

THE CANADIAN
THEOSOPHIST

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Edited by Dudley W. Barr
for
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN CANADA

"The man who wars against himself and
wins the battle can do it only when
he knows that in that war he is doing
the one thing which is worth doing".

Practical Occultism P.67

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THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

Divine Wisdom

Brotherhood

Occult Science

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VOL. XXXI., No. 1

TORONTO, MARCH 15th, 1950

Price 20 Cents.

HUMAN AGENCY IN KARMA

BY ALVIN BOYD KÜHN, PH.D.

It is one of the strangest of paradoxes or anomalies in the domain of philosophical thought that principles of truth which can be intellectually conceived as sound and valid have the power to delude the human mind and virtually wreck human lives. It is in general a difficult enough matter to determine what is true and what is not, so as to make right choice of action and live in accordance with the law of good while avoiding the path of evil. But the task and the problem are further complicated by our discovery sooner or later that we can make application of certain of the highest and most universal truths at our peril, if we do not hold them under distinct leash of limitation in our thinking.

It is a recognition that comes to very few even among closer students of life and philosophy that there is a certain class of truths that can be held as authentic in a highly conceptual sense and at a high conceptual level, but which yet are *not* to be, indeed *can not* be, made the basis of guidance in human conduct. It will finally dawn on deeply reflective thought that there is a class of truths that may be conceived as valid for dia-

lectical reasoning, but yet are not to be put in practice in human life, or made the rules of action in our human sphere. They may well and indeed strikingly be likened to the bright flame of a lamp, which attracts with irresistible lure the moth-instinct of the human mind, only to scorch and scourge that mind and cripple or destroy its environing body if the human rushes in impetuously to grasp the fatal power of the light. Or again they may be said to be like the mighty radiant power of the atom, against which man has to insulate himself by massive walls of protection in his efforts to harness to his hand its stupendous energies. Or they are like the rays of the sun, which can not be faced by our eyes without a mechanism to reduce the glare to the range of our capacities.

The discovery of this apparently anomalous predicament in the realm of philosophical study was a truly surprising revelation in a life of eager search in the esoteric science. The profound realization of the actualities in the case seemed somehow to tie in very closely with the Biblical pronouncement that no man can look upon the face of God

and live. It loomed up as a corollary to this that no man can look upon or take as realistic actuality *for his use in this world* the principles of universal and eternal verity that may be said to be the light of God's mind, conceived as abstract truths in the lesser mind of man. So to express it, man may hold these paradigms of abstract truth in the remoter levels of his pure conceptual understanding, but dare not drag them down to incorporate them into his actual life and conduct. If he attempts this he will be singed and blinded by their too powerful dynamic, or shattered and wrecked by their rending force.

I think there must be a hint of this in the Greek myth of Phaeton, son of Apollo, the God of the Sun, who, too eager to show his youthful prowess, begged his father to permit him to drive the chariot of the sun across the sky for one day, and when given the reins of the fiery steeds, dragged the sun too close to the earth and scorched up the rivers and burned up the growing crops. Against all forces, both physical and mental, which range above those to which his equipment of evolutionary mechanism accustom him to safe usage and which are the normal instrumentalities for his life in body on this globe, man must be protected and shielded by either physical or mental safeguards. "The Lord God is a sun *and* a shield," assumedly *from* the sun.

This series of articles will have to do with the function of the shield in the realm of philosophical wisdom. It has been almost totally unseen and unexploited for general intelligence, that man must indeed guard himself advisedly against the sun-burn of too strong and unshielded glare of Divine Light in his mind. A verse from the *Talmud* represents Deity as bidding man to build a tabernacle in which the divine nature may "be raised up," and God orders him to build it "half in light and

half in shade." So man is to build the temple of his evolution in the light of God's glaring sun of truth, but in the shade of his own limitations under the shield of matter and body. Man must learn that he is to build in the light of God's truth, but in a position that is well shaded by the conditions of his own physical existence; not up under the blazing sun of Nirvanic heavens, but down under the trees of earth.

Let it be said that in the context of this thought is to be found a prime and most obviously essential lesson so sadly needing to be driven home to the arrant and ignorant presumptions of the endless run of "spiritual" cult groups at the present day. All in more or less directness assume fundamentally that we mortals can do God's work practically at God's level or with his range of power. The truth that will safeguard human philosophy and human sanity alike is the great realization that man is to do God's work at man's level and in man's world, not to usurp God's prerogatives in God's world. Most "spiritual" cults constantly exhort us to lift ourselves by our own bootstraps out of our homely world and somehow project ourselves to the nirvanic palace of God's own household. The true slogan of wisdom must ever be, as the sage Egyptians phrased it, "Head in heaven, feet on the earth;" or again, "Soul in heaven, body in the deep deep grave"—of matter. Yes, man is to activate God's will, but surely here on earth and in the place and station in the hierarchy of life values and expressions at which he stands. "Thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven," chants the Lord's Prayer. Man's single task, as Plato tells us, is "to weave together mortal and immortal natures," or to unify the God principle germinally in us with the human elements or forces of the body and the psyche. "Spiritual" cult philosophy, both in and out of the Theosophical movement, has somehow

come to take Yoga as the work of lifting the human clear out of his world and exalting him into states entirely removed from human provenance. This is the error that must be corrected in a true view of spiritual evolution and the true pursuit of the higher life.

Returning to the starting point, the class of truths that come under the category of "true in abstract conception but unworkable in human life" are those that the philosophers have called "abstract universals." They are principles that are true in the absolute sense, true according to the laws of logical thought, but can not be implemented by us in our world of relativities. My attention was first called to the necessity of such a demarcation between two modes of the relevancy of truth when I noted what Hegel had said in reference to them. He asserts that the only reality is the concrete: "all abstract universals are shams," Cushman says in expounding Hegel's thought. Kant asserts much the same thing in saying that the reason leads us to soar beyond experience to what it discerns abstractly as absolute verity, but that such abstracted conceptions in our noumenal world add nothing, or at any rate little, to our practical knowledge and are of little service to us. "Mere conceptual thought," comments Cushman in his *History of Philosophy*, "cannot be knowledge of the reality of the soul, God and the world." Still, he adds, expounding Kant's philosophy, the Ideas of the reason are an integral part of the human mind and they must have their purpose and function. They can not be verified by experience, in which alone is truth, but they can "regulate" experience. Kant says they have a slight "regulative" influence in our lives. Somewhat like the sky in a landscape picture they make a frame in which the earthly scene is set.

It is difficult to enumerate specifically the ideas that are here referred to as abstract universals. But under the term would come such asserted truths as that God exists, that he is wholly perfect and good, omniscient and omnipotent, that the soul exists and is immortal, that all life is one and not multiple, that matter does not exist, spirit being the only reality, that life is an illusion, not real being, that time is a false creation of mortal sense and present, past and future are illusions of that sense and that all is one eternal Now. It is possible for reason to substantiate all these and many more such ideas as rational and necessarily true. Yet it is not possible to verify them in our concrete experience. Still it is necessary for all minds to hold them as conceptually true, to keep the mind in a posture of balance and sanity. Amid man's distractions through the multiplicity and diversity of his sensual experience, it is essential that such abstruse recognitions as these influence his consciousness sufficiently that he does not lose entirely his sense of direction toward his ultimate goal.

The final point of practicality with them, then, is to determine how to entertain them without upsetting the normal balance of perspective in man's world. This gives them the slight value that Kant calls "regulative." We can make no direct practical or overt use of them, we can not put them to work for us for practical ends. But we can see how life sizes up in relation to them. This presents a bit of a strange predicament for mortals, the general reader will conclude. Yet it is a mistake to think of these ideas as lying so far remote in the world of theoretical abstraction as to be incapable of afflicting us with serious injury if we attempt, like the moth, to grasp at and embrace them in too realistic a fashion! No problem of the mind that concerns

something in any way pertinent to truth and reality can be dismissed as too remote to affect life, if the mind is not held in sane relation to it. When we find now that even the "unconscious" elements in our psyche determine our conduct, we are hardly permitted to disdain as unimportant any ideas that may be held in the open area of consciousness. Sooner or later they work into the "unconscious" and operate from there. Ideas rule the world, said Plato, and the highest philosophies have upheld his pronouncement.

But danger lurks in the human handling of ideas. This is hardly to be thought strange, since there lurks a constant danger in man's handling any of the forces or powers or faculties of life itself. Human life is perpetually endangered, threatened by every arm of the divine energy that creates and empowers the existence of living creatures. That is, every ray of potency that animates living beings must be handled always in a certain due measure and proportion of its power, determined at a point lying exactly midway between the two extremes of excess and deficiency in its expression or use. This is the great principle enunciated and dialectically vindicated by Plato and Aristotle in their quest for a formula that answers man's eternal question: what is the good? The good thing and the right thing, they found, is that exact measure and proportion of the elements of pro and con which marks the point midway between too much and too little of their power. True courage, for instance, is that exact measure of determined action that falls in between recklessness or foolhardiness, as too much of it, and cowardice, or over-caution, as too little of it. All this bespeaks likewise the quite surprising significance of the sign of Libra, the Balance, in the zodiac. When the Scriptures declared that we are being

weighed in the Great Balance, and the Egyptians called Horus, who is our Christ, "the Lord of the Balance," they were reasserting this supreme principle for the enlightenment and guidance of humanity.

Every idea, then, and every intuition of verity, while it is the veritable bread of life to hungering humanity, is at the same time a two-edged sword that cuts both on the side of excess and of deficiency in the wisdom that must be achieved to make its proper application. We see every day how wisdom must be the constant employment of discrimination in determining the precise point of balance between a too direct and forthright, and a too feeble or hesitant decision or action. All action in this sense is a compromise between the two pulls in opposite directions, just as such a medicament as insulin must be determined in its exact quantity between too strong and too weak dosage.

Nothing could so well illustrate the difference between knowledge and wisdom, which are often used almost synonymously. Well does Tennyson say "knowledge comes but wisdom lingers." Knowledge is a precious tool that we can get into our hands by earnest endeavour; wisdom is the skill and artfulness needed to use it aright. Tragedy and ruin can come from the ignorant use of knowledge. The truth is precious and shall make us free; but only on the terms that rightly prescribe its proper use. The great art of living and growing beautifully toward the fulfilment of man's destined end in godhood, inheres in the attainment of this wisdom, which is the master skill in giving play to every potential force of goodness, truth and beauty in its appropriate measure and proportion. Hence we see the wisdom, of the two great maxims that greeted the candidate for initiation into the Greek Mysteries: "Man, know thy-

(Continued on Page 15)

MISTAKEN NOTIONS

Under this heading, Madame H. P. Blavatsky made the following comment among others, in an article appearing in the February 1883 issue of "The Theosophist."

"It is a grave mistake, and a misrepresentation of the strictly impartial attitude of our paper to make it appear as the organ of any sect. It is only the organ of Truth as we can discover it. It never was, nor will it ever become, the advocate of any particular creed, indeed, its policy is rather to demolish every dogmatic creed the world over. We would substitute for them the one great Truth"

It is refreshing and illuminating to read the straightforward declarations of principles by H.P.B. in the early numbers of the Theosophist, and a few years later, in "Lucifer." The items in the former have been partially reprinted in the "Complete Works of H. P. Blavatsky" while some of the best articles from the latter may be found in "Raja-Yoga or Occultism" published by Theosophy Co. (India) Ltd. or "Studies in Occultism" published by Theosophical University Press, Covina, to which works the reader is referred for more detailed information.

Our remarks at the moment will pertain to the subject of Creeds in the above quotation, but first, let us survey the historic background.

In February 1883 the Theosophical Society with headquarters then at Bombay was little more than seven years old. H. P. B. had published "Isis Unveiled" in 1877, and in 1880 the Masters K.H. and M. began their correspondence with A. P. Sinnett, a Vice-President of the Society, and Editor of the Pioneer at Allahabad. This correspondence continued for about five years only in a private way, but much of it has become

available in recent years in the Edition of "Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett" just recently republished. But at the time in question, the only sources of Theosophical reading material were "Isis Unveiled," Sinnett's "Occult World," and the Magazine "The Theosophist."

Under these circumstances, it is needless to remark that these works were studied carefully, and because of their sweeping statements, they aroused deep questions in the minds of the members, many of whom were being drawn away from the old established religions in various lands. Let us visualize ourselves in that historic circumstance, holding the old beliefs as it were, with one hand, and trying to grasp the new tenets with the other.

Did H.P.B. deal gently with these doubting Thomas's? No. She declared her principles fearlessly, positively and definitely, and let Nature take its course. Yet, in spite of her methods, which some think unduly rugged and severe, the Society grew in numbers and in vitality, for many of the keenest minds of the day were being attracted to it.

That we may determine the landmark about Creeds, let us now refer to "Isis Unveiled" Vol. 2, page 635:

"Many men have arisen who had glimpses of the truth, and fancied they had it all. Such have failed to achieve the good they might have done and sought to do, because vanity has made them thrust their personality into such undue prominence as to interpose it between their believers and the whole truth that lay behind. The world needs no sectarian church, whether of Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet, Swedenborg, Calvin, or any other. There being but one Truth, man requires but one church

—the Temple of God within us, walled in by matter, but penetrable by any one who can find the way.”

Having quoted from *The Theosophist*, *Isis Unveiled*, let us ascertain whether the Masters made any comments in their letters to Mr. Sinnett. In Letter X, received in 1882, the Master K.H. says this:

“I will point out the greatest, the chief cause of nearly two-thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power. It is religion under whatever form and in whatever nation. It is the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches. It is in those illusions that man looks upon as sacred, that he has to search out the source of that multitude of evils which is the great curse of humanity and that almost overwhelms mankind. Ignorance created Gods and cunning took advantage of opportunity. Look at India, and look at Christendom and Islam, at Judaism and Fetishism. It is priestly imposture that rendered these Gods so terrible to man; it is religion that makes of him the selfish bigot, the fanatic that hates all mankind out of his own sect without rendering him any better or more moral for it. It is belief in God and Gods that makes two-thirds of humanity the slaves of a handful of those who deceive them under the false pretense of saving them . . . Remember the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of these false gods.”

Such was the message of Theosophy in those early days with regard to creeds. Other quotations might be taken from the works referred to heretofore, but the position indicated would not be altered. That we may under-

stand the purpose of the Theosophical Movement then and since, we need to possess clear-cut, definite and well-defined ideas concerning fundamental things, of which our attitude to creeds is one, for in due time under other leadership, the Theosophical Society was diverted to the consideration and acceptance of totally dissimilar ideas.

Emory P. Wood.

THE PRINCIPLE OF BEAUTY

Returning to the beginning, let us state at once what constitutes the principle of beauty in material things.

Certainly there is such a principle and it is perceived by the senses at the very first glance. The soul identifies it as if the soul knew it well, recognizes and welcomes it, and insofar as possible enters into union with it.

We say, therefore, that the soul, since it is what it is in its very nature and is close to that which actually and essentially is best, whenever it sees anything of its own kind or even suggesting such a relationship, rejoices and is startled with delight, takes its own to itself, and remembers again what it really is and what belongs to it.

But what resemblance is there between the things that are beautiful here and those which are beautiful there? And if there is likeness, they must be alike. How indeed, are these things beautiful as well as those?

It is we say, because they share in an idea, an eternal form.

That which sees must be of the same kind and like that which is seen, in order to view it. For never has an eye seen the sun which has not first become like the sun, nor has a soul seen the principle of beauty unless it were itself beautiful.

Plotinus.

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The controversy in our magazine lately seems to have shaken and loosened up Theosophy in general as far as the Canadian National Society is concerned. By that I mean there seems to be a revivification of interest and a feeling that we are not in a moribund condition. Letters have been received expressing gratitude at our awareness—that we were not “asleep at the switch” is very apparent; many express pleasure in the “liveness” of the magazine generally. Also since the advent of the new year we have had a pleasing addition to our membership throughout the Dominion. This is a cheerful note on which to begin the year’s work and makes us confident that having begun so auspiciously, we shall achieve something worthwhile in the months to come.

* * * *

I regret to note the passing of Miss Ethel Anderson an old member of the Toronto Lodge who died on January 12th at the home of her sister, Mrs. W. J. Pelo, in Victoria, B.C. Miss Anderson was demitted from the Canadian Federation in May 1933 and was a devoted member up to the last. Always a keen student her only regret was that owing to ill-health over a period of years she was unable to continue her studies. Hers was a shining example of a lovable soul sustained in adversity by a profound belief in what Theosophy has to teach. Our sympathy and condolences are extended to those she left behind to mourn her passing. We also regret to announce the death of Mr. Robert G. Manson of the Toronto Lodge who died on February 14th. By request he was accorded a Theosophical funeral at which Mr. G. I. Kinman officiated. Mr. Manson was a well-known musician and was a viola player in the Toronto

Symphony Orchestra for many years. During World War Two he was employed as an interpreter in French and German at Ottawa. A native of England, Mr. Manson travelled much and after the war went to Australia and had already planned a trip to South Africa in the near future when Karma stepped in. He left no survivors. Our best wishes go to him on his departure for other and brighter spheres, and our thanks for having known a thorough and ardent Theosophist.

* * * *

I have just received a copy of the Minutes of the Meeting of the General Council of the Theosophical Society held at Benares on December 25th, 1949, in which it is stated that “The Resolution for transference of the pictures of the Masters M. and K.H., to the Esoteric School had received 38 votes in favour and 2 against, but on further circulation as to whether the General Council would be agreeable to the withdrawal of the Resolution, the results were as follows: For withdrawal 19, Against 13. The Resolution was therefore declared withdrawn.” Without any further information it appears that the Resolution as sent to Adyar by the Canadian National Society was successful in its efforts on behalf of those who were anxious that the pictures should remain in the custody of the Theosophical Society. Apropos of this we would draw our members’ attention to the resolution passed at the January meeting of the General Executive (a report of which appeared in the February issue) to the effect “That the Mahatma Pictures which are the property of the Theosophical Society be removed from the custody of the Esoteric School and be placed in the Society’s Head-Quarters where they may be seen by all members who desire to do so.” This has now to

(Continued on Page 9)

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OFFICE NOTES

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

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A much appreciated Christmas gift was a copy of Mabel Collins' little known, "Morial the Mahatma", an item which is listed as 'very scarce' in dealers' catalogues. This book was obviously written in a black period of depression and disillusionment. We would

be grateful for any information concerning the circumstances of its production.

❖ ❖ ❖

Congratulations are extended to Miss Elsie Pomeroy on her recent election as a member of the Royal Society of Literature (London). Miss Pomeroy is the biographer of the late Sir Charles G. D. Roberts and is the author of many articles on Canadian Poetry. Her contributions to the Canadian Theosophist have been much appreciated in Canada and in other lands.

❖ ❖ ❖

"At least five out of every hundred children now attending school will spend part of their lives in mental hospitals", was the considered opinion of Dr. J. D. M. Griffin, medical director of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. Insecurity, instability, inconsistency, absence of a developed social ethic which recognizes the innate dignity of man, are some of the causes. The past fifty years have brought about revolutionary changes in our ways of living and in our attitudes towards life—a greater revolution than any other in the known historical period. We are in the midst of a period of flux with old standards being displaced before new ones are created. Unless there is a recognition of the truth of those few unchanging essentials which the great Teachers have each in their day given out to mankind, many will be whirled away by the ever increasing tempo of modern life.

❖ ❖ ❖

Racial discrimination and religious intolerance have been to the fore lately in Canadian newspapers. The refusal of restaurant keepers in Dresden, Ontario to serve negroes, and the persecution of the Jehovah Witnesses in Quebec, have been widely commented upon. The severe denunciation of both

incidents is a heartening indication of the general attitude in Canada towards both evils.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

(Continued from Page 7)

be acted upon and when this is carried into effect, we shall feel that we have acted in the best interests of those who are concerned with the safeguarding of our heritage.

* * * *

We welcome the following new members to the fold: Mrs. Nina Freeman, Vancouver Lodge; Miss Berthe Stohl, Miss Sarah Brown, Mrs. Esther Richstone, Mr. M. Richstone all of the Montreal Lodge, and extend fraternal greetings to them.

E. L. T.

REVIEW

Shadow of the Third Century, a Re-valuation of Christianity, by Alvin B. Kuhn, Ph.D., published by Academy Press, Elizabeth 2, N.J., 512 pages with index, price \$3.50.

Here is another outstanding example from Dr. Kuhn of that kind of scholarship which the Theosophical Society should be fostering and encouraging, but unfortunately is not at the present time. 'The study of Comparative Religion' undoubtedly meant much more to the Founders of the Society than a common acceptance by the members of the vague generalization that 'all roads lead to God.' The 2nd Object encouraged *study*, the analytical investigation of ancient and modern systems of religious and philosophical thought—and it involved the subsequent publication of the results of such studies so that eventually Theosophical scholarship would give to the world a body of reliable reference works on religions, philosophies and sciences from the view-

point of the ancient wisdom. The record of the past seventy-five years reveals how little has been done.

Dr. Kuhn contributed much to the world's literature on Comparative Religion and the interpretation of religious symbolism in his previous books, *The Lost Light*, an interpretation of ancient scriptures, *Who is This King of Glory?*, a critical study of the Christos-Messiah tradition, *Sex as Symbol*, a study of modern psychology in the light of the ancient wisdom. And now comes *Shadow of the Third Century*, a searching, erudite analysis of the tragedy that overwhelmed Christianity and killed the very spirit which gave it birth.

This book is "an attempt to rewrite the history of its (Christianity's) up-building on false bases, to delineate the nature of its falsification of the truth and its utter misinterpretation of its Scriptures and then to trace the evil psychological consequences of this warping of mind on the life of the West." Dr. Kuhn does not use his book to enlarge upon the familiar denunciations of the Church for the horrors of the Inquisition, the forgery of basic documents, the grossness, immorality and profligacy of the clergy, the economic subjugation of peasants under church feudalism, the exploitation of superstition in the sale of absolutions and remissions of 'sins' etc., etc. With competent skill and unshakable logic he builds his compelling case on the statements of church authorities and historians; the prosecuting attorney relies mainly on the evidence furnished by the witnesses for the defence! The book contains over three hundred and fifty direct quotations in addition to many other references which are embodied in the text; for this reason alone the book will be of great value to students who have not access to the many source books quoted by Dr. Kuhn.

This book is devastating—too devastating, many will say who fail to see the interplay of Siva-Vishnu throughout; it destroys to reconstruct on nobler, saner, simpler lines. It destroys beyond hope of reconstruction any fond ideas that Christianity as it is known today has any basis whatever in *historical fact*. Many quotations are given to support this conclusion, among them being a lengthy quotation from Irenaeus, one of the earliest of the Church Fathers, in which Irenaeus refutes the ‘heresy’ of his day that Jesus died and was crucified in his thirty-third year! Jesus, according to Irenaeus was not crucified at all but lived to be an old, old man. The historicity of the story as popularly presented, the virgin-born Son who at the age of thirty began to teach, who gathered disciples about him, who in their turn became the founders of the one holy church, who died on the cross and rose again after the third day, is shown by Dr. Kuhn, not only to be incorrect, but to be actually a baseless fabrication, an hallucination under which the western world has lived for two thousand years. The emphasis on an *historical person* in whom one must believe in order to be ‘saved’, instead of on that one eternal source of light, that light within ‘that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world’, brought about a religious fixation of racial proportions. Its irrationalities, though expressed in mild and gentle forms among many believers, have almost overwhelmed the spirit of the race and Dr. Kuhn points to ancient and modern evils resulting from this abnormality.

The reconstructive side of the book is in its presentation throughout of the original message of true Christianity which, “is also true Egyptology, true Hellenism, true Zoroastrianism, true Hebraism, true Hinduism, true Buddhism, true Platonism, and Neo-Platonism, true esotericism in all religions.”

“Listening to that oracular voice, that *logos* of the wisdom out of which grew the primal true Christianity, a wiser world will rebuild the philosophical religion of the divine soul in man.”

A book no serious student can afford to miss.

D. W. B.

EXPERIENCE

*this too is an experience
of deep roots divided in all directions
in virgin soil as in dying flesh,
for the remnants of life are sacred
from the north, south, east and west:—*

* * * *

Gather under your dark cloak the divine fragments
that are in sundry places,
in ruins of concrete and jagged rock,
in the turns of the tunnel of longing flesh
and unkind faces;
if your dreams descend think not its
the end
but a new beginning,
a search renewed for the unknown
twin,—
the displaced person you cannot see,
so gather him in as a *fait accompli*.

Gather under your dark cloak
in this so irreverent place, in the desert
of your solitude, the displaced person of
your dreams,
the always-opposite out of nether
waters
and imperishable grace;
gather his predilection for the undetermined
in the heart of the lotus
where the electron pulses ray on ray—
for he who has lived on the first
shall arise with the dawn
of the last day.

H. L. Huxtable.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

In Macaulay's History of England, it is stated that during the last half of the seventeenth century, a certain man named Charles Blount used to take an impious delight in exasperating the priests and theologians of his day, by asking them questions that they were unable to answer. One of these questions was:—"If as it states in the third verse of the first chapter of Genesis, that when 'God said, Let there be light; and there was light' how was that possible when the firmament, the sun and heavenly bodies had not yet been created?" In one place Macaulay calls Blount an atheist and in another an infidel; but in four encyclopædias that I consulted, Charles Blount is classified as a deist.

Macaulay was obviously a great scholar, a philanthropist, an abolitionist and a gentleman; nevertheless, due to his early religious training in the Chapham sect; one of the most rigid of all the Calvinistic denominations, many of his preconceived ideas about these matters were retained throughout his whole career. I presume that in a free country, a man should be at liberty to entertain as many prejudices as he sees fit, as long as they do not interfere with the liberties of other people; but Macaulay, who is usually the prosecuting attorney, but seldom the philosopher, appears to have had more than one would expect from a man of his intelligence. Even in this supposedly enlightened age of ours, there are many people to whom in matters of religion there are two colours only,—black and white. All those who do not believe in the kind of a Supreme Being that they believe in, are atheists and infidels. There is a world of difference between a deist and an atheist; but to go into an explanation of the difference is not the object

of this disquisition. It may not be amiss, however, to point out that nearly all the deists, rationalists, naturalists, free-thinkers and higher critics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not only believed in a Supreme Being; but they also believed as Macaulay did, in a personal, anthropomorphic deity, who had all the limitations, the imperfections, the passions, desires and prejudices of a human being.

If theosophical students could but persuade the theists, deists, pantheists, monotheists, polytheists, henotheists and atheists to study some theosophical literature, especially the Secret Doctrine, how it would clarify their minds! If a thorough-going materialist tries to take a literal interpretation from some of the passages of the Old Testament, it must surely sound like a nursery story; but if both the materialists and the supernaturalists would take advantage of some of the keys furnished by the Ancient Wisdom it would make a great deal more sense. If read in that light, what is described in the first chapter of Genesis, is a very important chapter in the history of the cosmos, and is of the most highly philosophical and metaphysical significance. However, as it states in the Secret Doctrine (II-78) "The divine intellect is veiled in man; his animal brain alone 'philosophizes.' And philosophizing alone, how can it understand the 'Soul Doctrine'?"

In the Secret Doctrine, Absolute Darkness is one of the many synonyms used to represent the All in All, or the One Great Reality. The Essence of darkness is an allegorical representation of the state of the universe, as it was during a period of complete rest, called in the East and in esoteric philosophy a mahapralaya; when the whole manifested universe disappears into

what some might call the abyss of nothingness. Neither light as we know it from the impacts that it makes upon our organs of sight, nor the sun, the giver of life were yet in existence.

Our physicists are to this day not entirely sure whether light is an undulation of the hypothetical ether of space, or a particle of matter. Prof. Burton, some time ago, said that the way they got around this difficulty at Toronto University was by teaching the one theory on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and the other on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

In the latest edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica we are given to understand that in spite of the great amount of research and experimental work performed by our greatest scientists and that they are able to demonstrate a great many things that can be done by means of the phenomenon, light, they are unable definitely to state exactly what it is. Scientists of to-day are either getting more ignorant or less pretentious than they were fifty years ago; at that time they were more cocksure of themselves. Light would appear to be one of the many aspects of radiation, and more and more scientists are leaning to the belief that matter and radiation are one and the same. The light and darkness, however spoken of many times in the Zohar, the Kabala and the Stanzas of Dzyan in particular, as well as the darkness that, "brooded over the face of the deep" in Genesis, are highly metaphysical abstractions that completely transcend the understanding of our greatest intellectual giants; and would elude detection by the most delicate instruments ever devised by the wit of man.

The sunlight that comes streaming through the window at daybreak and fills the whole room with its effulgence, is after all, merely one octave in a gamut of more than seventy octaves of

radiation. According to our experts, beyond the violet end of the visible spectrum there are also many other forms of radiation, such as ultra-violet, gamma and X-rays, radio and heat. Then again Prof. Millikan a few years ago discovered what he called the cosmic ray, a much more penetrating ray than any of these others. Sir A. S. Eddington and other scientists were of the opinion that these cosmic rays are much older than these other forms of radiation and existed before our earth was born. Interstellar space which to the naked eye appears to be so empty, is in actuality filled with radiation, but our little earth receives only a small portion of it; and one only of its more than seventy octaves can be detected by the human eye. Scientists have also discovered when two beams of light are focused upon the same spot, that instead of intensifying the light, total and absolute darkness is produced. Darkness then from a purely scientific standpoint as well as that of the Archaic Philosophy is the essence of light. These facts in nature should surely give us pause when we refuse to believe in anything that we are unable to contact by means of the five senses. As far as the visible spectrum is concerned, our eyes are very poor indeed compared to the seventeen-foot mirror of the new 200-inch telescope at Mount Palomar, which is approximately a million times as keen as the average human eye.

In the Stanzas of Dzyan which form the framework of the Secret Doctrine, it says that "Darkness alone filled the Boundless All . . ." The Zohar speaks of "Black Fire" and in Genesis it says that "Darkness brooded over the face of the deep". The Darkness referred to in these texts, as well as in the Kabalah, the Mahabarata and the Egyptian Book of the Dead has nothing to do with any of the aspects of radiation, known to science, not even the cosmic rays, but to

the Great Ineffable or Infinite. The verse in the gospel of St. John, which reads:—"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not", is often quoted by pious people in such a way to imply that the darkness mentioned in the text is spiritual blindness; but in the light of the esoteric philosophy, since it is impossible for the finite mind to comprehend the infinite; conversely it is impossible for the infinite to have any cognizance of boundaries, or the conditions or limitations of the finite world whatever. (See S.D. I, 99).

Reflection upon this profound subject then, leads one to the conclusion that what is spoken of in the Secret Doctrine as darkness when used in a highly metaphysical sense, means the same as it does in the Zohar, the Kabalah and the Book of Genesis, *i.e.* The Absolute or the Essence of Light. Esoterically speaking there are apparently three kinds of light; The Abstract and Absolute light which is Darkness, the light of the Manifested-Unmanifested, called by some the Logos, and the latter light reflected in the Dhyān Chohans, or planetary spirits, who in turn reflect it upon the objective universe. "Let there be light"; would then when read with the keys given in the Esoteric Science, mean, that from the primal emanation, Eternal Light, which had been previously concealed in Darkness, the First-Born was manifested in boundless time and space. When read in this light, the creation spoken of in Genesis began with the third stage of manifestation. The planetary spirits or Elohim were the seven creators, who separated the upper manifested plane of consciousness from the lower terrestrial world. In exoteric Zoroastrianism and Christianity, the seventh day of creation was one of rest, but esoterically interpreted, the periods of rest or the pralayas come first, and are followed by six periods of

manifestation. The command,—"Six days shalt thou labour" has apparently been ignored by the modern advocates of a five-day, forty-hour week.

One of the most glaring of theological inconsistencies is the creation of an anthropomorphic devil, often called Lucifer, the Prince of Darkness. Shakespeare puts into the mouth of one of his characters, the following exclamation,— "And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer, Never to hope again."

The Bard is credited by some theosophical students with having great occult wisdom, so let us hope that he knew better himself, than to utter such nonsense in private. The word Lucifer gets its derivation from Lux, Lucis (light) and Ferre (to bear) and Madame Blavatsky horrified some of her journalistic friends by calling the theosophical magazine that she edited, Lucifer. In the Book of Job, Lucifer, the bright star of the early morning is called the 'Son of God'; and why not? Fiat Lux! At the dawn of the mahamanvantara, the first archangel, Lucifer, the 'Son of the Morning' sprang from the depths of chaos; "And there was light".

E. J. Norman.

"WHEREIN ALL IS HOLY"

Asclepius: What then shall become of men after us?

Trismegistus: They shall be deceived by the Subtly of Sophisters, and turned away from pure and divine Philosophy; for out of a pure mind and soul, to worship God, to honour him in his works, and to give thanks unto him for his will, which is only full of goodness, this is Philosophie violated or corrupted by no foolish or unreasonable curiosity of the mind; and of these, thus far. (Hermes Trismegistus; His Second Book called Asclepius. London MDCLVII.)

We all remember the complaint of the dear old lady who, when asked how she

liked her first Shakesperian play, remarked that "it was too full of quotations," and the same criticism doubtless will be made by the reader of this article. We can only justify ourselves by remarking that it is meant to be so as it is our intention to bring to your notice a few excerpts from articles which we enjoyed reading and which appeared in the first number of the 'Occult Observer'. Ponder on this remark:

"Now although we are all so different from each other, there really is such a thing as the 'common man'." Then again: "There are proletarian 'common men'; there are lower middle class 'common men.' There are upper middle class 'common men'; and there are a lot of aristocratic ones! What then is a common man?" As is not uncommon, the writer of the article under review answers his own question, saying, "Well! he or she is a person who by luck or by temperament or by natural wisdom *has escaped the perils of education.*"

Thank God for the "common man" whose education, lacking nimety, at least is gleaned in that oft referred to "school of hard knocks" and experience. Oh for those good old days of the early part of the nineteenth century when education was really education! What marvels of constructive mental giants did it not produce compared to the monstrous scientific abortions that bid fair to hasten our going hence, and their own also, in this atomic age! Our author is concerned with two classes of individuals, the "sham superior," and the "dub"; or "common man," and remarks: ". . . no education, no culture, no mystical awe can quite obliterate, but we have the mother-wit to divine, letting their subtleties pass us by, that both Professor Ayer's Logical Positivism and dramatist Sartre's existentialism, are on our side against the Brain-

Trust Superiors who are at present running the world." He refers to the "Dub Credo" and among other "Dub" questions asks: "Why is everything, everything? and why am I, I?"; only to state that as long as we live, we will never receive an intelligible answer. ". . . All that we Dubs want is to be left in peace, there to pursue our harmless avocations and to beg or borrow what we cannot earn . . . *We do not want War. We do not want Culture. We do not want to save our souls. We want to enjoy ourselves in the way that we want to enjoy ourselves;* and we want to give our children more comforts, amusements and pleasures, than we have been able to obtain for ourselves."

He continues: "Persons. become superior by blood, by taste, by holiness, and by devilish cunning," and, "All these superiorities are based upon one superiority, the art of exploiting the darkness of the Absolute." And that brings us to the title of the article that we are discussing, which is: "The Unconscious," written by that able exponent of the magical, intuitive approach to both nature and literature, John Cowper Powys. He would have us consider a scheme fostered in the master brains of that sacrosanct hierarchy yclept "Superior people," whereby the non-existent *point* becomes the be-all and end-all of the existence both in, and out of time, conjuring forth fantasmic extra-Kosmic suppositions out of the whole cloth of the dark uncomprehensible void of Chaos, and fashioning for our pigmy intellect an Absolute to hold us in check and submission and enthrall us, while they themselves "the primrose path of dalliance tread." "Why", says he: "are we so perpetually lured into its dim purlieu? (the unconscious.) Why are we so constantly hypnotized by the jabbering of its Plutonian high-priests? Well, neighbour Dub, I will tell you in

one little sentence. From fear of the dark. From fear lest the dark should really and truly prove to be everything." Elsewhere it has been called "that undiscovered bourne from which no traveler returns." He concludes by saying: "The only thing to do is to deny the existence of the Great Totem Itself. The only thing to do is to refuse to pay our 'obols' to the superior Charons who take us on these imaginary health-excursions over the black Acherons of our mythological selves."

Enough has perhaps been said to whet the reader's appetite for further particulars on this article, and if, like Oliver Twist, he should ask for more, he should endeavour to obtain a copy of Volume One, Number One, of the "Occult Observer", published in May 1949 in London, England, and Edited by Michael Juste who himself has an article entitled "A Parable" in the same issue, that contains much food of a mystical nature for young Pelicans. James Kirkup offers us "The Coming of the Fool," wherein we hear "The Fool will come among you; he is here already, brother, if you will give room to innocence, and let the Truth appear! A Fool shall lead you out of Fear, deliver you from harm and winter's want, if you will turn from pleasures that are cold, to warm your hunger at a real flame; and learn to know the fire that feeds, and does not burn." Some there are who will have recognized the "Pure Fool" whose number is CXI. Other contributors to this issue are: Dr. D. B. Crow, John Heath-Stubbs, Ross Nichols, John Hargrave, an article "Magic and Art" signed Quaestor, and last but by no means least, a Note on Dion Fortune, throwing much needed light on her life, which contained much Wirth, and her contacts with H.P.B., the Theosophical Society, and the Order of the Golden Dawn. One gathers that there are some connected with this new venture who

have perchance traveled longer and farther over the Path that leads to final liberation and who have perhaps, like Nemo, dedicated their lives to tend the Garden wherein "all is Holy."

A. W.

HUMAN AGENCY IN KARMA

(Continued from Page 4)

self" and "Nothing in excess," — and obviously "nothing in deficiency."

With these eternal principles of understanding now laid down, the discussion can take up the great doctrine of Karma and give it that treatment which it obviously so sorely needs for the release of its full beneficence as a truth of the mind. Whether the danger that besets the unwise application of any principle shall be realized in harm or happily avoided is the stake in the matter. The challenge to occultists is to determine the proper measure and proportion in which it is to be administered in its implementation by humans. Good and happiness, or evil and suffering are the issues inherent in the problem. Good or ill hangs in the balance between the judicious and the faulty way in which Theosophists react to their doctrine of Karma. Its importance is thus sufficiently accentuated.

The former two articles in the series aimed to reorient the doctrine more directly in line with its sounder mental conception, as education for future growth rather than as consequence of past action or failure. This realignment of mental view will help vastly to adjust esoteric thinking more harmoniously to the sounder view of the great law's mode of operation. But another rectification of mental position, in order to encompass the final beneficence of the law in its ultimate right envisagement and usage, is necessary. It covers the whole ground of true wisdom in the mode of our reaction to the actual im-

pingement of the law upon us and others in the concrete events of life. The ultimate, the inexorable challenge of every truth the mind can envision is: what must we do in reference to it? And, as seen, this will be determined by our making as best our character and our genius may work it out, the closest approach to the right degree of wisdom to guide us to a balanced decision in every case. The two points to be decided, then, are: to what extent can we turn an abstract universal principle into a concrete practical regulator of conduct? And in what measure between excess and default is action to be gauged?

The prime danger that haunts our reaction to Karma's decrees is the temptation to fall back on it as one of those abstract universals that, being true—and abstract—can be counted on to do their work under God without our interference or our concern. This is indeed the danger which this article aims to point out and to warn against. It is not going crazily overboard with an intemperate statement to claim that nearly all "spiritual" cultism of our day is treading on very perilous ground in following the bent of this inclination to devalue and diminish the human initiative in the face of a law assumed to operate universally by divine or cosmic fiat. These cult systems err both in postulating the possibility of using or applying abstract universals in literal concreteness in our world, on the one hand, and in assuming that we need do nothing about them, on the other side.

As an illustration of the first one can mention the philosophical conception that matter has no real existence, hence no power to affect man's life. This is a sample of a doctrine that it is presumed by ardent sectaries can be acted upon at our level with concrete effects in healing disease by denying the existence of the medium in which it could have its

manifestation. Examples of the other kind are such doctrines as Karma and Maya (the latter to be dealt with in a later article), which afflict the uncritical mind with the assumption that they work automatically and need no help from us. These two attitudes are in fact two aspects of one and the same reaction to the universal truths referred to. The one in effect says that the law will work independently of us; the other affects to think that we can actually work it ourselves. Both confront us with the imminent danger that we will not take our station on the line of exact balance between how much we can and how much we can not operate these principles conceived in the mind as true. The one attitude represents an all-too-human illusion that the soul of man can build and climb up its giant tower of Babel and assault the very kingdom of heaven by storm; the other shows the spirit of man in its extreme opposite mood of feebleness and unworthiness to the abject degree that it hides from the presence of the Lord in the garden, and fears to stand forth and walk with God in his march to evolution's bright goal.

(To Be Concluded)

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.*