that is all we
know!
Yet clinging to us are deep mystic
things
Vague dreams and visions, dim re-
memberings

And whispers low that tell us we have
known

Some vanished glory and strange
beauties flown

That are not of the dust from which
we climb

Up to the kinglier pinnacles of Time!

Robert Norwood, the Nova Scotian poet who was for many years previous to his death the Rector of St. Bartholomew's Church in the heart of New York City, was a sincere and learned reincarnationist. His prose and poetry abound with expressions of his faith in immortality and life after death. The following sonnet from *His Lady of the Sonnets* reveals a similar confidence in life before birth.

Two faces haunt the stillnesses of sleep.
One is of a woman I have known

Past years, in many lives, as on a throne
Within my heart, for whom I daily keep
Fast and high vigil while deep calls to
deep;

You also stir me, like wind-voices blown
Through woodland hollows where I
walk alone

When twilight and its shadows slowly
creep;

And I am torn 'twixt love of you and
her—

My dear Dream-Lady of some long
ago—

Till past and present, pausing to confer,
Determine what I hardly dare to know:
The faces I have loved and love are
one—

How you have followed me from sun
to sun!

Frederick George Scott—Canon Scott of beloved memory!—has also expressed himself as a reincarnationist. "Evolution," a poem of over two hundred lines, reveals that he considered reincarnation as an integral part of the theory of evolution.

As we are present, future, past—
 Shall live again, have lived before,
 Like billows on the beaches cast
 Of tides that flow for evermore.

In conclusion I would quote again
 from the poetry of Sir Charles G. D.
 Roberts. Of his many poems referring
 to this subject, 'Re-birth' is one of the
 most beautiful and certainly the most
 original.

I had stumbled up thro' Time from the
 slime to the heights,
 Then fallen into the stillness of the
 tomb.

For an age I had lain in the pulseless,
 senseless dark,
 I had swooned in the darkness of the
 tomb.

I had slept for an age without a dream
 or stir
 Till a voice came, troubling the pools
 of sleep.

From the long-forgotten bones, the im-
 memorial dust,
 I fled up from the smother of my
 sleep.

A naked soul, I bathed in the light in-
 effable,

- I floated in the ecstasy of light.
 Yet I ached with desire for a dream I
 could not grasp,
 And I struggled to pierce beyond the
 light.

As the light had been a veil I swam
 through the veil

And sank through shadows to a bliss-
 ful gloom.
 And the ache of my desire was sweetly
 assuaged

As I sheathed me blindly in the gloom.
 In my heart, as it seemed, I heard a
 craving, faint cry.

I was darkly aware of moving
 warmth.

I thirsted, and my groping thirst was
 satisfied;

And I slumbered, wrapt and folded in
 the warmth.

Once again was I snared in the kindly
 flesh of man;

The kind flesh closed away my sight.
 But before the mists of temporal for-
 getting shut me in

I had seen, far off, the Vision and the
 Height.

Elsie Pomeroy.

211 College St.,
 Toronto, Ontario.

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

"Let us, then, apply this Key (of
 Occult Science) to the rare fragments of
 long-forgotten Cosmogonies, and by
 means of their scattered portions en-
 deavour to re-establish the once Univer-
 sal Cosmogony of the Secret Doctrine.
 The Key fits them all. No one can seri-
 ously study ancient philosophies without
 perceiving that the striking similitude
 of conception in all of them, in their
 exoteric form very frequently, and in
 their hidden spirit invariably, is the
 result of no mere coincidence, but of a
 concurrent design; and that, during the
 youth of mankind, there was but one
 language, on knowledge, one universal
 religion, when there were no churches,
 no creeds or sects, but when every man
 was a priest unto himself. And, if it is
 shown that already in those early ages
 which are shut out from our sight by
 the exuberant growth of tradition,
 human religious thought developed in
 uniform sympathy in every portion of
 the globe; then, it becomes evident that
 that thought, born under whatever lati-
 tude, in the cold North or the burning
 South, in the East or in the West, was
 inspired by the same revelations, and
 that man was nurtured under the pro-
 tecting shadow of the same *Tree of
 Knowledge*."—S.D. 1. 364.

THE UNITY OF MANKIND

"EX UNO AD UNUM"

I must have read it somewhere, for the thought comes to me in Latin: "Ex uno omnia". How much like the memorable words of the Apostle who declared: "God has made of ONE blood all the nations of the earth." (Acts 17:26) Out of the One come the many; out of Unity proceed all the diverse things in the universe, even the universe itself.

We are only too conscious of our diversities at this juncture of man's evolution. In fact we are so deeply conscious of our differences that at times we feel the gulf dividing one part of the world from the other to be unbridgeable. It seems as though East is to remain East and West—West. Yet there is a plan and a purpose one can discern even through the present-day chaos. It is striking, that when Christ referred to "the end of the age" and described to His disciples the signs and the outward reactions of the inner forces struggling for expression, He said, when you hear of these terrible things "be ye not troubled." (Luke 13:7) The day for the revealing of new spiritual impulses is at hand! Christ claimed that the purpose of His coming to earth was to "bring fire", (Luke 12:49) to hasten the process of spiritual awakening in the souls of men and thus usher in the new age.

The fact that all men proceed from One Father would remain unrevealed, or at best parade as a sanctimonious dictum, unless in some way the walls of separation erected during the ages be levelled and the prejudices of centuries be destroyed by the Power of Truth. The presence of the Christ in the world and the Christ-consciousness in us perform this miracle. And is it not this—the destroying of prejudices and illusions that has been taking place before

our very eyes these dreadful years of two world wars? God would be a monster indeed if He permitted all the agony and blood-spilling on this earth to be of no avail and to have no purpose. Surely, there is a goal before mankind and the sooner we see it and direct our feet toward it, the sooner will the New Dawn break.

Men are not only born Out of Unity, they PROCEED TOWARD UNITY. This is our goal! In Unity is the salvation of the world! We are to become conscious of our latent Unity and demonstrate it in good-will and brotherliness.

The Doukhobors in the West have a very commendable custom. When they meet, they bow low one to another, greeting in this way not the particular person, but the God within the person. To become aware of the fact that God resides within all of us is the only foundation for true Brotherhood. Slowly, very slowly perhaps, we are awakening up to this realization. It takes time for the child to learn to walk. Falling down and getting up is the law to final success. Many dreams of a United Europe and of a League of Nations had to be shattered before even a faint attempt at such a movement could be made. But the "signs" of the New Society of man are increasing. Many of us speak of "the Community of Nations", of the "Unity of Mankind," of the "One World" to be . . . Of course there are disappointments awaiting us. The United Nations Organization is still composed of nations that are not yet "United". In their efforts to function inter-communally there will be of necessity many failures. To go back, however, to the "Old" world is an impossi-

bility. Were it even possible, that type of a world would be a very uncomfortable place to live in . . . The only way open is the way of Him in Whom "there is no Greek or Gentile, no bond or free," but all brothers.

Is there anything that you and I can do about the hastening of this New Day? Can we assist the process of maturing and help the ushering in of the New Dawn

The answer is plain to those who will read these lines. At times we are inclined to underestimate the contribution we can make and are called upon to make to this end. If thought is Power, if an earnest desire is dynamic prayer, if the Universe is such that It listens to and answers men's requests—then ENTERTAIN thoughts of Unity and Brotherhood; Speak of Unity and Brotherhood; Live Unity and Brotherhood! Do not add fuel to the distrust and suspicion existing in the world. Whenever two or three shake their heads wisely and are sure that war is inevitable and the world is "going to the dogs"—be not silent. It is your duty to speak! Spread the Gospel of Hope and ascribe Victory to the principles lying at the foundation of the Universe. Stand firm on the side of the Prince of Peace. Join any group, who no matter on how small a scale are trying to unite men, and support all movements striving for Brotherhood. More than that: organize gatherings at which the cultural contributions of the various races can be demonstrated. Here in Canada we have a magnificent opportunity in this respect. In the past a gathering, at which the Unity of Mankind was emphasized, used to be ridiculed; TO-DAY it draws unflinching large audiences. The Folk Songs, Folk Dances and exhibits of Folk Handicrafts of the many nations represented in our midst would certainly add colour and attraction to such an Evening. In conversations and actions UNDERLINE those things in which we are alike, for

fundamentally the human heart is human the world over.

Undoubtedly, it is the will of God that all men come to know themselves as brothers. The Unifying of Mankind is the Great Coming Event in our world. By doing our utmost to demonstrate that underlying Unity we will assist in the releasing of spiritual forces and the creating of conditions which will hasten the realization of Christ's prayer that "All may be One".

Out of Unity we come—to conscious Unity let us proceed!

R. G. Katsunoff.

Montreal,
July, 1948.

(The author of the above article is the Rector of the Church of All Nations at Montreal, a church which puts into practice the admonition given in the article to 'live unity and brotherhood'. Through his work in the church, the Reverend R. G. Katsunoff is making an important and far-reaching contribution to the cause of Truth; his sermons and week-night talks reflect his keen interest in and his deep understanding of the Theosophical approach.)

THE THREE TRUTHS

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

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Mr. Sri Ram's visit to Toronto and Montreal more than came up to expectations. Mr. Ram's personality and erudition as exemplified by his lectures, held his audiences in rapt attention, not only for the manner of rendition but for the mental pabulum contained therein. The high-light of his series was, to my mind his exposition on "India To-day and To-morrow" which brought forth long sustained applause. It was noticed that many members from other lodges came from Hamilton and other outlying places. Mr. Ram's quiet personality combined with a scholarly and forceful method of speaking made a deep impression upon all his hearers. We feel his visit here was opportune and very worth-while.

* * * *

The resuscitation of Theosophy in Europe is again evinced in the letter which I have just received from Mr. Martin Boyken, the newly elected General Secretary for Germany with headquarters in Hamburg. Mr. Boyken asks for help and guidance in his new and difficult task, and I have assured him this will be gladly given as far as is possible to do so, and I have congratulated him on the opportunity afforded him of spreading the teachings as a gleam of hope for the people of his country.

* * * *

Quite a number of members have yet to pay the small amount that is required of them for their fellowship in the Society. It is a part of my duty as general secretary to look after these things and I can assure those concerned that it is far from being a pleasure to me to have to constantly refer to such shortcomings on their part. If the Society means anything at all to them it should not be necessary for me to remind them

of what after all is but a trifling pittance for the privilege of belonging to an organization devoted to the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.

THE LOOM

O secret loom,
whereon all dreams descend in double
darkness,
whereon we wind full gathered from
the mind
such skeins of wool that make the
senses shudder;
give o'er thy rhythmic beat,
and give us pause.

Now, existential spirit,
shake off thy dated dust,
and let all impulse lose all impetus,
resolve all resolutions of a kind,
disqualify the senses if needs must,
and tranquilly with joy tie tight each
nerve
with knot secure till spine be taut
twix ground and goal,
let gifted ghost with shut-in soul con-
sort,
pivot the conjugation—
let their embrace quicken the silent
place,
and let there be no antitheses,
only the focal point;
the guarantee—
a pattern for the loom to weave
that men may see.

H. L. Huxtable.

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THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

THE ORGAN OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
IN CANADA

Published on the 15th day of every month.

Authorized as second class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa.



Subscription: TWO DOLLARS A YEAR

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All Letters to the Editor, Articles and Reports for Publication
 should be sent to The Editor:

Dudley W. Barr, 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5, Ont.

Printed by The Griffin & Richmond Co., Ltd.,
 29 Rebecca Street, Hamilton, Ontario.

OFFICE NOTES

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



We recommend to our readers a comparatively new magazine *Manas*, an eight-page weekly, size nine by twelve inches, first published in January 1948. *Manas* is a journal of independent inquiry, concerned with the study of the principles which move world society on its present course, and with search for contrasting principles—that may be

capable of supporting intelligent idealism under the conditions of life in the twentieth century.' The current issue, (Oct. 20th) carries an excellent article on Erigena, the little known Irish philosopher of the ninth century, 'who transmitted the spirit of antique philosophy without sacerdotal taint or perversion', and whose teachings influenced Eckardt, Tauler, Ruysbroeck and the valiant 'heretical' sects of the Middle Ages. The weekly letters from foreign correspondents, the book reviews, the articles on children, education, science and religion all reflect the 'intelligent idealism' of the editors, and the clean-cut objective thinking on these subjects should of interest and benefit to Theosophical students everywhere. The address is Box 112, Station M, Los Angeles; sample copies will be sent free to enquirers.



We are indebted to Peace Lodge, Hyde, Cheshire for Paper No. 6 of the Lodge entitled *Aspects of Our Nature*, a comparative study of man's principles as set out in various systems of thought. The Paper is a splendid example of the kind of work that might be carried on in members' meetings of Theosophical Lodges. The table of comparisons and correspondences between the various systems is quite useful and the discussion of the points of view of the Taraka Raja Yoga, the Vedanta, the Egyptian and other systems is illuminating. We would be glad to loan this Paper to anyone who is interested in reading it.



The Art Gallery of Toronto honoured Lawren Harris of Vancouver by presenting his paintings in its first attempt to organize a comprehensive exhibition of the works of a living artist. How successful that attempt was may be judged by the enthusiasm of the art critics. Some of the later paintings we had seen before but the reaction on unexpectedly entering the long gallery

devoted to the 'Lake Superior' period of Mr. Harris's work, is unforgettable. It was a spiritual experience, a cleansing of the mind of its littleness, the recession of petty emotions, the assembling of the soul in response to greatness—it was Rupert Brooke's 'to turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping'—it was Whitman's *Song of the Answerer*. "Lawren Harris a Biographical Sketch", written by A. Y. Jackson and used as an introduction in the Gallery catalogue is an epic of comradeship in a creative quest. One portion of it will be of special interest to Theosophists, "and the night at the Tonquin, with the game warden Goodin. He was not over friendly until Harris made some remark about Theosophy. He could not do enough for us after that." One night two rain-soaked men sought shelter from the storm in the shack. "Over a roaring fire they hung their clothes to dry. The cook we found was an Oxford man, our warden a graduate of London University. We talked Art, Music and Philosophy far into the night and were just starting on the cosmic consciousness when Harry the packer and I fell asleep."

MR. SRI RAM'S VISIT

TO TORONTO

Mr. N. Sri Ram of International Theosophical Headquarters, Adyar, Madras, India, was guest speaker at Toronto Theosophical Society from Saturday, October 23rd to Monday, October 25th inclusive. His three lectures were entitled "The Science of Happiness"; "What is Theosophy?" and "The India of Yesterday and To-morrow". Many visitors attended the talks by this distinguished speaker, in addition to the regular audience of members and adherents. Mr. Sri Ram's scholarly, yet easily followed, approach to Theosophy and other subjects was

widely commented on and his splendid delivery was a delight to hear.

In his talk "The Science of Happiness", Mr. Sri Ram emphasized that true happiness was a "welling up" from within, the inner satisfaction that comes from the accomplishment of one's Dharma, and finding outward expression, rather than being the effect of outward excitement and stimulation. On Sunday evening in his lecture "What is Theosophy?" he presented the postulates advanced by H. P. Blavatsky in the "Secret Doctrine"; the Unity of Life; Cyclic Law; Karma; Reincarnation; Evolution; using in general Christian terminology in his presentation. "India of Yesterday and To-morrow" was fully dealt with in the light of conditions both during the life of Mr. Gandhi and since his death and the division of India into two states, bringing out the efforts of those now governing to deal with problems which are extremely complicated. Mr. Sri Ram's graciousness in answering written questions was very much appreciated by his audiences.

On Saturday evening, after Mr. Sri Ram's first address, an informal reception was held by Toronto Lodge to give everyone an opportunity to meet him personally. Miss Madeline Hindsley, President, received the many guests, assisted by Mrs. G. I. Kinman. Autumn flowers decorated the rooms and centred the long tea-table presided over by Mrs. E. B. Dustan and Mrs. W. G. Hyland. Assisting in looking after the guests were Mrs. E. Cunningham, Mrs. K. Marks, Mrs. C. Weaver, Mrs. W. Thompson, Miss G. Burgar, Miss K. Lazier. A group of visitors from Hamilton included Mr. and Mrs. C. Bunting, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Milton Wilcox, Mrs. Frank Hambly, Mrs. G. Miller, Mrs. E. Townsend, Miss S. Aylesworth, Mr. F. Amos.

Mrs. G. I. Kinman,
Chairman, Publicity Committee.

“THE FOUNTAINHEAD”

Now the Theosophical Society has no creed. It is not Christian nor Buddhist; it is not Theistic nor Atheistic; it is not Materialist nor Spiritualist. It embraces men of all creeds and of none. Does anyone recognize the Brotherhood of all men? Then to him its doors are flung widely open, and the clasp of Brotherhood is offered. None may challenge his right of entry nor bid him stand aside.

But Theosophy is a body of knowledge, clearly and distinctly formulated in part and proclaimed to the world. Members of the Society may or may not be students of this knowledge, but none the less it is the sure foundation on which the Masters have built the Society, and on which its central teaching of the Brotherhood of Man is based. Without Theosophy, Universal Brotherhood may be proclaimed as an Ideal, but it cannot be demonstrated as a Fact, and therefore Theosophists are needed to give stability to the Theosophical Society.

Now by Theosophy I mean the “Wisdom Religion”, or the “Secret Doctrine”, and our only knowledge of the Wisdom Religion at the present time comes to us from the Messenger of its Custodians, H. P. Blavatsky. Knowing what she taught, we can recognize fragments of the same teachings in other writings, but her message remains for us the test of Theosophy everywhere. As we learn, we verify some of its more elementary portions, and so—if need be—we may increase our confidence in the Messenger. Also, it is open to every student only to accept as he verifies, and to hold his judgment in suspension as to anything that does not approve itself to his reason, or as to all that he has not yet proven. Only, none of us has any right to put forward his own views as “Theosophy”, in conflict with hers, for all that we know of Theosophy comes from

her. When she says “The Secret Doctrine teaches”, none can say her nay; we may disagree with the teaching, but it remains “the Secret Doctrine”, or Theosophy; she always encouraged independent thought and criticism, and never resented differences of opinion, but she never wavered in the distinct proclamation “The Secret Doctrine is” so and so.

Theosophists have it in charge not to whittle away the Secret Doctrine for the sake of propitiating the Christian churches that have forgotten Christ any more than they may whittle it away for the sake of propitiating Materialistic Science. Steadily, calmly, without anger but without fear, they must stand by the Secret Doctrine as she gave it, who carried unflinchingly through the storms of well-nigh seventeen successive years the torch of the Eastern Wisdom. The condition of success is perfect loyalty; . .

Mrs. Besant, October 1891.

BLAVATSKY INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS

ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS
by H. P. Blavatsky.

THE EVIDENCE OF IMMORTALITY
by Dr. Jerome A. Anderson.

MODERN THEOSOPHY
by Claude Falls Wright.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA
A Conflation by Albert E. S. Smythe.

Owing to the higher costs of binding it has been necessary to increase the price of the above books to One Dollar (\$1.00) each.

ANCIENT AND MODERN PHYSICS
by Thomas E. Willson is now out of print.

Copies of Professor Roy Mitchell's **COURSE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING** are still available at \$3.00 per set. This course was especially written for Theosophical students.

THE BLAVATSKY INSTITUTE
52 ISABELLA ST., TORONTO 5, ONTARIO

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor, Canadian Theosophist:—

Dear Editor, I desire to answer the letter of Mrs. Ethel Trupp against the President of the Theosophical Society asking Theosophists to approve the work done by the Spiritualists. She says that "H.P.B. never was in favour of the Theosophical Society forwarding the cause of Spiritualism." That may have been the case in 1890, but was certainly not the case in 1875.

Under the orders given by the Masters she and Colonel Olcott came into close relationship with Mr. E. Gerry Brown, who was the editor of "Spiritual Scientist", a Spiritualist paper. H.P.B. was looking about to see in what way she could make a start, and on this hint, received from the Master "Serapis", both she and her colleague Colonel Olcott wrote articles for the "Scientist" and spent a good deal of time and money. We must remember that at that time Spiritualists were the only group known as noteworthy for two facts: first for their definite challenge to the materialists' thesis that the death of the body was the end of everything; and secondly, for proofs given (though perhaps not sufficient to satisfy everybody) that after death the individual's consciousness did persist. H.P.B. therefore linked up with the Spiritualists and, as she states in on memorandum in her own writing, which I have reproduced in the *Golden Book of the Theosophical Society* (page 8), 1926, that in order to prevent the collapse of Spiritualism through the discovery of the frauds of the mediums, the Holmes, she herself created out of the Akasha unusual spirits, who were Tartars, so that the proof might be given that Spiritualism was not utterly a fraud. She hoped to lead the Spiritualists out of their craze for mere communications into a greater philosophy, but Mr. Gerry Brown withdrew from

the attempt, and hence H.P.B.'s very caustic remark in her Scrapbook, reproduced by me in the *Golden Book* (page 17):—

"Several hundred dollars out of our pockets were spent on behalf of the Editor, and he was made to pass through a minor 'diksha'. This proving of no avail, the Theosophical Society was established. The man might have become a POWER, he preferred to remain an Ass. *De gustibus non disputandum est.*"

It was from that moment that she lost all hope in the Spiritualists, that they would pass through what little they had discovered concerning the invisible worlds into a larger philosophy of life.

A similar disaster took place with regard to the best and most cultured spiritualist of the time, the Rev. Stainton Moses, a professor in University College, London, editor of "Light". Mr. Stainton Moses was a natural psychic of a very high order, and an effort was made by a living Adept, who is referred to several times in the *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* as "+ Emperor". Specially noteworthy is the cross always in front of his name, and I am fairly certain that this was the Master Jesus. But Mr. Stainton Moses insisted on considering the very high inspiration which he received as coming from one of his "spirits" and not a living Adept. That was his failure. Ever since that time there has certainly been a wide gap between our Theosophical propaganda and that of the Spiritualists.

But this does not mean that Spiritualists have not been doing remarkably useful work for mankind, particularly of the Christian world. One has to be familiar with the attitude of the Christians to the subject of death to realize, first, what a sense of terror death gives; and second, how completely the individual, after he dies, is identified with the decaying body in the grave.

Every Christian knows the type of hymn, for instance, about the burial of a child:—

“Tender Shepherd, Thou hast still’d
Now Thy little lamb’s brief weeping;
Oh, how peaceful, pale, and mild,
In its narrow bed ’tis sleeping,
And no sigh of anguish sore
Heaves that little bosom more.”

As to the general attitude of the grown-ups, the Christian conception is:

“Sleep on, beloved, sleep, and take
thy rest;
Lay down thy head upon thy Saviour’s
breast:
We love thee well; but Jesus loves
thee best—Good-night!”

We know that before dying King Edward VII wanted sung his favourite hymn: “Now the labourer’s task is o’er”. The last two lines are:—

“Father, in Thy gracious keeping
Leave we now Thy servant sleeping.”

I have a Spanish notice of death beginning: “Our dear Mrs. —, having ceased to exist . . .” Perhaps the most striking is what I noted at an Easter service concerning the Christ in 1944, where the words occurred, “Now sleeps the Lord, secure from human sorrow.” The Christian imagination thinks always of “poor dear father” as in the grave; we all know “Dere old massa am a sleeping, sleeping in de cold cold ground.” If any Christian considered the natural action of the worms, etc., he might give up this beautiful conception of “sleeping”. In some Catholic countries they put the coffins into holes in a wall. Somewhere in Mexico there was an earthquake and the coffins were thrown out, and you can imagine what the sight was like. One day in Brazil I found the trams full of women in black carrying flowers and I asked what it was all about. I was told that it was All Souls day, and that it was the duty of every Catholic to go to the cemeteries

and lay flowers on the grave and of course weep profusely the loss of their beloved who were there sleeping. I noticed that men seemed conspicuous by their absence in this ghastly ceremony.

This intense materialism of Christianity, insisting that at death all the faculties of the individual “go to sleep” is something terrible, particularly to those who dearly love those who have “gone before”. I have thought how during the war, when the radio announced concerning our planes that went out to Germany, that such and such a number failed to return, what must have been the feeling of the wives, parents, children and sweethearts of those who were Christians, who are forced by the Christian idea to believe that once a person has died there is an utter impossibility that the dearly beloved can ever feel anything of the love being poured out by those who are living. I cannot think of anything more ghastly in the way of a tragedy than this feeling that all the love that is poured out to the beloved dead meets an absolutely dead wall, as according to the Christian creed, he cannot possibly know of our love. The dead person has been put in what may be called a kind of cold storage until Gabriel blows his trumpet, and all the dead awaken from their long sleep.

It is all this horrible suffering of humanity that has been abolished by Spiritualism. In my long tours in South and Central America, where there are hundreds of spiritualistic circles, those who attend them, though they are Catholics, do not accept the Catholic idea of the dead that he “has ceased to exist”. There is a more sane and truly Theosophical attitude towards the life beyond the grave. Incidentally I may mention that in some spiritualistic circles certain dead doctors appear, and give prescriptions, which certainly seem to effect remedies. Of course the weak point in Spiritualism is that Spiritual-

ism can never give any proof of *immortality*, meaning by that word that the consciousness after death continues on and on in endless time. The individual may survive for a few years, but who knows if at the end of 20 years or even 100 years he may not be dissolved as was his physical body. I know that Plato and other ancients are supposed to appear, but to judge by what they say, they are absolute frauds, for what they say is as weak as water. Furthermore, Spiritualists resent very much the Theosophical explanation that any dead person can easily impersonate another; that to an expert dead person all the most sacred facts of any sitter's life can be read in his aura and memory, and can be reeled out as proof that the communicating entity is what the sitter thinks him to be. In a lecture a few years ago in London on the subject of "Love and Death", while I gave due meed of tribute to the work of Spiritualists in lifting the awful quality of depression from Christianity, I pointed out these facts about impersonation, and I received a good deal of abuse from the leading weekly Spiritualistic newspaper of London.

To sum up, I have assisted at many sésances and seen "physical phenomena". There seem to be few now, and it is mostly sermons, like what any living Theosophist can give. All that I have seen and heard merely upholds the Theosophical thesis that death is not the end. But Spiritualism leads nowhere, so far as a great philosophy of life is concerned. Nevertheless I know from my own observation in Latin America the immense comfort that Spiritualism has given in the course of its hundred years. Incidentally, I may remark that in Latin America all the spirits teach Reincarnation, and of late Karma as well in Brazil. What prevents us Theosophists from giving our cordial approval for the good aspect of the work done by any body of people, even if mixed up with their good work there may be a certain

part of their work that we disapprove? I would like to quote the following that took place at the U.S.A. Convention in 1892:—

"Bro. Judge then discussed the paper by Dr. Buck, claiming that Theosophists were not opposed to Spiritualism, but that they gave an explanation which necessarily controverted Spiritualism. A lady then took ground against Bro. Judge, saying he thought Spiritualists were not good or intelligent. Bro. Judge denied this, and the audience of 400 declared in one voice that such was not the impression he conveyed. Bro. Thomas of San Diego declared with Bro. Judge, but also said that many Theosophists had been Spiritualists and that the latter had paved the way for Theosophy."

Yours faithfully,
C. Jinarajadasa.

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Another letter from Mr. Jinarajadasa concerns an earlier statement in the Magazine respecting the absence of the Mahatma Letters from many Lodge Libraries. The President states that his book, *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom*, a collection of 49 Letters was published four years before Trevor Barker's *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. This was followed in 1925 by a collection of 82 Letters entitled *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom (Second Series)*; in November 1925 the President published *The Early Teachings of the Masters* which included "such portions of the Mahatma Letters as were authorized by the Masters to be distributed." We are grateful for this information, although the letters answers the main question only indirectly and does not enlarge upon the important point of 'authorization'. We are grateful also for copies of the three books above-mentioned. Copies of these have been for many years in the Toronto Lodge Circulating Library and in the Travelling Library which loans books to students across Canada.

THE EXILE OF THE SOUL

BY ROY MITCHELL

(Continued from Page 128)

VII. THE MYTHOLOGICAL PROBLEM.

This is the prime reason why the evolutionary mythologists are puzzled. If you are quite sure that nine-tenths of the material of your study is nonsense, it will be fatally easy—for reasons of mental laziness alone—to give up your effort to understand a difficult problem, and assign the whole thing to the nonsense division. The man who is satisfied that the earth is flat and that the sun goes over and under it, can never become a distinguished interpreter of Copernicus, nor will any man who thinks compassion a waste of time make much of the sayings of Gautama Buddha. Neither will anyone who is sure the science of philology was invented yesterday have the patience to unriddle the *Cratylus* of Plato. Instead you will find him saying, "Plato, so intelligent about other matters, was ignorant and credulous in his tracing of the origins of Greek words, and his *Cratylus* has no scientific value." Which is to say that the clear-eyed Plato, in spite of the strictest habit of examination of any philosopher we have ever known, in spite of a lifetime in the use of Greek, in spite of association with the greatest trained minds of the golden age of Athens, in spite of an intimate knowledge of the several dialects and related languages, the possession of dictionaries that have disappeared, for all he pondered words and was the greatest classical user of them, for all he was the avowed continuer of the then-extant lore of Orpheus, Onomacritus, Pherecydes, Aglaophamus, Homer, Pythagoras and Pindar, word makers and

users, knew less of these things than a foggy-minded English or German curate.

Similarly you will find such a Gradgrind writing, "The Greek mind, of course, was incapable of understanding such and such a thing" or, "It never occurred to the ancient Egyptian that—", or "The Hindu could not conceive of ———", or when Homer does not specifically mention something, saying "It is certain that Homer knew nothing of ———". Sometimes you will find one of these omniscient gentlemen writing this kind of nonsense; "The figure of the infant Horus with his finger upon his lips was long considered a symbol of secrecy, and was used as such by Egyptian, Greek, and Roman secret societies. Modern research shows that it meant nothing of the sort; that it was merely a sign of childish innocence." That is to say, the societies that *used* it and the sculptors who *made* it with such a use in mind, as a sign of the inviolability of a mystery cult did not know why they used it or why they made it. What is one to do with minds like these? Yet such are the constant processes of argument brought to bear on the modern interpretation of myth. These are the absurdities inseparable from an evolutionary theory of religion.

With this habit to defeat their best endeavours it is easy to see why our interpreters of religious fable do not penetrate far into the mystery. They have in recent years worked out a definition of myth on which most of them agree. In the version of W. Sherwood Fox it is as follows:

"A myth is a statement, or virtual statement as implied in a symbol, an

attribute, or an epithet, accepted as true by its original maker and his hearers, and referring to the eternal nature and past acts of beings greater than man, and frequently to circumstances which to us are improbable or impossible."

It is the requirement of this school of thinking that the phrase "accepted as true by its original maker and his hearers," should mean that it was accepted as literally true, or if some element of symbol did enter in it must be such a symbol as could be easily grasped by child-like minds. If one suggests that it may have been offered as philosophical or mythical allegory, these mythologists reply that being born of savagery it could have had only a trifling interpretation. Under no circumstances must you attribute a high meaning to it although it is permissible to attribute ever so far-fetched a low one. Their dogma is that because it originated early in the history it must have a less profound value than if it had appeared later. Which is the same as saying that all later poets must be superior to all earlier ones, that all later philosophers must be wiser than all earlier philosophers and all later teachers more profound than all earlier ones. Which of course is nonsense.

The outstanding fact about human thought is that wisdom is where you find it and you are more likely to find it in a document of tradition that has had the power to move many persons over a long period of time. The great myths may easily have been—indeed the mass of evidence is in favour of their having been—the symbolical expression of ideas from which we are excluded because of materialistic prejudices. The same Sallustius I quoted before had another wise saying about which is a key to the art of myth reading. It was that when the events of a myth become improbable or impossible as literal fact it became the duty of the student to look

for a spiritual fact. Only an evolutionary mythologist can assume that these early poets and seers must have been fools offering impossibilities to credulous listeners. By the rules of his game he must think Keats a fool for telling people that jocund day ever stood tiptoe upon a misty mountain-top.

The central clause is valid enough but it is insufficient to account for the facts. He says that myth refers to "the eternal nature and past acts of beings greater than man." What is needed to complete it is an idea, as easily available to Dr. Fox as it is to any other reader. It is to be found throughout the pages of the best and wisest teachers of the various systems—that most of the beings greater than man, whose eternal nature and past acts form the body of myth, *are none other than man himself*. The rest are man's adversaries here upon earth.

Pythagoras is clear upon the point so far as Greek myth is concerned. So is Empedocles and so is Plato. So also are Plotinus, Plutarch, Iamblichus and Proclus. Hermes Trismegistus, the Egyptian, leaves no doubt of his belief that men are fallen divinities. The Hindu sages, Krishna, Gautama, and Sankara, taught it. So did the Chinese Lao Tsze, Lieh Tsze, Chuang Tsze, Confucius, Chu Hse, and Wang Yang Ming. No one can read the Gathas without recognizing it as fundamental in Zoroastrian belief; the Sufis taught it, and so did the Christian Gnostics. It is in the Eddas, the Quran, and the Kabalah. It is in our Christian tradition.

Why then, if it is so evident that all the myths deal with a golden age before the descent of the Divine Egoes, a bondage or enchantment here in the hands of the adversaries, and a return again to our earlier home, do not modern mythologists accept it

Because they do not want it. And honest use of their scientific method

would dictate that they report the phenomena as they find them saying, these are the beliefs and although we do not hold them, these foolish and credulous people did. They are not so honest, they repudiate the philosophy that accompanies the stories and assign meanings they themselves can believe. The only reason for thinking an ancient Mayan could possibly believe the ocean swallowed the sun at night and disgorged it in the morning is that Sir Bertram Windle had the kind of mind that permitted him to believe the Mayan could.

Just as surely as the Christian apologists are pledged to the belief that Christianity is the true light, so the evolutionary mythologists are pledged to the idea that evolution is the only true theory of man on earth, and no matter what the facts, they will bring in their pre-determined verdict. That man was once higher than he is and is now below his true place is a defiance of Darwin and Haeckel and although you may say what you please about God, Darwin and Haeckel are sacred. Too many men have invested their reputations in them.

Meanwhile, the contradictions involved in the life, let us say of Dionysos, the heights from which he has come, the degradations to which he has fallen and the heights to which he will again ascend, clear enough as Proclus explains him, must be modernly interpreted as the sap in the grape-vine. Prometheus, the god who fell into the bondage of the earth forces, so revealing a figure in Aeschylus, must remain a primitive savage who discovered fire; the Kumaras or celibate youths who descended into half animal bodies to redeem them, must have their interpretation in sex magic and taboo; the Chinese men of old time who knew the Tao and lost it, must be understood as skin-clad barbarians of a pastoral age.

The key that would reconcile the contradictions and thus lead to a useful conclusion these mythologists reject because they do not want the conclusion.

The fables of redeemers, understood in all the older faiths as types and exemplars of man himself, of the ego of each of us, are "culture-heroes" and no more. The fables of Orpheus who came down into the place of shades for Eurydice, of Persephone drawn down into the realm of Pluto, of Herakles who toiled for the liberation of men, of Perseus who freed Andromeda from the sea-monster, of Theseus who defeated the minotaur, of Apollo who slew Typhoeus, of dismembered Osiris assembled and raised again, of the Greek Sons of the Sun besieging the stronghold of the Sons of the Moon to free Helen, Rama the Son of the Sun freeing Sita from the moon host, Arjuna and his four brothers all the Sons of the Sun defeating the Kurus or Sons of the Moon, Vainamoinen defeating the evil magician Lemminkainen, the Volsungs toiling to save a lower race, are nothing but childish efforts of the dawn of human intellect to celebrate their tribal strong men? It doesn't seem reasonable. There is too much power in the stories. They have moved too many wise men of vision. If they do not move mythologists to vision the implication is plain.

(To Be Continued)

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