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Divine Wisdom

Brotherhood

Occult Science

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THE ONE LAW—AND “GOD”

BY ERNEST WOOD

In the Mahatma Letters to Mr. Sinnett one of the Masters writes: “We recognise but one law in the universe, the law of Harmony, or perfect Equilibrium.” And again: “We deny the existence of a thinking conscious God on the grounds that such a God must either be conditioned, limited and subject to change, therefore not infinite, or if he is represented to us as an eternal unchangeable and independent being, with not a particle of matter in him, then we answer that it is no being, but an immutable blind principle, a law.”

From the basis of these and similar statements by the Masters we draw some inferences and present some conclusions.

In the course of evolution we find man making things for himself in this world—all the common things of daily life which are produced with hands, but really by thought. All these thousands of objects—especially things with which civilized man surrounds himself—are definitely mind-produced. Another group of forms, the organic, consisting of animals, plants and even the human body itself, are also mind-produced, since they result from the actions of minds—legs produced by minds trying to run, eyes produced by minds trying to see, and all the rest of the instrumental

forms which minds have made for themselves over long periods of time. We are all familiar with the idea that in the course of evolution function precedes structure, and behind that function there is an instinct of self-preservation, and even more than that, an instinct of self-expansion, or self-enhancement.

It is stated in more than one scripture and in the writings of Madame Blavatsky that the whole universe of forms is composed of the karmas of the universe of lives round which those forms are gathered. These karmas are the products of mind, and, once made, they present a series of obstacles to the minds that made them.*

As this works out in the process of reincarnation we see mind modifying forms and forms modifying mind in regular shuttle action. In the early part of life in this world of karmas the mind eagerly observes the things of the phenomenal world and works among them to produce alterations.

* *Footnote:* This is what happens in our lives. We are all the time dealing with our own past production and correcting it. The mind is full of thoughts which are wrong, and need consideration and replacement.

This relationship is always mutual. The carpenter makes a chair and at the same time makes the man—himself; he modifies that object, but he equally modifies himself. We thus speak of karma in two ways. We can speak of “a karma”, referring to a thing made, and we can speak of “the law of karma”, which is a way of saying that when the thing is made it is there, and the only way to get rid of it is to unmake it or to remove it or to do something about it. The law of karma can be stated in the form that a man gets what he makes, neither more nor less. In the large business of millions of men living collectively in one world and exchanging their various products among one another it still remains true that each one gets what he makes, neither more nor less. That is the law.

This law is outside the power of man. He cannot escape it or modify its operations. As far as we are concerned it is “God”, something with a character of its own, operating upon man and entirely beyond his power to modify. Nothing else is that. In one ancient book God is defined as that Being who is unmoved by anything else.

When it is stated that there is *only one law* in the universe and that is the law of equilibrium or karma, it is also stated that what we call “the laws of nature” are not laws, but forces, and those forces are operations of minds or lives. For example, the so-called law of gravitation is not a law but a force. It is an attribute or property of an object, or rather many objects. We know, of course, in these enlightened days, that an apple does not fall to the earth, but that the apple and the earth attract each other and, in the absence of any other restraining force, will fly together. This means that an object which is tangible and visible has as one of its properties the tendency to reach out and go towards other objects. In this, it exhibits force, not law. When such a force

occurs in large quantities anywhere, men can rely upon its occurrence and then they call it a law. In our teaching it is carefully stated that such occurrences are operations of lives or minds, with however such constant habits that they seem invariable to us.

Years ago I found quite a bit of help in understanding this matter from one of the old Puranic stories of India—that of “The Pillar of Light”. The Purānas belong to what the Master calls “the scriptures written for our superstitious masses.” I do not read any contempt or disapproval in the Master’s expression, but simply a statement that the scriptures of the past contain material for undeveloped minds* as well as for others, and I think I am right in saying that the Purānas have an esoteric side to them, since careful minds, taking them as allegorical stories, can find in them some hints and directions leading to true ideas. The story of the Pillar of Light may be condensed and put into modern form somewhat as follows:

In the time of pralaya, or the nighttime of the world, between two of its incarnations, all was quiet, and the great trinity of deity—Shiva, Vishnu and Brahmā†—were taking a well-earned rest. At the approach of day Brahmā woke up and, seeing Vishnu, touched him and said, “Who are you?” Vishnu

* *Footnote*: The literary productions of the Theosophical Society were intended to be not of this kind, but statements of the highest truth—upani-shadic rather than puranic—so as to attract the highest minds, not the younger, to the Society, so that it would form a great force for enlightenment in the world.

† *Footnote*: Brahmā is not the same as Brahman. The latter is a word for speaking of all three in unity, the former to indicate the third or creative aspect only.

replied, "I am the Lord of the world". But Brahmā said, "That cannot be, for I am that." Then the two fell to quarrelling. While the dispute was going on there suddenly appeared a great pillar of light going upward and downward beyond their sight. The story says that Vishnu and Brahmā stopped quarrelling, to wonder what this was. Brahmā then flew upwards for a thousand years, trying to find the top of it, and Vishnu dived downwards for a thousand years, trying to find the bottom of it, but both of them returned baffled, and acknowledged that they had found something which they could not understand, and which was therefore greater than themselves. Then Shiva appeared from the pillar of light, told them that he was the Lord of the world—which they readily acknowledged—and ordered them to set to work upon a new world period of day. Brahmā was told to attend to the form side of creation and Vishnu to the life entering the forms, but it was Shiva who brought them together and who said that he would be with them throughout the coming day, maintaining the harmony between them.

The point of the story is that the principle of relation between minds and forms is more fundamental than either of them, and represents as it were the one deity in which both the others are contained. We have to think of law as the category of being in which mind and matter are subordinate classes.

When we inspect the operation of the law of karma in human life, we find that it does for man the things which man *really* wants deity to do. That is, it provides conditions in which he can proceed towards the constantly fuller realization of his own being. I have frequently spoken of this under the title of "God our Opponent". If we wish to become good tennis players or good chess players, we need an opponent on the other side of the net or of the board.

That opponent should not be a weakling whom we can easily defeat, nor an expert who can easily defeat us. He should be someone just a little stronger than ourselves, who can defeat us in the particular game but leave us stronger for the next game. This is what happens in the field of karma. It is certainly not punishment that we are receiving, and it is not mere retribution, or the receiving back of what we have given, but it is education through opportunity. Every moment of life is a problem which demands the exercise of our thought, love and will, and the fact that we have survived all these milleniums and all these incarnations and gained some maturity in the process shows that our opponent has not been too strong for us, but has met us exactly according to our need.

The law of karma allows for that best sort of education in which the children make their own toys and therefore have toys exactly suited to their own minds.

When we view karma as opportunity we not only feel that we can exercise our own intelligence among our problems, but we acquire a new feeling towards the world. There are certain emotions which often stand in our way, spoiling the best use of our faculties—such as discontent, resentment, envy, jealousy, greed, fear, impatience—but these fade away when karma is understood, or rather they are replaced by positive affection, a kind of thankfulness or gratitude, a feeling towards the world of experience that we are meeting with it as with a well-loved friend.

The attitude that thus arises is surely a proper form of devotion. We see that there is something in the statement made by a well-known philosopher that no one can really understand anything until he loves it. It brings to us also something of the mood of the Christian mystics, who held that God was with them in the experiences of pain as well

as in those of pleasure*—a release of the will from the dominance of pleasures and pains and their mental consequences, the likings and dislikings which cause us to be governed so much from the outside. We find our own will in harmony with the fundamental law. The same attitude was expressed by Emerson, when he said: "To the poet, to the philosopher, to the saint, all things are friendly and sacred, all events prof-

itable, all days holy, all men divine." It is the height of theosophical understanding to have the right feeling as well as the right knowledge about karma.

* *Footnote*: The practice of the "absolute presence" of God; real belief in omnipresence.

(May be reprinted in other Magazines, with acknowledgements to *The Canadian Theosophist*.)

A CATECHISM OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Chapter II: THE SPIRITUAL MAN

1. Q. What are the characteristics of the spiritual man?
A. The characteristics of the spiritual man are:—Compassion, Justice, Love for Truth, Loyalty to Principles, and Impersonality.
2. Q. What is Compassion?
A. COMPASSION is a Divine Love for all that lives; "it is the law of LAWS—eternal Harmony, the law of love eternal," of life universal, and of IMMORTALITY.
3. Q. What is the Foundation of Compassion?
A. The *solidarity* by which all spiritual monads are bound into ONE, and which springs from the UNITY manifesting on the highest Spiritual Plane.
4. Q. What is Justice?
A. JUSTICE is the Principle of Harmonious Equality.
5. Q. What is Harmonious Equality?
A. HARMONIOUS EQUALITY is the condition where every being has a place and rank exactly according to his inner status, resulting in an harmonious balance of DHARMA and equal rewards for equal merits.
6. Q. What is the Foundation of Justice?
A. The foundation of Justice is
7. Q. What is the Spiritual aspect of KARMA?
A. The Eternal Longing for Absolute Harmony.
8. Q. What is Love for Truth?
A. Love for Truth is a complete attachment and devotion to *Truth*.
9. Q. What is Truth?
A. Truth is Knowledge which conforms to all facts. It is, therefore, that pure food which is essential for the growth of the SOUL.
10. Q. What is the Foundation of the Love for Truth?
A. The Spiritual Ego, which is Knowledge per se.
11. Q. What is a Principle?
A. A Principle is an unreducible spiritual element of EXISTENCE.
12. Q. What is Loyalty to Principles?
A. Loyalty to Principles is following as lines of conduct, those traced by Eternal Nature on the imperishable centre of one's being.
13. Q. What is the Foundation of the Loyalty to Principles?
A. The spiritual realm of the ABSTRACT, which is the true home of Man's Spirit.
14. Q. What is Impersonality?
A. Impersonality is the abnegation of the personality in the inter-

- est of the Supreme Spiritual Aim.
15. Q. Which is the Supreme Spiritual Aim?
A. The Supreme Spiritual Aim is the Good of Mankind and of all other creatures.
16. Q. What is the Good of Mankind?
A. The Good of Mankind is its spiritualization.
17. Q. And what is the Good of all other creatures?
A. The Good of all other creatures is their rationalization.
18. Q. What is the object of worship of the Spiritual Man?
A. He will worship the ever unknowable and incognizable *Karana* alone, the *Causeless* Cause of all causes, in the innermost temple of his heart (cf. S.D. I-280).
19. Q. How is this worship done?
A. By making his spirit the sole mediator between himself and the *Universal Spirit*, his good actions the only priests, and his sinful intentions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the *Presence*. (cf. S.D. I-280).
20. Q. How will the spiritual man deal with Objective Life?
A. He will always be more concerned with the abstract, than with the concrete, with causes than with effects. His mind will ever try to penetrate the veil of Matter in the search of Spirit, to reduce appearances to their eternal principles, to deal with *generals* rather than with particulars, with *metaphysics* rather than with physics.
21. Q. What is the Goal of the Spiritual Man?
A. He aims to satisfy the spiritual longings of his Divine Ego, having as goal a never ending *Spiritual Evolution* to ever greater heights of knowledge, Wisdom and COMPASSION.
22. Q. How do the mental activities of the Spiritual Man differ from those of ordinary men?
A. The Spiritual Man uses a great deal his Higher Mind, and even when he uses his lower, concrete mind, the latter will always reflect in one way or another the influence radiated from the Higher Mind.
23. Q. Can you describe the activities of the Higher Mind?
A. Only in general terms, as its own activity is not directly related to the physical plane. The following activities will give an idea:
- (a) Abstract Thinking—i.e. without concrete images;
 - (b) Spiritual Reasoning—a logical ratiocination based on spiritual premisses and spiritual synthesizing, processes, used especially for the consolidation of intuitional knowledge;
 - (c) Analogizing—i.e. the establishing of relations between factors of an unknown subject by the use of analogy and by correspondence to parallel factors of a known subject;
 - (d) Symbologizing*—i.e. the reading and writing of symbols and allegories;
 - (e) Spiritual Clear Vision—i.e. the perception of Truth underlying mayavic appearances; more especially the joining of the Past, Present, and Future into ONE REALITY.
24. Q. And which are the powers of the Lower Mind as reflected from the Higher Mind?
A. It will suffice to mention the following powers:
- (a) The power of concentration, as a result of stopping the wandering of the mind;
 - (b) The power of meditation, in the sense of marshalling all the

* Coined for the occasion.

mental images stored up in the memory and related to the particular subject chosen, and next, to establish relationships by any suitable means;

- (c) The power of vaticination, as related to the Future on the objective planes;
- (d) The power of originality, which causes every activity of the Spiritual Man to be stamped with an independent originality;
- (e) The power of art, which instills beauty and grace into the various activities of the Spiritual Man.

25. Q. What other powers can the Spiritual Man manifest?

A. The accomplished Spiritual Man, perfected in Raja Yoga, has through the help of his Divine Monad — ATMA BUDDHI — command over the superhuman SIDDHIS, whose exoteric descriptions can be found in the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali.

26. Q. Are among these Siddhis also the physiological powers of the Hatha Yogi?

A. No, certainly not, as these powers are not at all spiritual but rather of a disgusting nature and of no use to the Spiritual Man.

27. Q. But does not the great Sage S'ankarācārya deal with the practices of Hatha Yoga?

A. Yes, in a way he does, but he completely spiritualizes the concepts, as can be seen from his treatise Direct Realization (Aparokṣānubhūti, slokas 100/121).

BY MANGALA.

(The above article is not to be reproduced without first obtaining authority so to do through the Editor.)

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I have received a very satisfactory report from the Secretary of the Theosophical International Correspondence League in Canada giving a long list of persons who have been put in touch with others in many parts of the world. The original idea as now carried out seems to be the culmination of a long-felt want, and this note is to intimate that others who are interested and wish to correspond with Pen-Pals, are requested to write the Secretary as per the notice printed in another part of this issue of the magazine.

* * * *

We were delighted to have Professor Ernest Wood, accompanied by Mrs. Wood, with us again. Wherever he goes Mr. Wood always stimulates not only local interest but much activity in theosophical affairs generally. He remained in Toronto for one week and at the Lodge there expounded his theories of Yoga as laid down in his latest book "Practical Yoga, Ancient and Modern"; a book, by the way, no earnest student can afford to be without. Large audiences attended all his lectures. After Toronto, he went to Montreal and Ottawa where he was to speak on the same subject.

* * * *

I have read with the greatest interest a preamble on "An Animals' Bill of Rights" drawn up by Mr. Geoffrey Hodson, and sent me from the Council of Combined Animal Welfare Organization of New Zealand. It seems that that country is far ahead of any other in its efforts to educate its citizens in regard to reform in the treatment of animals by man. Every effort should be made by Theosophists to further such schemes, and I may add, they should not wait for plans, no matter how well laid, to mature, but act immediately by doing everything they can to assuage the suf-

ferings of animals. Last month in my Notes I wrote of the matter in regard to the exportation of horses from this country to Belgium and of the sufferings of the animals in transit and have spoken on several public occasions since, each time arousing much commiseration and I hope actual service toward amelioration of such nefarious practises.

* * * *

According to the latest report from Olcott, Mr. Jinarajadasa is now sufficiently recovered from his recent illness as to be able to resume in a very modified way, his tour as arranged. Unfortunately he will not be able to visit Western Canada at all as he has been ordered to conserve his strength which has been overly taxed. This will cause disappointment to many of our lodges who have been looking forward to his expected visit, but I feel sure that by the above explanation everybody will appreciate the situation. The East is more fortunate for he will come to Toronto and eventually Montreal. He will not give any public lectures however but confine himself to meeting the members and talking to them only. Mr. Jinarajadasa has not been strong for some years and we hope that this conservation of his energy and health will enable him to carry out the most important of his objects in coming to America.

* * * *

I have been notified that important changes are taking place in the administrative affairs of the Theosophical Society in Northern Ireland. As the Republic has separated itself from the British Commonwealth it is no longer possible for the Theosophical Society in the two countries to be organized as a single "National Society" under the Society's present international constitution. Therefore the lodges in Northern Ireland have passed resolutions agreeing to co-operate as a group attached to

Adyar until such time as they can apply for a charter authorizing the use of the name "The Theosophical Society in Northern Ireland." In the meantime Dr. Hugh Shearman has been appointed Presidential Agent, and the address is, 18 Brookhill Avenue, Belfast. It will be the aim of all members to see that this administrative change does not create any break in the customary co-operation among members in the two countries or impair in any way the inner and effective unity of the Society. We send our best wishes to Dr. Shearman and the Society in Ireland generally on their endeavours to meet the situation and continue the best traditions of the Society under the present circumstances.

* * * *

We are very happy to welcome the following new members into the Society:—Mrs. Judy Anderson, Orpheus Lodge; Miss Edith Dearden, Hamilton Lodge; Mr. Frank Cooper; Mr. James Sutton; Mr. Clark Purvis; Mrs. Helen Kenyon; Mr. Ivan Hare; Mr. Norman Beerman; Dr. Richard S. Wynn; Mrs. Arnold Wild and Mr. J. Emory Clapp, all of the Toronto Lodge.

E. L. T.

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.

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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.

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Paper No. 8 of the Peace Lodge, Hyde, Cheshire, England, contains the first installment of a very interesting study of "Mme. Blavatsky and Spiritualism." This first installment gives an outline of the development of Spiritualism prior to 1873 and ends with a consideration of the impact of H.P.B. on the Spiritualistic Movement. This work

has been well done and we are looking forward to the next installment.

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The Young Citizen (Adyar) for March, quotes with evident approval, from the writings of Cardinal Newman: "The true gentleman carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast . . ." Apparently the Cardinal considered that Jesus, despite His merits as a Saviour, was no gentleman! What about the money-changers in the temple? Every creative thinker 'jars and jolts' his generation.

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From 'A Letter from Adyar' published in *Theosophy in Australia*, we learn that the A.B.C. Fund with a goal of Rs. 2,000,000 (\$600,000) stands at Rs. 430,000, which sum is now yielding Rs. 11,000 towards the annual deficit at Adyar. The taxes recently imposed by the City of Madras have been reduced approximately 50% to about Rs. 6000. Thirty-six books are awaiting publication at the Theosophical Publishing House but Indian paper is available only in limited quantities and imported paper is very expensive. It is interesting to note that "Because of the high standard of typographical workmanship and accuracy of our Vasanta Press, the Government of India has recently requested the Society to undertake the printing of its 'Report on Indigenous Systems of Medicine'. For this the Government will supply the paper."

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A letter from Herr Martin Boyken, General Secretary of the German Section, which was published in *Theosophy in Action*, the official organ of The Theosophical Societies in Europe, tells of increasing activity and interest among the German Lodges. There are now twenty-one Lodges including a Lodge near Munchen formed of Displaced Russians. The Section now has 630 members.

We were delighted to receive a letter from an old subscriber, Mr. J. C. Miller of Manila, Philippines. Mr. Miller used to contribute letters and articles to the magazine and we hope to hear from him again. He states that he is recovering from long years in internment camps and that he has not seen a copy of the magazine since 1941.

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A note from the Philippines also appears in *The American Theosophist* for April. Mr. Walter X. Osborn, F.T.S., reports that there are sixteen Lodges in the Islands, eight of which are in Manila. The Society has its headquarters in a quonset hut on the outskirts of Manila.

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We may have to become vegetarians by force of circumstances, if not by persuasion, according to an article 'One Man's Meat' in the May 18th issue of *Manas*. "Half the people of the world are living close to the starvation line and forty percent of them are children," according to an October 1948 report by the U.N.O. Appeal for Children Committee. "Even with the most whole-hearted effort, many of the 462,000,000 children needing help, have little hope of survival". This is an appalling thought. Says *Manas* "The primary fact is that the meat-eaters of the earth are starving the rest of the world to death . . . At present, a human diet including meat requires about 1.6 acres of arable land per person fed, according to the British estimate. Of this total, only .3 of an acre is needed for all the bread, butter, milk, cheese, potatoes, fruit and vegetables, the rest of the land—1.3 acres—being devoted to meat production . . . According to data assembled by William Vogt, author of *Road to Survival*, "the really productive areas of the world are so limited that there is only about two-tenths of an acre per person." A recommended pamphlet on this sub-

ject is *Bread and Peace* by Roy Walker (published by C. W. Daniel, Ashington, Rochford, Essex, England, one shilling).

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Incidentally the above quoted issue of *Manas* has among its other thought-provoking articles, a fine review of *Out of Exile* by Soetan Sjahrir, one of the organizers of the Indonesian Revolution and Premier of the Indonesian Republic from November 1945 to June 1947. The quotations from the letters of Sjahrir reveal a strong, compassionate, tolerant, wise man who understands the problems of the Dutch administrators and who loves his own people and desires to serve them.

EXCHANGE MAGAZINES

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

The American-Theosophist, April, May.
 Lucifer, Covina, May.
 Theosophia, Los Angeles, May-June.
 The Federation Quarterly, Canadian Federation, April.
 The Golden Lotus, March-April.
 Peace Lodge Paper, No. 8.
 Theosophy in Action, The Theosophical Society in Europe, March.
 Theosophical News and Notes, March-April, May-June.
 Theosophy in Australia, Dec.-Jan.
 The Indian Theosophist, Jan.-Feb.
 Ancient Wisdom, March.
 Theosophia, Holland, April.
 The Young Citizen, Adyar, Feb., March.
 Devenir, Uruguay, March.
 Adyar, Austria, April.
 Norsk Teosofisk Tidsskrift, Jan.-Feb.
 Revista Teosofica Cubana, March.
 Revista Teosofica Argentina, March-April.
 O Teosofista, Brazil, April.
 Metaphysische Rundschau, May.

THE EARTH'S EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION

Our readers will recall the article bearing the above title, which was written by the late A. C. Fellows, and which appeared in two installments in the September and October issues of last year. In December a letter was published from Mr. Boris de Zirkoff giving his comments on Mr. Fellows' article.

We have now received a note from Dr. J. Croiset van Uchelen of Hollywood, California drawing attention to several statements on this subject, which are to be found in the esoteric teachings left by Dr. G. de Purucker. These teachings were published in 1948 by the Theosophical University Press (Covina) under the title *The Dialogues of G. de Purucker* in three volumes which are priced at \$20.00 a set. The statements quoted by Dr. van Uchelen are:

" . . . we are karmically and for eternity bound up with the vital essence of the Sun and as entities, both planets and the individual inhabitants of any planet, must live in that vital solar essence forever. But not necessarily always living in the same part of the solar system . . . All the planetary vital, psychical and spiritual energies—and this applies to all the planets—will be gathered into the Sun before the Sun's end comes. The Sun is the first to appear in manifestation, and is thus our Elder Brother again. It is the last to vanish from this plane." page 145, Vol. II).

" . . . every planet of the solar system will re-enter the Sun before the end of the solar manvantara." (page 150, Vol. II).

Mr. Fellows in his article had quoted from *The Esoteric Writings* of T. Subba Row, as follows, "When the planet in its approach to the sun passes over the line where the centripetal and centrifugal forces completely neutralize each

other, and is only acted upon by the centripetal force, it rushes towards the sun with a gradually increasing velocity, and is finally mixed up with the mass of the sun's body."

Mr. de Zirkoff commented on Mr. Fellows' basic idea of the spiralling movement of the planet away from and then towards the sun. Dr. van Uchelen on this point quotes from *The Dialogues*:

"As an example, Globe D on this cosmic Plane begins in the highest sub-plane and gradually with each new round sinks to the sub-plane below till it reaches the fourth sub-plane in the Fourth Round. Then beginning the fifth it slowly rises into the more ethereal planes. The same is true of all the other six (or eleven) globes of any planetary chain". (Page 379, Vol. III).

" . . . when such a planetary chain has reached its fourth existence, or planetary manvantara or fourth series of seven Rounds, it has reached its most material form."

"Now, Venus has reached that . . . why is Saturn intrinsically a more material planet than Earth, which Saturn actually is; and yet is much more ethereal? Simply because it is in one of its manvantaric existences previous to its fourth manvantaric existence, the most material. The Earth intrinsically is a more spiritual planetary chain than the Saturnian chain is." (Page 17, Vol. I).

Other statements on this subject may be found elsewhere in *The Dialogues*, for instance, on page 137 Vol. II where Dr. de Purucker puts forward the teaching that the planets "are not exactly 'absorbed' in the sun, but are dissipated and become part of the body corporate of the Sun. . . ." Again on page 150, Vol. II, "They are not absorbed. They do not become part of the individuality of the Sun. They merely enter the Sun and then leave it afterwards; again to re-enter the Sun, again to leave it."

Students may wish to compare these statements with other portions of *The Dialogues* and with *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. In the latter there is the teaching on page 99, "His (Flammarion's) mistake is that he believes a long time must be devoted to the ruin of the solar system; we are told that it occurs in the twinkling of an eye but not without many preliminary warnings. Another error is the supposition that the earth will fall into the sun. The sun itself is the first to disintegrate in the solar pralaya." See also the portion of *The Secret Doctrine* relating to the three kinds of pralayas. (pages 397-401, Vol. I.).

CORRESPONDENCE

Editor, Canadian Theosophist,
Toronto.

Dear Editor: In the course of his very interesting review of *The Story of the Soul in East and West* in your issue for April, D.W.B. mentions that: "An account is given of experiments in hypnosis and magnetic passes by which 'the inner bodies—etheric, astral, mental—are drawn out of the physical body 'as stalk from grass'. . . The efforts of the experimenter are then devoted to the etheric double from which he seeks to draw out the astral and mental bodies." From this it appears that the experimenter thinks that the astral and etheric bodies are two separate bodies. To prevent confusion in the minds of any of your readers who may be unfamiliar with the Blavatsky teaching it should be pointed out that this is at variance with the Theosophical Division of the Lower Quaternary given on page 70 of the *Key to Theosophy* where it is shown that the astral body is "the Double, the phantom body"—the term etheric body is not used, the other three "aspects" are the physical body, prana, and Kama rupa.

Mr. Judge further explains, on page 47 of *The Ocean of Theosophy* that "... when a man dies his astral body and principle of passion and desire leave the physical in company and coalesce. It is then that the term Kamarupa may be applied, as Kamarupa is really made of astral body and kama in conjunction, and this joining of the two makes a shape or form which though ordinarily invisible is material and may be brought into visibility." It is clear, then, that there are only two bodies included in the Lower Quaternary.

Yours fraternally,

W. B. Pease.

Victoria, B.C.,

31/May/49.

AMONG THE LODGES

Professor Ernest E. Wood, and Mrs. Wood, visited Toronto Theosophical Society again this year from Sunday, April 24th to Sunday, May 1st, inclusive. For the first Sunday evening of his stay, Professor Wood's subject was "Patanjali's 'Yoga for Modern Life'" (Part 1) and the second part followed on the last Sunday of his visit. The titles of the three public weeknight talks were "Human Personality and the Sub-conscious Mind"; "The Threefold Cyclic Law"; "The Psychology of the Path". One evening was set aside for a members' meeting, the title being "God, Our Opponent" at which time Professor Wood gave a comprehensive presentation of Karma.

Large audiences attended all the meetings during Professor Wood's stay and he dealt with the subjects as a deep student of Theosophy of many years' standing, with great interest and profit to all who heard him. An informal reception was held for Professor and Mrs. Wood by Toronto Lodge so that everyone would have an opportunity to meet them personally.

Mrs. G. I. Kinman,
Corresponding Secretary.

NIRVANA

"What is Nirvana?" An exceedingly orthodox lady of my acquaintance once became very sarcastic over this question.

"Nirvana", she said, "is a heathen superstition. A never-never land. A place which is nowhere: where you are nothing." She talked a long while in this strain, and ended with: "A never-never land, that's all."

I asked: "What is a never-never land," and the answer came, "Why—uh—er—Nirvana, of course."

I have heard Nirvana spoken of as annihilation, and as absorption. What is it really? What are the teachings?

I have collected a few extracts from Theosophical Literature on the subject, from *ISIS UNVEILED* Vol. II, p. 116, I gather the following: "The man who recognizes the Supreme Soul, in his own soul, as well as in that of all creatures, and who is equally just to all, (whether man or animals) obtains the happiest of all fates, that to be finally *absorbed* in the bosom of Brahma (Manu, Book xii, sloka 125). Ask a Brahman to explain Moksha, address yourself to an educated Buddhist, and pray him to define for you the meaning of Nirvana. Both will answer you that in every one of these religions Nirvana represents the dogma of the spirit's immortality. That, to reach the Nirvana means absorption into the great universal soul, the latter representing a *state* not an individual being, or an anthropomorphic god, as some understand the great EXISTENCE. That a spirit reaching such a state becomes a part of the integral *whole*, but never loses its individuality for all that. Henceforth, the spirit lives spiritually, without any fear of further modification of form, for form pertains to matter and the state of Nirvana implies a complete purification or a final riddance from even the most sublimated particle of matter."

H.P.B. Glossary under "NIRVANI":

"Positively (and esoterically) they define Nirvana as the highest state of spiritual bliss, as absolute immortality through absorption of the soul (spirit rather) into itself, but *preserving individuality* so that, e.g. Buddhas, after entering Nirvana may reappear on earth—i.e., in the future Manvantara." THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY, page 104:

"Speaking of *some* classes of higher Planetary Spirits, they will never be men on this planet because they are liberated Spirits from previous, earlier worlds and as such they cannot re-become men on this one. Yet all these will live again in the next and far higher Manvantara after the great age and Brahma *Pralaya* (a little period of sixteen figures or so) is over."

THE SECRET DOCTRINE, Vol I, page 177:

"Nirvana, the vanishing point of differentiated matter."

Page 193: "A Dhyani has to be an Atma-Buddhi: once the Buddhi Manas breaks loose from its immortal Atma of which it (Buddhi) is the vehicle, Atman passes into NON-BEING, which is absolute Being. This means that the purely Nirvanic state is a passage of Spirit back to the ideal abstraction of Be-ness which has no relation to the plane on which our Universe is accomplishing its cycle."

Page 266:—"reabsorption is by no means a dreamless sleep, but on the contrary, absolute existence, an unconditioned unity, or a state, to describe which human language is absolutely and hopelessly inadequate. The only approach to anything like a comprehensive conception of it can be attempted solely in the panoramic visions of the soul, through spiritual ideations of the divine monad. Nor is the individuality, *nor even the essence of the personality*, if any be left behind, lost, because reabsorbed. For however limitless from a human standpoint, the para-nirvanic state, it has yet a limit in Eternity.

Once reached, the same monad will re-emerge thereupon as a still higher being, on a far higher plane, to recommence its cycle of perfected activity."

THE SECRET DOCTRINE, Vol. II, p. 80:

"Some Vedantins might say, 'This is not so. The Nirvani can never return,' which is true during the Manvantara he belongs to, and erroneous where Eternity is concerned. For it is said in the Sacred Slokas, 'The thread of radiance which is imperishable and dissolves only in Nirvana, re-emerges from it in its integrity on the day when the Great Law calls it back into action.'"

TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE, p. 112:

"The Day after Maha-manvantara or the 'Day-Be-With-Us'. Then everything becomes one, all individualities are merged into one, yet each knowing itself, a mysterious teaching indeed."

Nirvana, then, is a state of consciousness, intensified almost beyond imagination. It is definitely not the dreamy state implied by the term "never-never land", nor is it the cessation of consciousness we understand by annihilation. Just what it is cannot be told. K. H., in the Mahatma Letters, p. 198, speaks of "the mysteries of initiation." Then, "It is", He says, "a state of Absolute rest and assimilation with Parabrahm—it is Parabrahm itself."

It is a "rebecoming". We, the prodigal sons, return to our Father, who is OURSELF. That which we were, we are again, and never have we been aught else. We are ourselves, and yet OURSELF.

We do not lose our individuality. Are we not told, "after para-nirvana, the same monad will re-emerge as a still higher being?" It is a mysterious teaching, yet not un-imaginable, or un-understandable.

It is Truth.

Mrs. N. Dalzell.

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DISCERNMENT AND CRITICISM

(Last month's issue contained an article by H.P.B. on 'Criticism'; here is another article on the same subject which was published by Mr. Wm. Q. Judge in *The Path* for January 1891 under the pseudonym of 'Harij'.)

Discernment, discrimination, and criticism are not synonymous terms, though they are often used in a confused way that leads to something worse than confusion. True discernment is an office of the human understanding. In and of itself it is a passive, though by no means a negative, quality. When this passive quality of the understanding becomes active, we discriminate. We discern by contrasts; we discriminate by choice or by preference. Discernment belongs to the judgment of man as to qualities and things. Discrimination belongs to the will of man. It is an act of the will that anticipates results. To discern is to know; to discriminate is to do.

Criticism differs from both discernment and discrimination, though it involves both. By discernment we learn to know good from evil; by discrimination we choose either good or evil in others. Discernment and discrimination are necessary to real knowledge and correct living. We employ them upon is experience and observation, and our upon others. It is one thing to contrast good with evil, and to choose the good and to reject the evil. Here our teacher is experience and observation, and our motive may be the highest and best. It is, however, a very different thing to contrast another person with ourselves, for here we are almost certain to seek out all possible blemishes in our neighbour and all imaginable perfections in ourselves. Our motive *may* be that of instruction and self-improvement, or it may be to lift ourselves up at the expense of another. It is always so much easier to pluck the mote from the eye

of another than to even discover the beam in our own organ of vision.

Rascality may indeed hide its head and work in the dark for fear of criticism. Yet everyone knows that the great crimes that come to the surface of society are born of the little vices that lurk unseen and grow in the dark. The public critic is apt to become in private a cynic. One whose attention is always directed toward the imperfections and short-comings of others, if not himself guilty of equal short-comings and greater vices, will find little time or disposition to cultivate the virtues and beauties of existence. The critic, like the practical joker, is apt to be exceedingly averse from taking his own medicine. It is often only by being compelled to do so that he realizes the nature of the office he has voluntarily assumed. It is not infrequently the case that an individual who habitually indulges in carping and severe criticism imagines that he conceals beneath this captious spirit a sincere desire to benefit his fellow man or the cause of truth. In order to remove the mask and destroy the illusion, it is only necessary that the critic's guns be turned the other way. If he does not run to cover, he will throw off all disguise and throw his gauntlet with scorn and defiance at the whole human race. It is very questionable whether any one has ever been made either wiser or better by being continually reminded of his faults or follies. If he has already become sensible of them, and desires to get rid of them, he may be helped by advice and encouragement. It is human nature, when openly accused, to deny and retort upon the accuser when charged with personal vices and errors. Criticism stirs up anger and revenge a thousand times where it once leads to repentance and reformation; and the motive that incites strong personal criticism is in a hundred cases spite or anger, the desire to seem better than the victim criti-

cized, where it once springs from a sincere desire to benefit society or the person criticized. The private individual is, indeed, amenable to law and order, and the public servant to municipal well-being. When the acts of these come within the scope of law, order, and good government, they are, indeed, legitimate subjects of criticism. It is even here the act rather than the individual that is a legitimate subject of criticism. When this right of the individual is ignored, criticism ceases to be either beneficent or reformatory. It becomes both partisan and personal, and carries little weight, and the critic soon loses all influence, and deserves to lose it. The force of criticism rests in its passionless judgment and its justification. It is the thing that needed to be said; that is said with sorrow rather than with exultation that carries weight and compels repentance and reformation.

With individuals in private life the function of criticism is generally both dangerous and demoralizing. This becomes at once apparent if we select the most critical individual we know, one who is always condemning others and who has seldom a good word to say about any one. Such a person is by no means a general favourite, nor is he sought as a companion, unless it is with a view to secure his favour. It by no means follows that the fawning sycophant and habitual flatterer are more sought after or more to be desired. These are opposite poles, conceit and conscious inferiority, that bring into strong contrast that dignified kindly spirit that begins in self-respect, and goes out in genial good-will to man. Such a one does, indeed, discern and discriminate, while he withholds criticism. It may be said of such a person, "No one ever heard him condemn another." If he sees faults in others, they serve only to make him more careful in searching into his own life; and the reformation that is there found

necessary, and the constant watchfulness needed in his own life, teach him still greater charity and consideration for others.

I know of no more practical lesson in theosophy than this, as there is no rock upon which we are more likely to run awreck. It would not be believed to what extent this spirit of criticism is habitually indulged till one's attention has been directed to it, and till one begins to set a watch over his own life. To what extent gossip and slander form the staples of conversation among both men and women is remarkable, to say the least; and when criticism of others is removed from these, what indeed remains!

To refrain from condemning others is the first lesson we are taught in theosophy. It is the very foundation-stone of the Brotherhood of Man.

What virtue can we imagine there would be in extending the hand of fellowship to one whom we had already figuratively picked in pieces and banned in every joint and sinew? A brotherhood of slanderers might thus arise, worse even than a brotherhood of thieves.

To refrain from condemning others and to get rid of our own vices is but the beginning of the theosophic life. It is but the clearing away the obstructions and getting rid of the rubbish before laying the foundations of the real temple of Truth and holiness.

With the great majority of mankind life consists in "keeping soul and body together." The feeding, clothing and housing of the physical body absorb all active energy. The difficulty of getting into this earthly existence, the still greater difficulty of maintaining our existence here, and the fear of death, owing to our ignorance of what lies beyond, these make up the sum of that misery called living, with more than three-fourths of the human race. The

small minority who are born to wealth and position in life are either slaves to the conventionalities imposed by the station in which they are born, or they are slaves to their own appetites and passions. Greedy for every cup of pleasure, they ring the changes on appetite till satiety and disgust lead to despair and death. There are, indeed, individuals in every walk of life who realize that it is not all of life to live, and who are not devoted solely to either the maintenance or the squandering of life. There is, moreover, a growing middle-class, bound neither by extreme poverty on the one hand nor by conventionality on the other, and these are becoming the ruling class in the world of ideas.

It is to this middle class that theosophy strongly appeals; they possess the necessary intelligence to appreciate the nature and bearings of its problems, and they are less trammelled by the demands of poverty or the commands of wealth and position, so that they have opportunity to follow the bent of their nature and explore new fields.

Occasionally a born aristocrat like Tolstoy will follow his logic and his convictions at any cost, and relinquish the world for an idea. There is everywhere manifest a deep satisfaction with conventional forms of thought, and a disposition to look behind all traditions. Very few things are taken for granted, and inquiry is inclined to dig deep for the subtler forces that hold the key to the phenomenal world. There is a restlessness abroad, an eagerness of expectation, a restlessness of anticipation, mingled with wide-spread dissatisfaction. Nervous diseases multiply in numbers and reveal new forms, and insanity is rapidly increasing.

There has seldom been a time when so great tolerance has been manifested; there never was a time when greater

forbearance, greater consideration for others, was demanded. Discernment and discrimination belong indeed to the wise and thoughtful, and these are always the most careful and guarded in their criticisms of others.

In the Theosophical Society the value of one's services and the beneficence of one's influence are always in inverse ratio to his spirit and habit of personal criticism. Principles and measures may and often must be discussed, but individuals never. Nothing can be more harmful, nothing so hinder individual progress, nothing so trammel and subvert the cause of Theosophy, as personal criticisms of individuals. It is true that in discussing measures and principles names have sometimes to be mentioned; but this can always be done in a spirit of kindness and consideration that arouses no ill feeling, that puts no one to open shame. He who is found active in a good cause; who stipulates nothing and demands nothing, but works wherever he can find a foothold; who takes pains to commend and approve, but who never condemns or criticizes others; such an one has learned the true spirit of discernment and the wisest discrimination, and is a power such as few persons conceive of.

Many make the mistake of supposing that if they do not make haste to criticize and condemn, and even openly to repudiate the acts or words of others, they will themselves be held responsible for the same opinions. These forget that probably the first effect of their hostile criticism will be to confirm their opponent in his error, admitting it to be an error; whereas, if one is sure of his ground and shows the opposite view without reference to persons, these views, being passionless and exciting no opposition, will hold by their own force and inherent truthfulness. The opponent is disarmed and convinced, not by an opponent, but by truth itself. He who really cares more for the truth

than for his own opinion, right or wrong; who cares more for the triumph of truth than for his own triumph over an antagonist, and perhaps a weak one at that, will not hesitate a moment which course to choose.

If one really desires the consciousness of power, let him get squarely on the side of truth; sink himself in its service; be as impersonal as truth itself; condemn no one; encourage every one; help where he can as though he helped not; give public credit to every helper, and seek no credit himself; and he will not have the consciousness of being helpful, but he will be saved the humiliation of being envied. It requires a strong, self-centred soul to persist in this line of work. We are so hungry for praise, so greedy for reward. We are so envious if another receives praise, or is rewarded more than we think he deserves. This is because we have so little confidence in ourselves; so little unselfish love for truth; so little trust in the Master of the vineyard. He who works for no reward, who would be content without it, finding his reward in his work, knows nevertheless that he cannot avoid it if he would. He feels it in the air; and when he knows that he has deserved it, lo! it is already with him. He casts his reward at the feet of truth, and again enters her service uplifted, encouraged, inspired.

THEOSOPHICAL INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE LEAGUE

"PEN-PALS" — Anyone desirous of corresponding with other members of the Society in Canada or foreign countries either in the English or French languages should write to the Secretary of the League:—Mr. John Van Eden, 232 Pacific Avenue, Toronto 9, for particulars enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for reply.