

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

Divine Wisdom

Brotherhood

Occult Science

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MISTAKEN NOTIONS

From the previous article under this heading, persons uninformed regarding the real work and effort of H. P. B. might conclude from the quotations that the Theosophical Society was actuated by and committed to the fulfilment of destructive motives rather than constructive ones.

I wish to emphasize, however, this was not the case. In all reform movements, it is essential sometimes, to destroy before again building up. We have known cities to be almost wiped out by fire, yet in the simmering ashes, the resolute citizens already visualized something more up-to-date and better, and in a very few years, every evidence of the former squalor was obliterated. In a smaller way, we have all witnessed old buildings being torn down, that some new modern edifice might take its place. Similarly, in the world of ideas, it is equally essential to destroy old mental concepts and ideologies, whether political, philosophical or religious, so that expression may be given to the out-surging energy of the spirit within. Otherwise, no progress is possible. Consequently H.P.B. advocated the demolition of every dogmatic and sectarian creed, so that mankind might witness

the outpouring of the spirit within, and again realize the basis of Brotherhood.

The constructive side of her philosophy was merely hinted at in the statement "We would substitute for them (creeds) the one great Truth, which—wherever it is—must of necessity be one, rather than pander to the superstitions and bigotry of sectarianism, which has ever been the greatest curse and the source of most of the miseries in this world of Sin and Evil." In the Theosophist for May, 1883, fuller expression was given to the origination of ideas.

"Occultism teaches us that ideas based upon fundamental truths move in the eternity in a circle, revolving around and filling the space within the circuit of the limits allotted to our globe and the planetary or solar system; that, (not unlike Plato's eternal, immutable essences,) they pervade the sensible world, permeating the world of thought; and that, contrary to chemical affinities, they are attracted to and assimilated by, homogeneous universals in certain brains—exclusively the product of the human mind, its thoughts and intuition; that in their perpetual flow they have their periods of intensity and

activity, as their durations of morbid inactivity. During the former, and whenever a strong impulse is imparted on some given point of the globe to one of such fundamental truths, and a communion between kindred eternal essences is strongly established between a philosopher's interior world of reflection and the exterior plane of ideas, then, cognate brains are affected on several other points, and identical ideas will be generated and expression given to them often in almost identical terms."

Thus the centrifugal motion of energy, the positive noetic action, sometimes referred to as Lucifer, the Light-bringer; or Hermes, the Thrice Greatest; or Christ, the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, is Fire, Life, Struggle, Effort, Thought, Consciousness, Progress, Liberty, Independence. It is dynamic movement, advancement and progression on the Pathway. The Religion of the Future, then, cannot be expressed dogmatically, because the inner striving towards the Impersonal and Unattainable provides no permanent stopping place. Even the reaching out in communion with higher and greater intelligences provides no finality.

On the other hand, the static resting on thoughts (Dogmas and Creeds, crystallized by the action of energy in centripetal motion, from without within,) however hoary with age or regarded with veneration, indicates stagnation, and a dependance on forms rather than on spirit. Effort, thought and consciousness are deemed unnecessary, for blind faith in the efficacy of creeds, and in the performance of rites and ceremonies, are now cardinal tenets. From the practice of such, humanity becomes the slaves of a handful of those who deceive them under the false pretense of saving them.

The Theosophical Movement, as designed by the Masters and given

out to the world by Madame Blavatsky, was an expression of energy in centrifugal motion, noetic, and acting from within outwards. At his present stage of development, man responds predominantly to the psychic, hence it is only when the sensual and the psychic have been destroyed by an unconquerable will that the spiritual can be realized.

The necessity for a clear understanding of the action of the centrifugal and the centripetal motion of energy is all the more essential at this time, because in the year 1950, the celebrations incident to the Holy Year of Rome will provide a demonstration of ceremonial and ritualistic grandeur unsurpassed in the last century. These in themselves would be confined to relatively few of the world's citizens, except for the fact that Radio broadcasts, Newspaper and Magazine articles, and Movie News, with their concentrated emotional appeal, will inoculate many unthinking persons with its psychic miasma. Elaborate ceremonial vivifies the imagination in a given direction, and coupled with the effective use of mob psychology, Rome hopes to impress and captivate the Western Protestant world, and eventually unite all under its banners, on the plea that Communism is our common enemy. On the one hand is held up the ideal of State domination, and on the other Ecclesiastical. Both are the expression of the psychic motion of energy, and from the Theosophical standpoint, both are equally evil. We hope to have more to say in this regard in future articles.

E. P. W.

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"No man can learn true and final Wisdom in one birth; and every new re-birth, whether we be reincarnated for weal or for woe, is one more lesson we receive at the hands of the stern yet ever just schoolmaster—Karmic Life."

Lucifer, Sept., 1890.

THEOSOPHY IN ACTION

BY ROY M. MITCHELL

I. ORIGINS

It would seem unnecessary at this late date to have to remind members of the Theosophical Society that the Theosophical Movement and the Society are not one and the same thing.

The Theosophical Movement of our time arises primarily out of the reaction from the materialism of the last century, when both religion and science had reached the outermost points of their swing from idealism. Religion posited a restless and whimsical Deity who plunged a new-made soul into a welter of evil, of good, or of mixed environment, and at the end of a few years drew it out and arraigned it for judgment on the one issue of its tenacity of belief in a dogma of redemption, condemning or beatifying therefor. Science, no better, posited a God called nature which for some obscure purpose of its own bred human beings into misery; pitted one against another in order to perpetuate the species of the victor; plunged souls into appalling misery, not for any benefit to themselves, but for the sake of souls and intelligence to be born æons hence.

It was into this deadlock of opinion that the Theosophical Society came, the herald of a movement, to proclaim the immortality of the souls of all created things, to restate the law of the cyclic return of souls and of the effects of the deeds of souls, to enunciate the doctrine that all religions, philosophy and science at their highest emanated from a body of custodians of the wisdom of the race, and to offer a common meeting ground for religion and science. It said to dogmatic religion: "There is no quarrel with your Scriptures if you will read them in terms of your immortal soul returning again and again to earth." To

science it said: "There is no quarrel with your observed facts if you will interpret them in terms of the same evolving entities returning again and again to earth."

This was the original position of the Society, one of explanation and adjustment for the great wave of opinion then setting in against the positions of religious and scientific dogma. That reaction was bound to take a host of forms, for the reason, more than any other, that the world stood upon the verge of a return of the souls who had made the last great wave of preoccupation with occult things. When they came they would inevitably bring with them all their schisms, hatreds, fanatisms, and their cults. For all our talk of reincarnation we do not lay stress enough on this view of life. We still talk of spiritual movements as energizing one from another, as if the soul of the father created the soul of the son, instead of thinking of the soul of the son as another person who modifies or breaks from the forms which the soul of the father has projected for it—the body in which he functions, the house in which he lives, the clothes he wears, the school in which he was educated, the religious system in which he was reared. We are not the products of our predecessors. We are other people than those who believed in infant damnation, and other than those who urged the survival of the fittest.

The great Theosophical Movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, then, is itself less an evolution of ideas than of old cults each born with the motive force of centuries behind it, and each with the genius of ignorance and selfishness in it which will destroy it again as they have destroyed it before.

One of them is spiritualism, destined from its very birth to degenerate into necromancy; another is that Pharisaism of Jesus Christ's time which laid stress upon spiritual healing and worldly prosperity and denied the existence of evil—the cult whose members Jesus described as whitewashing the sepulchre instead of cleansing it—born again in the multitudes of faith-healing sects; another is adventism, that world-old hope which becomes father to the thought that an avatar is at hand; another, ceremonial magic; another, the scientifically garbed wonder-seeking called psychical research; another, mystical ritualism; another, the development of the lower powers by psychic processes; another, the enquiry into hypnotism and its effect upon neurosis. These on the more perilous side; on its nobler side, mystical Christianity, internationalism, and humanitarian and transcendental movements.

In the beginning the Theosophical Society as custodian of the most ancient and the most complete philosophy, held a central position among them all, to guide, to amplify, to warn, and to answer. Its work was one of explaining the rationale of the movements round it—even the maddest—with sympathy and understanding; to provide a literature, to trace ideas to their origins, to restate the ancient doctrines of the soul of man which have survived the ages, to teach those things which are basic in all great religions and philosophies, and to round out the path of which each of the cults is a fragment.

It is a precarious position and one easily lost. Its most striking analogy is that of centrifugal action in water, where the most buoyant thing can stay at the centre of the swirl, the least buoyant swings out to the circumference. As long as the Theosophist can maintain his place at the centre of the great vortex of cults he will serve the

purpose of the Society, studying and explaining with sympathy, with kindness and with insight. The moment he identifies himself with any of the incomplete and fragmentary cults around him he has done less than the task he has assumed. The moment he seeks to drag the Society into a special cult he has struck a blow at its usefulness. If he should succeed and persuade the Society as a body into one or other of the lesser vehicles he would destroy its purpose utterly.

It would then cease to be the explainer. It would become itself only one of the explained.

It is inevitable that in a body of so great extent and with so wide a platform as the Theosophical Society there will be those incapable of staying thus at the centre, who, because they are not trained to study or because they are bored, will find Theosophy insufficient for their needs and seek a more exciting orbit. It is inevitable, also, that from time to time they will draw the Society or parts of it into their eccentricities (in its strict sense). Such things are inseparable from the task it has set itself.

The remedy is that the Society shall apply itself with more devotion and industry to its original work.

The nature of that work and the practical means towards it whereby the lodges of the Theosophical Society in Canada may become more vital factors in the intellectual as well as the spiritual life of their communities I shall discuss in succeeding articles.

BOOKS ON THEOSOPHICAL SUBJECTS

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N. W. J. HAYDON,
564 PAPE AVE., TORONTO

HUMAN AGENCY IN KARMA

(Concluded from Page 16)

Where, then, is the golden mean, the point of right thought to determine right action, either to work with God in his scheme for universal beneficence, or to shrink into inaction; to stand aside or sit with folded arms under the assumption that the great cosmic laws will sweep on to their great cosmic ends without our participation? *Knowledge* enlightens us with the fact and the play of the great law of Karma; what does *wisdom* say as to our response to the impact of the law upon us and our near interests? Taking it as an abstract universal law or principle of truth, are we to let it go its own way without our injecting a mite of our own influence by overt action into its working? Or are we to accept and assume a share of responsibility where we can become causative agents in the flow of events, and thus modify its decrees; and if so, to what measure?

Much of the danger of our being manoeuvred into false position in the problem inheres in our unfortunate habit of thinking that truth, principle, law and things abstractly conceived are, as it were, sheer forces of an entirely impersonal sort that work in nature like a vibration in the air, needing no personalized expression or organic instrumentalization. This naive view assumes that they work abstractly and automatically. This errant basis of so much thinking in occultism should long ago have been replaced by the understanding that all forces and laws work only through the agency of organic beings. Truth and principle are things that come to play in and through the lives and consciousness of great or lesser living beings. Truth and law must be implemented by knowers and administrators of their edicts. Truth is that

which is true for some organic life and consciousness. It does not go floating through the air, impersonalized. It does, in fact, go floating through space, like a sonata transmitted by a radio projector; but only potentially, and in a sense it is not existent in a world of consciousness until it is caught by a personalized registering instrument such as a brain mechanism. Only then is it a verity for some type of conscious being.

Karma must then be a law that comes to concrete manifestation only in the sphere of living personalized being. And the immediate corollary inference is that personal beings can, nay, must, be participants in its operation and conditioners of its decrees. It is the law of action and reaction. Those beings dowered with freedom to initiate action obviously are constituted as its agents. "Every man is his own absolute law-giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself, the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment," asserts one of the three Great Truths.

Well, then, Karma is an abstract universal that we dare not make the mistake of assuming will work in the realm of the abstract with no call upon us to participate in it. The Oriental wisdom has introduced into the Theosophic ideology the awesome thesis that "inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an act in a deadly sin." Broaden mercy into more general godliness and we have the challenging realization that if our action is too feeble on the one side, or too unwisely vigorous on the other, we are transgressing the just law of Karma and inviting corresponding reaction.

The chief fault in Theosophic tendency in face of the problem of due and proper action is, as it appears, the tend-

ency of members to take Karma as an abstract universal that does not concern them or demand of them active participation in its operations. This, one must feel, can be the generating cause of error and tragedy, certainly the occasion of neglected opportunity. The assumption that the great law of justice and balance will work in the abstract—in the air, so to say—without reference to or dependence upon human intervention, human initiative, is a lurking hazard that is all too likely to catch the mind not given to a constant critical studiousness in the philosophical realm. It is of a piece with the general bent of people lured to all forms of "spiritual" cultism to think that spiritual forces are things that vibrate throughout the cosmos and generate their beneficent influences by some sort of magic, much in the fashion of sunlight, which simply shines everywhere and blesses all who bathe in its rays. All you have to do is to open the window of your mind to the benign radiance of universal spirit and the divine influx from on high will inundate and transfigure you. *That you have to provide a mechanism of highly conditioned receptivity, of requisite sensitivity, of power to transmute purely potential energy radiations into currents of brain and nerve force so as to issue in forms of consciousness for you, does not often enter into the consideration of the problem of spiritual realizations.*

So it is with Karma. That it is not a thing that works by automatism in an upper world, but on the contrary is implemented by human action and works its decrees through human agency, is the corollary of the doctrine that hardly seems to be recognized by those who count on it as the principle of justice in a tangled web of living actions. Adversity bears down on those about us, our friends, our enemies, their lives touching ours weightily or lightly; it

even strikes heavily upon us ourselves. All too readily and easily it is our ingrained recourse to think: well, it is Karma; the law is working out its decrees. It is a just and beneficent law; all then is well. And we incline to relax into the posture of complacent mind and folded hands. We stand aloof and let the law work its goodly will. There is not too much risk of an untrue statement to add that, if ill befall those around us whom we have compared adversely with our own standards and virtues, the tendency of many in their own feeling of self-righteousness is to gloat a bit inwardly in a superficial judgment that is much like the oft-delineated joy of the one hundred and forty-four thousand of the redeemed as they sit on the clouds of heaven at the Apocalypse and gloat over the writhings of the multitudes of earth's damned in the flames of Gehenna beneath them. "It is only what the person deserved" is the only too ready reflection in our minds. And this judgment may be quite correct. But the sobering thing in the situation is that we so tragically fail to see what its correctness involves for us ourselves.

It was a healthy sign and a short step in the right direction when Clarence Darrow challenged society collectively with its onus of responsibility in such a crime as the thrill-murder of a Chicago lad by young Loeb and Leopold. Sagacious and conscientious philosophers had suggested the same idea before that. The Scriptures had accentuated it in the moral situation that led to the asking "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The entire matter then resolves down to the point of critical judgment at which the individual, acting alone or in the milieu of the group, must in every case that brushes close to him come to a decision as to what should be *his* re-action, *his* degree of action or inaction,

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NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

A resolution passed recently at Banaras on the independence of the Society from all other movements such as Freemasonry, the L. C. C., etc., is very welcome and shows definitely where the Society stands in regard to such. The full resolution is printed elsewhere in this issue and should be studied by all interested in the status of the Society to which they belong.

* * * *

The General Council has desired me to emphasize the desirability of the Sections supporting the Adyar Day Fund and the A.B.C. Fund in order to meet the needs of the International Headquarters. As most of you are aware the Adyar Day Fund is to meet the deficit of the Adyar Library, one of the greatest and most influential libraries of its kind in the world and one that is indispensable to the welfare of the Society at large. The Annie Besant Commemorative Fund has its object in building up a permanent fund for the establishment of Adyar on a permanently secure basis. Both of these are of great moment to us all and I quote from the Presidential Address at the International Convention last December: "I would like members throughout the world to remember that the strengthening always of the International Headquarters is of vital importance to the work of the National Societies throughout the world". Any donations should be sent to me and I will be happy to forward same on to Adyar in due course.

* * * *

The School of the Wisdom at Adyar wishes to introduce new personnel within its organization and I have been requested to send in the names of outstanding members with a thorough knowledge of Theosophy, or who perhaps combine such knowledge with some

specialized or academic scholarship and who are judged temperamentally suitable as lecturers or leaders of discussion in the School of the Wisdom opening about next October 1. Perhaps there is a member who is thinking of attending the great 1950 Convention and who might come earlier and stay through the School term of eight months. This information is requested very soon with the recommendation of the General Secretary, also giving information as to their qualities, the possibility of their being able to come if invited and financial needs if any. Members interested should write me direct at 52 Isabella St., Toronto.

* * * *

Re the increase in Annual Dues which was mooted in a previous issue with a notification that all lodges were being circularized as to their views on the subject. The Executive Committee has now been advised of the decision of these lodges and at the last Executive Meeting discussed the subject and decided, in view of the various opinions expressed, to abandon the idea as it was plainly evident that many members could ill afford to pay more for their membership, further, many lodges were living from "hand to mouth" as it were, having to find among their own members the wherewithall to pay for rooms and the necessary funds to keep the lodge going. On the other hand several felt that there were members amongst them who could afford to pay more and the suggestion made by these was that the lodges recognizing the necessity of Headquarters meeting the "higher cost of living" that the lodges make an effort to donate a certain sum annually to headquarters. The Executive felt that this was a solution of the difficulty and decided as aforesaid to relinquish the idea of raising the dues and to leave it to the lodges to donate annually a sum

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GENERAL EXECUTIVE

The Quarterly Meeting of the General Executive, Theosophical Society in Canada was held at 52 Isabella St., Toronto, on Sunday, March 5, 1950, with the following members present:—Miss M. Hindsley, Messrs. N. W. J. Haydon, G. I. Kinman and the General Secretary. Mr. Barr was unavoidably absent due to temporary indisposition. The minutes were read and approved. The Financial Statement was moved and adopted. The Magazine Report: The special issue for next November was approved. A decision regarding the number of copies of each issue to be kept was made. The policy of the magazine was gone into and eventually decided that controver-

sial matters should be given the necessary space but that owing to the restricted size of the magazine that correspondents should be limited to letters of not more than 500 words and if that was not enough they should submit their ideas as articles which should be treated as such. It was suggested that a note limiting letters be inserted each month in Office Notes. Finally it was decided that the whole matter be taken up by the Editorial Board and that their finding be submitted back to the Executive Committee who, after approval, would have it printed in the magazine. The question of increasing the Annual Dues was discussed and a report of this is contained in Notes and Comments by the General Secretary in this issue. Pictures of the Masters was then brought forward and the General Secretary stated the result of the voting at the General Meeting at Banaras in December last and which was reported on in Notes and Comments last month. The Executive was pleased that their efforts had been successful but thought that the Resolution as expressed at the January Meeting should now go forward. That Resolution read as follows: "That the Mahatma Pictures which are the property of the Society be removed from the custody of the Esoteric School and be placed in a location in the Society's Headquarters where they may be seen by all members who desire to do so." This was formally moved and carried. The General Secretary was instructed to send it to the Recording Secretary at Adyar for submission to the next meeting of the General Council. A resolution regarding Freemasonry, the L.C.C., etc. passed at the General Council Meeting was fully endorsed by the Committee and it was moved and seconded, that it should be printed in the magazine. Regarding the next meeting of the Executive it was decided that in view of the expected Returns from the Lodges con-

cerning the election of Officers for the coming year, that a tentative date be fixed, viz. the 7th of May to deal with any urgent matter that may arise there-with otherwise the date of the next meeting would be the 9th of July. There being no further business the meeting adjourned.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

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to the best of their ability. I have therefore written the lodges concerned expressing our gratitude and trust that the remainder will fall into line and do the best they can to meet the exigencies of the situation.

E. L. T.

CORRESPONDENCE

Editor, *Canadian Theosophist*,
Sir,—

May I crave space for a few comments on the letter of your Correspondent in the Feb. C. T., signed Student. There is much that is highly commendable in this letter;—that the Society does not constitute a body of religious teachers, but an association of investigators and enquirers, that we should not have the E.S. in the Canadian Theosophical Society (I was not aware we had), that we should not offer our platforms to speakers from Adyar, “if they are a species of dry rot, etc.” We don’t as a rule, but, there still arises the fond faint hope that we shall come across one of these speakers who has given up poselytizing the psychism of Leadbeater for the Study of Theosophy.

When we heard Sri Ram, whom ‘Student’ mentions with great approval, I thought,—here is a prominent lecturer from Adyar, high in the inner councils, who yet it seems is an individual, a man who refuses to fit the mould which

exists at Adyar, but thinks and decides for himself. With such a man as President and the study of Theosophy encouraged as well as the usual study of C. W. Leadbeater’s psychism, and a Society of ‘Followers’ might re-become the Society of alert, critical, self-responsible individuals which it once was before ‘the Fall’. It is true that later when we learned that Sri Ram was a member of the E.S., *with all that that implies*, the lack of substance in our hopes became apparent.

The main contention of Student’s letter, viz. that we Theosophists should enter into competition with the various religious and service clubs and organizations in their public work for Brotherhood, and become ‘recognized and admired’ the world over as they are for their good works, is based upon a complete misconception of the nature of Theosophy and the purpose of the Theosophical Movement.

A study of Theosophy makes it possible to know what Man is, and what Man’s function is, upon this planet. This knowledge with its innumerable implications is of immense importance for humanity, and never more so than at this time when our best thinkers,—our philosophers, scientists and literary men, are loudly proclaiming that the impasse we find ourselves in shows that somehow we have lost our way, and possess no sure sense of direction.

The old land-marks left by Western religions are discredited and the new ones erected by Science are sterile in that they satisfy our desires but not our intelligent aspirations. Never has there been such a period of mental unrest as has existed during and since the last war. It is clear to all thinkers that intellectually we have forged ahead, but spiritually and morally we have lagged, and cannot now control our own creations. We in the West, have no Ethical system. The Ethics of the past was

based upon religious sanctions, now largely discredited, and no longer a dynamic power in most men's lives; Science can only offer us the Ethics of expedience. If the younger generation ask us 'why shouldn't I?' to our 'thou shall nots' we have no answers to give in which we ourselves have any real reliance. The Western world is running on its past built-up habits of decency. It has no guide-posts of its own, no standards to strive to attain. To supply these missing landmarks, to erect new guide-posts, for the guidance and direction of Man's finest energies, his aspiration and goodwill, this is the purpose of the Theosophical Movement. To feed a starving race with spiritual and metaphysical truths which are not put forward as beliefs to be accepted, but as hypotheses to be tested and proved or disproved if they fail to stand up to the fierce searching light of criticism and experience.

What the West needs is knowledge, not belief, some certainty upon which to base its efforts; then it can face the future however dire and foreboding it promises to be. This knowledge Theosophy can supply; an understanding both rational and supra-rational of the why and wherefore; the means and the goal of human existence.

To neglect our task of fitting ourselves to take our part in the work of keeping this knowledge increasingly available,—a work which none but students of Spiritual knowledge can do, to compete in the infinitely less important but very necessary work of the 'Uplift' organizations to help palliate some of the ever-recurring evils of Mankind, would be to overlook the great privilege and to fail to accept the responsibilities which are ours. "The Dharma of another is filled with danger".

W. E. Wilks,
Member Executive Committee,

HUMAN AGENCY IN KARMA

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or aloofness or participation. The nub and gist of our essay, then, is the suggestion of a principle that should be the guiding light in the determination of proper courses. This principle will embody and bring to a focus the whole burden of our presentment. It is that every individual should consider that his decisions, whether to stand aloof and let Karma work its supposed effects without his participation, or to act in the situation as if it was a matter demanding the deployment of his initiative, should be made on the basis of the knowledge that human and not cosmic agency is to be implicated in the case if it falls within the range of the possibility of human agency becoming in any way determinative. To grab it out of the hands of impersonal law, so to say, and bring it within the law of righteousness which the individual can himself initiate or implement, is perhaps the core of the idea that we mortals must thoroughly take home to ourselves and use as our conscious criterion of all motive to action on our part.

The tremendous ethical principle involved and at stake in all human action is this awakening of the sluggish mortal mind to the realization that it is the function and destiny of the divine Ego within each one, as it slowly steps out from under the dominance of the automatic instinctive forces of the universal Mother, Nature, that gave it birth and reared it to ripening maturity, and moves over into the free territory of its Father, Mind and Soul, to inject its judgment, will and moral initiative into the area of its activity. So long have we lived under the rulership of the automatic forces of the natural world, which forces, be it understood, are the automatisms of the subconscious mind of God—his autonomic

nervous system, so to say—that we are slow to come to the final realization that in life's schematism, the time has come for us to play the part and assume the prerogatives of young gods ourselves, making *our* willed determinatives the norms of living procedure for the forces in the area that we can control. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things," is undoubtedly the ancient dramatization of the voice of God as he commissioned his Sons, the twelve legions of angels, to descend to earth and convert lower animal natures to higher human and divine status, promising them elevation to higher rank in the hierarchy as reward for faithful fulfilment of their part of the covenant. As the divine Ego in us advances in its evolution farther and farther from the group soul and its instinctive and almost automatic responses to the impact of outer conditions and events, it can be understood, as expressed in Biblical terms, to be moving ever farther out from under the "bondage to the elements of the world," "bondage to them that by nature are no gods," as Paul expresses it in his Epistles, or again that "bondage under the law" of Nature which forms so large a segment of his analysis of the human situation, in which divine soul is imprisoned in natural body. Just as the child in the family is more strictly under the tutelage and rulership of the mother until the age of young maturity, and then passes out from that guardianship to become an ever freer actor on its own initiative, so in the volitional or spiritual spheres: the young soul lives throughout its "childhood" period under the sway of the forces manifesting in the world of Nature, the universal Mother of life—Isis and the other goddesses—until such time as it steps upward to maturity and begins to deploy its own untrammelled resources in the exigencies of its experiences, and

thus begins to gain a knowledge and mastery of the forces which it is destined to use in *its* chore in the creational work.

We read in the *Secret Doctrine* of the Lords of Karma. To the degree of our status in evolutionary development, we are all to be, if we are not now, Lords of Karma. Laws, as we have seen, do not work abstractly, "in the air;" they must be implemented by the agencies of organic beings, laws that seem automatic and impersonal being the habituated routines ingrained in the automatic or subconscious "nervous systems" of higher planetary and cosmic beings. All advance for the human being is clearly seen to be progress made in his movement away from automatic natural instinct over to reasoned and self-initiated free activity of his own. This is dramatically depicted in the New Testament by the "incident" in which the child Christos runs away from his mother and when she finds and rebukes him, he reminds her that he must now be "about my Father's business." As his Mother is Nature and his Father is the divine mind, is vividly portraying this transition from the childhood of the race and the individual man from early subjection to the rule of Nature over to the birth of mental responsibility and moral initiative. As, again, the life of the individual human is a recapitulation and epitome of the evolution of the race, and that in turn a miniature of the run of every cosmic cycle, we have the analogical ground for understanding and evaluating our own status and steps in progress.

The upshot of all this is that more and more, as we advance in stature and in the knowledge and love of God, both within and without, we will and we must step forward ever more boldly into the stream of events and interpose our own influence, our decisions and our forthright courses of action to deter-

mine the flow of the current. We are to become as gods, knowing to choose the good and avoid the evil; and as gods we, so to say, incorporate more and more of what will seem to the orders below us as an automatism of abstract law, or what indeed is an abstract law until we at our level implement it through having made it the living principle of our motive and action. What we must understand more clearly is that what we think of here as "abstract law" or "principle" is the automatic subconscious functioning of our Planetary's mind, being the routine procedures that he at an early time initiated by conscious thought and then by constant repetition made habitual, which means that his conscious mind turned them over to the care of his subconscious. Mind eventually turns every one of its determinatives over to the custodianship and handling of Nature. Mind, just like any father, plants the seed of its ideation in the body of Mother Nature, and lets that universal Mother bear and rear the child through the years during which it quickly runs over the recapitulation of its former progress in previous cycles. When it catches up with its highest advanced stage of growth in the last cycle, it begins then afresh its education for still higher achievement in divine unfolding of godly power and faculty.

So we must cease thinking of Karma as an "abstract law" working independently of our participation. We must think of making ourselves in ever wider scope the agents and executive dispensers of its decrees. For our inaction in a positive way is ever on an action in a negative evil, a missed opportunity for active good. We must not expect mature actions from a child, but we must expect the child to grow toward maturity.

We are told in the archaic lore that every atom and cell is an entity

launched on the stream of being and destined to expand and unfold potential power until it becomes a god in the heavens. After infinite stretches of experience in Nature's orders of creation, it comes to a point at which it sheds the veil of ignorance from its eyes, rejoices in the wondrous light of dawning self-consciousness and intelligence, and from then on stands on its own feet as an active coadjutant with God in the process of creation.

Upon developed man finally rests the tremendous obligation to rise at last to the philosophical perspective through which he sees that in his sphere of action and influence he—and not an abstract law—is the agent of creative will. His developing will is that creative Karmic force, free to act within the field of its possible reach. If he does not implement God's creative work, it simply does not get implemented at that given place, in that open opportunity. His ignorance, his failure, his feebleness, his cowardice tie God's hands, stall his procedure, negative his effort, defeat his purpose. God expects each cell of his cosmic body, each call of our bodies—and science now tells us that each cell has its own degree of intelligence—to learn its special lesson, unfold its own quantum of sagacity and perform its own duty at its rightful place. Like Lord Nelson, the cosmic Lord expects every man to do his duty.

The "practical" point in the situation, where man is called upon to exercise his prerogative of free will in such a way that inaction, rather than action, is dictated by his best judgment, is his sincere mental determination of the question how far he *can* go with the best will to act. He must indeed know his limitations, for rash impetuosity can throw confusion into the orderly stream of progress. He can throw only his little mite into the stupendous complex of world life. He has only so much time,

strength, power. He must act wisely in his choice of modes and degrees in the use of his available contribution.

If our analysis is to head up in one "moral" of particular impressiveness, perhaps that would be the rather startling realization that the general assumption that Karma may be dodged by inaction is a delusion, that inaction involves through negative channels as much entanglement in the Karmic complex as action does positively. One does not obviate Karma by sitting still and twiddling thumbs. After all the heaviest Karma is the misery generated by failure to grow. Man is under the cycle of necessity to rise to mastery and perfect implementation of every cosmic law, no matter how much practicing or drilling it takes. Life is the drill-master, generous and bountiful in the end, *but stern enough to see that the candidate for infinite blessings fulfils the conditions on which alone the reward of beatitude can be bestowed. No human will escape that exact amount of pressure necessary to make him develop the divine potential within him.*

What is so necessary to know is that, if inaction is decided upon when action would better solve the situation, the inaction becomes a dam to stop the free flow of the law's operation, and that it only causes the forces driving through to accumulate greater power, the result being a later bursting through with greater violence. The moral again is that if all become intelligently alert to seize the always present opportunities to act in positive ways, instead of clinging on to the last degree of inertia and thus precipitating periodic violent cataclysms of Karmic dispensation, the treading of the upward path would be made far more a delightful pilgrimage than the *via dolorosa* it so generally is. Contributing mightily toward this keener alertness would be the wider Theosophic realization that the Karmic

law is waiting and counting upon *us* to implement it most beneficently. This essay is intended to suggest a change in Theosophic thinking and understanding which might tend to quicken this alertness and bring a generally more spirited facing up to Karma.

Perhaps the fullest instruction from the discussion condenses in the realization that we humans must act in human relations at the often unromantic level of the concrete actual. We dare not fold our hands and count on great abstract universals to work out their grand procedures as we watch. It is *we* who must lay hold of the essence of those mighty universals and put them to work in the milieu of the tawdry human and earthly things. The moment we implement cosmic principles amongst these things, they cease to be tawdry and become haloed with splendid romance.

What we have seen with ever-mounting dismay is that the wholly unphilosophical expectation that abstract universals will work independently of our implementation has dried up the flow of the milk of human kindness or turned that milk sour. A glaring sun will quickly turn milk sour. Well may we be instructed then that the too powerful glare of the sunlight of great cosmic truths in our little minds can thicken and sour the sweet stream of human charity and personal helpfulness. To refrain from action from the belief that Karma will in some "spiritual" way take care of all things in complete beneficence, needing nothing from us, can commit us to the sterilization of our human kindness.

Karma is action, and it is time that the Theosophical movement take closer to mind and heart the clarion trumpet voice of its revered Scripture, the Baghavad Gita, when it says: "Verily action is better than inaction."

Abstract universals can and do lethargize the human mind. They can all too

seductively derationalize the reason, dehumanize the human. Their Siren power is in their truth. But it is truth too binding for the human consciousness to be taken in its unmodified and purest brilliance. Man can not lay hold of the sun in the heavens. He can utilize and be blessed with its life-giving rays only after they have been tempered and reduced in their might by passing through the media of moist air about the earth. They have undergone a conversion or transformation of their stupendous power into milder and softer radiations beneficently adapted to man's receptive capacity. So it must be with the power-laden rays of divine truth. Truth unmodified for appropriation by humans at their level will singe the wings and crisp the very body of mortal man. Absolute truth is for God; for man is relative truth. Indeed it may be said, in a certain mode of relevance, that Truth is not for man. For him are all the little separate individual truths. Eventually he will be able to synthesize all these little facets into a composite organic whole of resplendent beauty and moving power, which will come closer to being Truth. But he will then be leaving manhood and approaching Godhood.

"The Lord God is a sun *and* a shield." The great sun of his being, falling full upon man, would consume him to a cinder in a flash. Only behind the shield of matter and of the law of relativity can man endure and be blessed in the dimmed light of Truth, resolved into the precious glittering and wholly salutary little truths.

It is to be assumed that the connection is quite indirect and partly coincidental, though I would not think entirely so, that the word "moth" is both the Egyptian and the Hebrew word for "death." And man, like the moth, is to live happily in the *light*, but must beware lest he die in the *flame*.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Of special interest to the members of the Society are two Resolutions passed by the General Council at its meeting in Banaras last December. The first of these reads as follows:

"The General Council of the Theosophical Society, taking into consideration the fact that a certain confusion exists among the public in certain countries, and among the Governmental authorities in them, as regards the relation of the Society to other bodies with activities sometimes regarded as parallel or allied, deems it advisable to make the following declaration:

"The Theosophical Society, while co-operating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such co-operation possible, is and must remain an organization entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title The Theosophical Society.

"Since the Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of every attachment and affiliation to any other organization."

The other Resolution was proposed by the President and reads:

"Resolved that where a Lodge of the Society or a member desires to present any matter to the General Council, such matter be transmitted through the General Secretary of the National Society to which the Lodge or member belongs;

And that where a Lodge or member who is attached directly to the International Headquarters desires to present any matter to the General Council such matter shall be transmitted through the Recording Secretary."

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

Some such resolution as this is in order but in its present form it jeopardizes the right of Lodges and members to 'appeal to the Throne'. Possibly at its next meeting the General Council will amend this by providing that it shall be the duty of General Secretaries to forward all such letters promptly and should they default in so doing, Lodges and members may write directly to any member of the General Council on the matter.

D. W. B.

"THEOSOPHY IN ACTION"

The interest aroused in the series of articles 'The Exile of the Soul' by the late Roy Mitchell has led us to re-publish an earlier series of his articles which appeared first in the Magazine in 1923. There are twelve installments in all dealing with the relationship of the Theosophical Society to the wider Theosophical Movement, the training of Theosophical Speakers, writers and workers, and in general, with a student's attitude of approach to some of the Theosophical fundamentals and his contribution to the welfare of his Lodge or the Theosophical centre with which he is connected.

There is a breadth of vision in all Roy Mitchell's writings. Like his beloved Walt Whitman, he leads us to the top of a high hill where we see a wider horizon and breathe a cleaner air. With one arm around our shoulder, he points out the ancient way and traces it clearly for us even when it passes through the swamps and undergrowth of the lower lands.

D. W. B.

PIONEERS

The word 'courage' is linked with the word 'pioneer'; one could not be a pioneer without possessing courage.

For a man with the aid and good wishes of his friends to set out to discover a new land or to fashion a home in the wilderness for himself and others, takes courage—but he has the aid of his friends. For a scientist or a doctor in a laboratory to experiment with new ideas, takes courage. But again he has not only the aid and good wishes of his colleagues, he has the necessary instruments for his use and favourable conditions to help him.

But for the Saviours to come as they did to try and impress their teachings on the peoples of the world, indeed takes courage in its finest form. When we think how those teachings have, age after age, been distorted and betrayed we realize that the Teachers must have indeed possessed a courage, patience and knowledge to which we in our present state of consciousness are blind. Having very little if any help to begin with, they eventually, so we read, gathered about them a band of followers to assist them and carry on their teachings when they passed from view.

And then for the Pioneers of the T.S. to come and in the face of ridicule and slander and with such little aid, to carry on on, most unfavourable conditions, took courage. Their effort to preserve and spread the teachings as they did, must indeed make an impression on anyone who is in any way acquainted with the early days of the T.S.—and that required courage.

Then there were those who pioneered for Theosophy in different countries and even in our own city of Toronto. At that time there were no Sunday street cars and no automobiles and many people considered it well worth while to walk for miles to the Lodge room twice on Sundays to the Secret Doctrine Class

and the evening lecture. They along with the personality who brought Theosophy here were Pioneers and courageous one. We have much to thank them for for they kept the link alive and have made it possible for us to have the knowledge today.

What are we doing with it; are we misusing it, bringing confusion into its teachings? Or are we earnestly doing our best day by day, not only to teach it but live it—because after all, that is the real test of the teaching, by their fruits ye shall know them. Are we by our own individual efforts helping to prepare favourable conditions for any future Teachers who may come? Are we helping to shape a mould wherein spiritual forces can be poured for distribution to the needy?

Workers will be needed—are we helping to create a desire in the hearts and minds of those we come in contact with to study and carry on the teachings as we received them? Are we helping to keep the link alive, forgetting our own self-importance, thinking only of the link which is all important?

The mould and conditions could be formed here and now, if we but dimly realized its importance. If we but sensed the need of it, we would make it our life's work. Let us all pull together and show our courage. The Pioneers did; we can—there is nothing to prevent us. The need is great and the workers few. How about you and I being among them, not because we are any different from or better than any one else, but just because we have been blessed with a glimpse of the Light, 'that light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world'. "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify the Father" who imparted the teachings to the Pioneers.

Winifred Pratt.

Mrs. W. M. Pratt, the writer of the above article came in touch with The-

osophy over fifty-five years ago. Mrs. Pratt at that time lived with her parents easterly of the Don River, then on the outskirts of Toronto. A Theosophical pamphlet which had been delivered to their home aroused the interest of the parents and older children. Mrs. Pratt speaks from personal experience when she mentions those who walked for miles to the Lodge room (old Beaver Lodge at Gerrard and Yonge Streets). Mr. S. Beckett was president at that time; he was the leader of the Secret Doctrine Class and that Class is still continuing every Sunday morning. Mr. A. E. S. Smythe, the first Theosophical pioneer in Toronto, was the editor of *The Lamp*, and it may have been a copy of that publication which was delivered to her home. Earnest workers of those days delivered Theosophical literature from door to door, determined that every household in Toronto and its environs should receive at least one of the publications.

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INSPIRATION

O Source of inspiration,
 Could I but tap,
 Draw forth and bring
 To thirsty lips thy gift,
 To freshen bloom of hope
 And raise from valley
 Of despair,
 Succor the wounded,
 Cherish the broken and
 The weak!
 These have I set to do.
 Where one has put his heart
 And aim,
 There does he benefit.
 O Source of Inspiration,
 Do I find
 Thy waters flow anew again?

V.I.S.