

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

Divine Wisdom

Brotherhood

Occult Science

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SPIRITUALISM—FACT OR FRAUD

BY J. HASKEL KRITZER, M.D.

Years ago, while interning in an institution that accommodated a considerable number of patients suffering from mental and nervous disorders, a most unusual phenomenon occurred one Friday afternoon.

The perpetrator was Bennie, twenty-five years old, frail and undersized, who was brought to the institution violently insane. That Friday, weeks after the violence subsided, it returned suddenly during a physical re-examination. All efforts to pacify him had failed. He broke every leather strap that held his wrists and ankles to his bed.

When questioned how he managed to free himself, he pointed into space, saying, "They did it,—the negroes." The situation became the more provocative because of a previous similar experience with another mental patient, a famous soprano, hospitalized on the same floor. One day she pierced the air with terrifying shrieks, calling for help against attack by "two negroes."

An inquiry into the history of the building prior to its annexation by the institution disclosed the recorded murder of two negroes on the premises. These significant incidents precluded a

light dismissal of the Bennie exploits—as "illusion, delusion, or hallucination." These misleading terms often cover an appalling ignorance of a type of psychic abnormality that is as common as it is misdiagnosed. It involves an aspect of man's nature apart from the superficial brain consciousness, which chiefly concerns the psychiatrist and—psychologist.

All Mental Levels

Nor were the victims of this misunderstood type of psychism isolated instances in institutions only, as I was to discover later while engaged in general practice. There were among my patients men and women of every walk of life, of intelligence and education, often considerably beyond the average level. Some of them would first consult me about some trivial symptoms and then engage me in discussions bordering on the psychic or metaphysical. After ascertaining their safety in my "right" attitude on the subjects they would unburden their real woes of harassing clairvoyance and clairaudience, that is, of seeing ghostly apparitions or of hearing annoying often even insulting voices.

There was the clever young physician who could not sleep alone in a room because of the repeated violent shaking of his bed; the executive of an industrial concern who was irregularly disturbed by a well-defined feminine apparition which left him drained of his energy; the widowed matron who was driven to distraction resisting armorous advances of her deceased husband. There was the retired naval officer, a bachelor sixty-nine years old, unusually robust, whose sleep at night and rest in the daytime was interrupted by taps on his body by fleeting forms of indistinct origin which occurred when he was alone in a room, particularly when in unfamiliar surroundings. Shirley Ann, over two years of age, cried convulsively in fear of the "bad man" whom she located in space. The condition was relieved in two days. Her father, also, was treated the previous year. He saw "ghosts as real as people."

In some of the patients such abnormalities resulted from deliberately "sitting for development," a practice of inducing total passivity. It is recommended by spiritualists as a means of acquiring mediumistic "faculties."

One "sitter," a mechanic, thirty-eight years old, "developed" into seeing "spirits" even when he tried desperately NOT to see them. He became a nervous wreck. Competent observers in this field regard mediumistic practices as inimical to health and, much too often, as a cause of mental and moral unbalance. This is confirmed by the consequences suffered by patients known to this writer. It leads him to concur, in their views and warning against spiritualism and mediumship. The latter is a disease; it contracts the solar plexus and thus hinders materially the functions of the abdominal and pelvic organs.

Mediumship And Ill Health

Mediumship is in fact a psychological dislocation with all that that implies. Mediumship may also result from day-dreaming, lack of initiative, prolonged fasting, amorous excesses, alcoholism and other habits that undermine health.

My excursion into "spirit-land" followed an urgent request from a medical colleague to join his investigation of an "extra-ordinary" phenomenon of spirit-materialization.

Interrupting my research in some of the county institutions in St. Louis, Missouri, I arrived on a Sunday afternoon in time to attend a semi-public seance held in one of the halls of the Masonic Temple on State and Randolph Streets, Chicago. A Mrs. Thompson, an English woman, was the demonstrating medium of a group which called itself the International Society for Psychical Research, of London, England.

I was one of a group of physicians, earnest men and women, determined to make an unbiased investigation of the claims of "spirit-materialization." Accordingly, we separated into two groups. The men made a thorough inspection of the improvised "cabinet" consisting of a small speaker's platform enclosed by unlined portiers suspended from the ceiling. We were satisfied after a careful check that there were no concealed wires, trapdoors or other materials that could possibly be surreptitiously employed.

In an adjoining room, the group of women physicians, made a physical examination of the completely disrobed medium. They then helped her into an unlined, pocketless robe and ushered her into the cabinet under our watchful eyes. Members of the audience who occupied the first two front rows of seats were requested to join hands. A few minutes later a gruff voice, sounding as through a barrel, greeted us

"Good evening," to which some of those present responded, "Good evening, Major." Shortly after, an usher was seen to receive a large bouquet of long-stemmed roses from the cabinet! One of the roses I carried home kept its freshness for several days.

"Spiritual" Hand-Shake

Shortly following the bouquet episode, I was singled out by a delicate young lady usher in her early twenties who took my hand and led me to the cabinet. From it appeared a clearly discernible nebulous form that could fairly qualify as a well-behaved proverbial "ghost" which embraced and shook hands with me. It was a sensation similar to the caress of a gentle breeze. The agonized "facial" features of the faintly whispering "ghost" bore a striking resemblance to those of the deceased wife of a musician-composer who had died in St. Louis six months prior to the holding of the seance. I was a friend of the family and had enjoyed many a musical evening in their home, for the deceased was also an accomplished musician.

It was a terse "ghostly" visit, yet it lasted long enough to rend the veil, however slightly, that screens the living from the dead. It also kindled the desire to pursue the investigation, much against a natural disinclination, if not repugnance, towards such matters, which is more intense now over a quarter of a century after the last seance.

Others, too, were escorted to the cabinet to meet a succession of "spirits" that advanced from, and retreated into the cabinet. The mist-like forms were plainly visible in subdued daylight to all assembled, who unanimously attested the genuineness of the phenomenon.

The novelty of seeing "ghosts" faded. I could not share the belief, however sincerely set forth by the sponsors of the seance, that the senseless apparitions were the "spirits" of the "dear departed." They offered no philosophi-

cal basis to support such claims.

There was decidedly nothing spiritual in that vaporous materialization of forms, to see which a two dollar admission fee was charged in violation of an ancient Law observed by spiritual Teachers that "*Truth may not be sold.*" Assuredly, Jesus of Nazareth charged no fees to show His people the "way, the truth, and the life."

Prince Siddartha Buddha renounced his future rightful kingdom to don the yellow robe and with beggar's bowl preached the Great Law; and Socrates drained the hemlock poison cup, the death sentence imposed by the Greek Senate as his reward for expounding Truth. Furthermore, great religious Teachers and Philosophers down the ages have ever counseled against mediumistic practices. Excepting rare instances, materialization of "spirits" was regarded as masquerades of "evil spirits" in deceptive impersonations.

The swooning medium, still in her trance after the performance, presented a pathetic figure of desolation and exhaustion that long haunted my memory.

It is pertinent to add that this writer had witnessed the much-publicized wager-performance endeavouring to duplicate by sleight of hand Mrs. Thompson's phenomena. The laborious attempt of the internationally famous magician in a large theatre in Chicago's Loop was a dismal failure, a shabby imitation.

Negligible Knowledge

The one definite lesson learned from my "spirit-land" journey was that nothing of value can be learned through such channels. It is equally obvious that psychiatry to date still proudly resists psychism by ignoring it as a factor in the psycho-neuroses.

Psychism may be roughly defined as the "no man's land" which divides the seen physical material from the unseen super-physical domain. It is as

unreasonably resisted even as Sister Kenny's successful "polio" treatment was, and still is resisted in some quarters on no sounder grounds than that it did not originate in medical textbooks, —the ultra "Sacred Cow."

The none-too-fruitful seance experimentation stimulated a more determined search of a true basis for the psychospiritual side of life. For in *that* is joined not only mental and emotional health but also man's hopes and fears, joys and sorrows.

The next logical step, therefore, was a retreat into the refreshing climate of the literature of immortals. Perchance the religio-philosophic precincts may hold the coveted solution, acceptable to the mind and heart.

Consulting the Bible as a starting point, we find in the First Book of Samuel that King Saul seeks the counsel of a woman with a "familiar spirit." First Samuel, chapter 28, verse 7, "Saul and the Witch of En-dor." "Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that had a familiar spirit at En-dor."

King Saul in disguise "came to the woman by night" (chapter 28, verse 8.) ". . . And he said, Bring me up Samuel." (chapter 28, verse 11.) The medium brought about the materialization. ". . . . And Saul perceived that it was Samuel and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself." (chapter 28, verse 14.) It is noteworthy that the New and the Old Testaments of the Bible proscribe "sorcery," "necromancy," "witchcraft," etc.

Turning to Shakespeare, the great Master Craftsman dedicates much of the first act of his classic, *Hamlet*, to a dialogue between the materialized ghost of the murdered Danish King with the

Prince, his son, Hamlet. The Kingly ghost commands Hamlet to "Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. . ." (Act 1, Scene V.) To use a phrase of Psychanalyst Jung, was this Hamlet's "veridical hallucination"? But the King's ghost had also manifested to all three at the same time; to Hamlet, his friend Horatio, and Marcellius, Captain of the Guards. (Act 1, Scene IV.)

Imputation of the Bard's motive prompting the portrayal of the ghost is herewith humbly relinquished to the interpreters of literature and the drama.

Theosophy Speaks

And now, a glimpse into the monumental work, *Isis Unveiled, A Master-Key to Science and Theology*, by H. P. Blavatsky, in whose salon had congregated the great minds of the time, in New York, Paris and London. Among them were Alfred Russel Wallace, Flammarion, the great French astronomer, Thomas Edison, and many others.

From this book of over fourteen hundred pages, the following excerpts are submitted: "*That phenomena are actually witnessed, mysterious in nature —generally and perhaps wrongly termed spiritual it is now idle to deny. . . .*" (p. 40, vol. 1.)

"Many years of wandering among 'heathen' and 'Christian' magicians, occultists mesmerisers and the *tutti quanti* of white and black art, ought to be sufficient, we think, to give us a certain right to feel competent to take a practical view of this doubted and very complicated question." (p. 42.)

"We have recognized such materialized figures as the visible representatives of acquaintances, friends and even relatives: We have in company with many other spectators, heard them pronounce words in languages unfamiliar not only to the medium and to everyone else in the room, except ourselves, but,

(Continued on Page 94)

THEOSOPHY IN ACTION

BY ROY MITCHELL

V. STUDY

Now, fixing our minds on the things which require to be done and looking back only to avoid repeating the mistakes of our past, I think we will find nothing wrong in the Theosophical Society which cannot be mended with a few years of right effort. The membership of the Society changes with great rapidity—far greater than persons unacquainted with its records would suppose—and a very short time is enough to recreate the spirit of any group. If, then, we assume our tasks, not as an end in themselves, but as laying down a charge and a culture for incoming members, the whole Society can be remade nearer to that first mood in which the work was begun.

The primary requirement will be to create fertile methods of study. Our greatest present disability is our shameful ignorance of the elements of occultism. Our people are not without the wish to know, but they come into the Society with a grave misapprehension of the nature of occult literature—the idea that somebody is going to tell them truth.

The Theosophical Society is not the custodian of truth, but of certain age-old means to the attainment of truth, and when we lose sight of this distinction and proffer to outsiders things we cannot give them, the best outsiders suspect us and refuse to come in, while those less than the best, who come in on such a promise, create so great a disturbance arguing about the right book and the right teacher, that we are in a constant turmoil—a turmoil in which study is extremely difficult.

It will be the duty of those who have found it out to make it clear to those who have not—inside as well as outside the Society—that esoteric truth is never

written down exactly in any book. If it were it would cease to be esoteric. The great books in Theosophy are never explicit about anything except the moral steps to the attainment of truth. Regarding matters of fact they are evocative of truth in the reader, not by a process of telling untruth, but by a method of presenting truth in a fragmentary form. A great Theosophical book is not solid nutriment to be broken off and carried away piecemeal, but a mesh requiring to be filled.

For years now we have had study groups engaged in poring over a single book, trying by intense scrutiny to acquire its treasure. If it has been a foolish book which professed to be explicit the effort has been vain, because the book has contained little truth. If it has been a great book the effort has been almost as vain, because the wealth of a great occult book is derived in exactly the same measure that the student takes something to it.

If we bolt an idea entire from a book we have not gained an idea. We have merely entertained an alien. But if the borrowed idea, obeying the same law of polarity as manifests here on the physical plane as sex, unites with one in our own minds, we have gained an idea. Ideas are not born outside of us, but inside of us, and our native-born will be the only ones we can use in the quest of truth.

The single-book Theosophists have given us a great deal of trouble and have seriously impaired our efficiency. If they have eaten a great book they mouth recondite phrases. They are not unlike the old-line Christians who bang the Bible with a positive fist and say, "All any man needs to know is in that Book!" Of course it is, but it will never give up its all until the student brings

some wealth of his own with which to elicit it. The truth is all in a tree if we know how to read it. But these single-book and single-author people, when their attenuated arguments run out, fall back on issues of loyalty which have nothing to do with the matter. Then the pot boils again. For all they are getting out of their respective treasuries of truth they might trade books and be no better nor any worse off, as long as they think a single book can yield truth.

The solution is in that word I dwelt on in the second of these essays. Comparative study alone will nourish. The fool cleaves to a single exposition of truth, and is starved. The wise man reads two books and is fed. He knows neither book can be complete and exact. He triangulates on his subject. Each book gives its own bearing and a parallel is established by which values can be measured. Once having learned the process, the wise man will go on taking new bearings on his problem until he sees it in the round. Then he possesses the factors out of which he can make truth in his own soul, and such truth is Theosophy.

The Masters Themselves do not offer truth gratuitously. When a disciple has pondered and comes to Them with his solution, asking if it be true, They are bound to answer "Yes" or "No."

That is what the books They have inspired will do. Students say they find The Secret Doctrine a hard book. For the person who comes to it empty-handed, expecting to be given something, it is the hardest book in the world, double-locked and bolted at every page. For the seeker who has gone as far as he can with his problem, and comes with a question, the Doctrine will fall open at the page he needs. My reader must not take this on any word of mine. Let him try it. It is a Master book, and it is bound to say "Yes" or "No."

So with all great books—ours and before our time. They elicit truth from the student. The silly books inform him, and when he gets something for nothing that way, he can take the testimony of the centuries that it is wrong. If it were right, it could not so be told. Exact truth on this plane is maya. Even $2 \times 2 = 4$ is not quite right. It is the dim symbolic formula for something only the soul can know.

We will have to set up our study classes with these things in mind, and instead of a somnolent group listening to the droning voice of a reader, we will demand of each student that he carry on a research parallel to the subject in hand, and bring his gleanings to the class for the filling of the text. One will follow parallel indications in Buddhist, one in Hindu, one in Egyptian, another in Greek and another in Chinese tradition. One may have a scientific, one a philosophic, one a mystical inquiry, and so on. The text itself will suggest search, and the material will be turned into the general store. So we will find out what texts paralyze study, and what ones energize it. Instead of having to fall back upon the bona fides of the writer of the book in hand, and argue about his authority, the students will know him by his fruits.

We will learn also that the source of *Theosophia* is in the soul, and we will develop by practice the faculty of eliciting it. We will learn how to ask ourselves a question again and again until the Ego creates the answer from the treasure house of his own high origin. Then we shall have an end, perhaps, of this nonsense about the evolution of the soul, and find out by definite experiment that the soul does not evolve, but, as the early books had it, it emanates.

Our real Theosophists will find such a method as fascinating as it is enduring. Our weaker students will not like it because they do not want work.

They want alms, or at least a bargain. And since, as our records show, whatever they may do for the Theosophical movement, they are not long for the Theosophical Society anyway, we will be less upset when their karma runs out and they leave. The work firmly built on Theosophical principles can go on.

GENERAL EXECUTIVE

The Annual Meeting of the General Executive, Theosophical Society in Canada took place at 52 Isabella St., Toronto, on Sunday July 9th. Beyond the ordinary routine there is very little to report. The Financial Statement was approved and a copy appears in the current issue of this magazine. On analyzing the Standing of the Lodges it is found that the total membership is two down on last year's report in spite of the fact that we had twenty-five new members; this was caused by thirty-four members being in arrears through non-payment of dues to date and it is hoped that they will put themselves in good-standing in the near future. The General Secretary informed the meeting that in response to a request from the General Secretary of the Indian Section he had sent a small Canadian flag for purposes of display at their conventions, etc. He also stated that he had sent a telegram of congratulation and good wishes to the American Section on the occasion of their sixty-fourth convention which was held at Olcott, Wheaton, Ill., early in July. Mr. Kinman intimated that he would spend his vacation this year in motoring to Vancouver and back and that he would visit the lodges on his way; it was suggested the General Secretary include a notice to this effect in his Notes and Comments for August so that the lodges could arrange for his arrival. It was then arranged that the next meeting of the Executive should take place on Sunday, October first.

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Mr. George I Kinman who is president of the Toronto Lodge and member of the General Executive intends to motor to Vancouver and back for his vacation this year and proposes visiting our lodges on the way. I feel that this should be publicised as it will be an opportunity for our lodges to meet a representative of the General Executive which is quite a rare experience these days. Mr. Kinman is a good lecturer and a keen student of the Secret Doctrine and will be glad to speak wherever and whenever it is possible to do so at the short notice that will have to be given in advance. He hopes to be in Winnipeg toward the end of August, will go on to Vancouver and return via Calgary and Edmonton, the latter place he expects to be in early in September. Secretaries of lodges please note and be ready to co-operate with Mr. Kinman when he notifies them of his impending arrival.

* * * *

I attended the annual picnic held by the Hamilton Lodge and a very enjoyable function it was. Many old friends were present and there were representatives from four lodges accompanied by quite a number of children who, it was pleasant to hope, may become the future theosophists who will carry on our ideals. Dundurn Park where it was held lends itself to such a gathering and the view over the bay was delightful. The Lodge is to be congratulated on the admirable arrangements made, nothing was overlooked, and the games under the guidance of Mr. Cecil Williams were most amusing and he was ably seconded by Mr. Alex. Watt in some most hilarious impersonations.

E. L. T.

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 To whom all payments should be made, and all official
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OFFICE NOTES

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

* * *

The Blavatsky Institute (Toronto) reports that the sale of the book edition of Roy Mitchell's *Exile of the Soul* is going very well indeed. *The American Philosopher* has very kindly given considerable publicity to the book and by

far the greater number of sales have been in the United States. Those who desire to obtain a copy of this important work should send in their orders as quickly as possible; price \$1.00 for the paper bound edition, \$1.50 for the cloth-bound. Requests have been granted for the issuance of Spanish and German translations of the book. Mr. Mitchell's *Course in Public Speaking* which was written especially for Theosophical use, has already been published in both languages.

* * *

Occult Masonry by Roy Mitchell which appeared in the early numbers of *The Canadian Theosophist* under the pen-name of Matthew Gibson, is also being published in book form by the Institute. This should be ready in early October. It will be similar in format to the *Exile* and the prices will be the same.

* * *

The American Foundation for the Study of Man is sponsoring the work of microfilming many ancient manuscripts at St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai. This monastery was the home of the famous "Codex Sinaiticus" which was taken to Russia and was later purchased by the British Museum. The manuscripts now to be microfilmed date back to the second and third centuries and their publication should make available to historians and to religious scholars a vast amount of hitherto unknown material. H. P. B. predicted that in this century many ancient manuscripts and records would come to light.

* * *

We have received the first number of a new magazine, *Self-Knowledge*, official organ of Shanti Sadan, the centre of Adhyatma Yoga in the West. This well-written and interesting magazine of Vedanta thought is published in London.

Newspapers which gave columns of space to accounts of the unauthorized handing over of atomic information to the Russians, gave less than an inch to a brief announcement that four Russian atomic scientists would attend a fifty-nation conference in London on July 12th to discuss the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

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The Vatican has cancelled the proposed canonization of Monsignor Gianbelli, Archbishop of Bobbia (16th century) because one of his miracles qualifying him for sainthood was the curing of a venereal disease. It was held that canonization under such circumstances 'might give people the wrong impression.' There is doubtless some valid logic in this somewhere, but we must

confess to failure to understand the Roman Catholic mind.

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The book Catalogue of the Theosophical University Press (Covina) for 1950-1951 is an excellently prepared booklet which bears the imprint of that fine craftsmanship which distinguishes all publications of the University Press. In addition to the standard Theosophical publications such as The letters, Isis, The Doctrine, The Voice, The Key, etc., the writings of Dr. G. de Purucker are listed together with other interesting items including, Theosophic Correspondence between Louis Claude de Saint-Martin and Baron Kirchberger, Healing and Occult Science by J. Croiset Van Uchelen, Sensa, a mystery play in three acts adapted from The Idyll of the White Lotus.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—Year Ending June 30th, 1950

RECEIPTS		EXPENDITURES	
Balance from last year:		Per Capita, Adyar	\$ 95.43
General Account	\$984.05	Magazine Cost:—	
Special Fund	3.00	Printing	\$1,116.00
	\$ 987.05	Postage	48.16
Lodge Fees and Dues:—		Envelopes	80.14
1950	803.45		1,244.30
1951	132.50	General Fund:—	
	935.95	Postage	14.17
Magazine Subscriptions	300.16	Office	1.60
Magazine Donations	112.60	Extras	67.81
General Sales	23.29	Stationery	20.52
General Fund Donations	23.05	Binding	97.55
Bank Interest	18.04		201.65
Pefund	3.00	Balance	862.22
Premium46		
	\$2,403.60		\$2,403.60

BANK RECONCILIATION

As per Pass Book	\$964.94
Less O/S eqs.	\$93.00
	9.72
	102.72
	\$862.22

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Theosophical Society in Canada as at June 30th, 1950 was 372, as compared with 376 as at June 30th, 1949. Twenty-five new members joined, seventeen former members were re-instated and there were thirteen deaths during the past year.

E. L. THOMPSON,
General Secretary.

LODGE NOTES

Ever since a Theosophical Study Class was organized in Hamilton in 1911 or 1912, one of the activities of the group has been an annual picnic. Toronto friends have often joined us, and in the earlier years the St. Catharines group frequently came too.

This year, Toronto Lodge was asked to combine with us. As the date was Saturday, July 8th, a good many were away on holiday, but Lt.-Col. Thomson, the General Secretary, was able to come and Mr. and Mrs. Kinman and Mrs. Marks each brought friends in their cars. Mrs. G. Knapp came from Thorold and Mr. A. Griffiths from St. Catharines. Mr. and Mrs. Watt with grandson, and Mr. and Mrs. Oberlechner and family came from Kitchener. Altogether, about forty adults and twelve children gathered in Dundurn Park for several enjoyable hours.

Games were played prior to the luncheon and after supper, much amusement was created by Mr. Alex Watt's characterizations by means of masks.

M. Carr,
Secretary, Hamilton Lodge.

CORRESPONDENCE

2873, Inlet Avenue,
Victoria, B.C.,
July 5th, 1950.

The Editor
Canadian Theosophist.

Dear Sir:

Mr. Pease's letter in the July "Canadian Theosophist" embodying an excerpt from the "Theosophical Movement" is a very timely one and should be taken to heart by all serious students of theosophy. Such criticism is indeed badly needed, and one has only to refer to the article by C. Jinarajadasa in the

same number in order to realize the kind of theosophy that is being widely publicised to-day.

Speaking of a member of the Society, Mr. Jinarajadasa says: "While he may still remain a devout member of his own faith, he passes beyond that faith into recognition that all faiths have the message of God."

True, all faiths have the same origin but here we have "God" cropping up again as one who can send messages to "his" followers, and the theosophist is apparently to be devotedly faithful to this message while at the same time accepting the message of the Masters which repudiates the existence of any such Being.

In your "Office Notes" you genuinely deplore the use of the word "God" in Theosophical magazines, but say that you have no objection to its use "by those who prefer it". However, as long as the word is used there seems no use in objecting to the personal pronoun, or the "plans" or "messages" emanating from "him", for they are inseparable from a "God" who *can* only be referred to by a personal pronoun.

Yours sincerely,

E. K. Middleton.

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To the Editor, *Canadian Theosophist*:—
As I have previously made a lengthy reply to the critique of Mr. E. B. Dustan on my Karma articles in recent issues, I can not ask you to give extended space to another reply to the critique of Mr. G. R. Kinman in the June issue. Yet the discussion can not yield its potential value unless the points raised are met and essential truths brought out as far as may be done.

It seems to me that Mr. Kinman's critique shows a very shallow reading of what I wrote in the Karma articles, and spends itself in attacking positions

which I do not hold and did not put forth at any time. Only in a few sentences does it deal with the material I had presented, and even then does not meet the argument advanced, but contents itself with sheer assertion to the contrary.

My thesis in the articles was that Theosophists have erred in invariably attributing present Karmic involvements to their *past*, and I made the definite assertion that our Karma was motivated by the future, i.e., designed to carry our evolution on toward its high goals. I expected that this radical and quite revolutionary proposition would fall with incredulity and amazement on most readers, conditioned to think only of Karma as being generated in the past. Then I advanced my logical grounds for this declaration, which must appear to have strong cogency, if faced thoughtfully. Not one of these grounds did Mr. Kinman face and refute.

The main support of my averment was that as the universe was planned "in the beginning" by God's Mind and then energized by his power to evolve through to its finished stage, this final purpose must be taken as the driving *cause* of all the action implicit in the process. On these premises all action of creatures in the scheme is directed, whether blindly or with direct awareness, toward the fulfilment of the Divine Purpose. Philosophy in general has endorsed Aristotle's designation of this end purpose of the Creator as the "final cause." I quoted Yale's eminent author, Dr. Northrop, as saying that "the living organism comes into mature being because it is guided by its final cause as its aim and pattern." Mr. Kinman sidesteps the conclusive force of this positive (and very remarkable) statement of evolutionary principle by his quite unsupportable assertion that the principle does not apply to man,

but only to "mechanical evolution." "Man," he insists, "is not part of mechanical evolution." The soul is not under compulsion of the automatic law of mechanical evolution, is the argument. This is the "line" that one gets in Christian Science; is it also the Theosophic teaching? Let us see.

Surely my critic has heard the phrase so bitterly expressive of India's philosophical straining to unleash the soul from its burden of the flesh: "Bound to the wheel." Is he not fully aware that the soul of man, (the Atma-Buddhi-Manas entity) came here expressly for the purpose of putting itself "under the law"? This is the very "bondage in Egypt" of the Scriptures. This is "the great sacrifice" of the Agniswatha Pitris, the "great oblation for sin," the "dying on the cross" of all the Christs and Sun-gods. And, say the Scriptures: Not one jot or tittle of the law shall be abated until all be fulfilled." Says Paul: "While we were yet children, not knowing God, we were in bondage to them that by nature are no gods." (Moffat Trans.) We were under the power of what he calls "elementals of the earth" and "of the air," or "the elements of the world."

Mr. Kinman points to the "freedom" of the soul, i.e., the man. It can come and go in its relation to the life in flesh. I see nothing in all my reading of extensive Theosophical literature that says the soul is free to undergo this bondage or not, as might be its whim. On the contrary, our literature says that it is severely punished for recalcitrancy and refusal to incarnate. We are told what happened to the "unwilling Nirvanees!" (See *The Secret Doctrine, passim.*) The soul's incarnations in animal bodies is termed by the Greeks *Kuklos Anangke*, or the Cycle of *Necessity*. Our minds have been so warped by the "Christian" doctrine of the "fall of man" that we do not even as Theoso-

phists recognize that incarnation is a natural and wholly beneficent necessity—unless God changes to some other scheme of life manifestation.

Paul is at pains to establish by analogy that as the child is “under parents and guardians until the time” of its maturity, so the race of infant deities, our souls, that is being generated in the womb of mother earth and mother body, is for a long period of the cycle under lower natural powers, the automatic energies of nature, lacking mind. Ultimately, however, in the fullness of its development, the soul must free itself from this enslavement to the body and its prison rules. But I doubt if it would ever exercise its alleged “freedom” to disregard the laws of the mechanical organism that empowers it with the energy of the atom, which power it must have to implement its own creative operations. And it is a point that has had no emphasis in Theosophic teaching that I have ever encountered, that these laws of Nature which govern man’s body are the precise analogues of all spiritual laws, and that the soul must come under their tutelage and have their principia, so to say, stamped upon and inwrought into the very texture of its own spiritual being and consciousness. For all things below are formed over the pattern of “the things in the mount.”

So it is the law of life that man make himself a very immediate and direct part of “mechanical evolution.” There is no escape from this, any more than an acorn can escape the fate of falling off the lofty bough and being buried in its underworld of soil and moisture—if it wishes to become an oak. If man wishes to become that which he (predestination or not) has no choice but to become—the alternative being total disintegration of his individuality!—namely a god, he *must* incarnate in lowly animal bodies. This puts him

“under the law” of “mechanical evolution” very decidedly.

For one to say that the great concept of final cause applies only to the physical or material side of life, and that man’s high soul is not within the area of the cosmic evolution of life to God’s predetermined objectives, is to make a preposterous and wholly erroneous assertion. God’s “final cause” or motive in creation permeates with its radiation of influence every facet, branch, level and department of the creation. Mr. Kinman argues that physical evolution, but not the evolution of consciousness—sensation, emotion, thought and spiritual love—is alone the operation of divine purpose. God’s laws are uniform throughout the entire range of his mighty Being. Does Mr. Kinman argue—indeed he does—that man’s soul, being free, is free to handle the body, its lower vehicle, as it chooses, and free to ignore or flout and turn away on any caprice from the eternal laws of the divine causative purpose, in total disregard of the relentless pressure of the deific “drive” to achieve its final end and goal? The pressure of the final cause is never relaxed on any creature. Even the “present desire” which my critic says is the independently existing new cause of future Karma, is a product of that incessant pressure that drives the creature on to the activities that will result in future progress toward the attainment of that great final cause. Any “present desire” is of course only an aspect of the pressure and one expression of the drive toward the goal.

My analysis of Karma as being future, not past, is startling, no doubt. But while Mr. Kinman does not argue the point in any real way, he lets it be assumed that the idea is erroneous. But if he had read my words carefully, he would have seen that I placed the past (of our evolution) in its due and proper place, in my statement that the past has

conditioned our present status, made it what it is at any given moment; but that the motive of all Karma is unequivocally and eternally educative, that is, inspired by desire to attain a future end. God committed us to the necessity of action, and action is Karma (the very meaning of the word!). He committed us to Karma. This is what I meant in saying that God made all our Karma for us and handed it to us—in germinal form—at the very start. Therefore it must be true and correct to say that we did not “make” any of our Karma, in the sense that we would not have had any if we had not acted badly. We have all the Karma we will ever have when we set out, and we did not make that ourselves. God designed it for us—to work at and learn by. We took it, and by our wise or foolish action *conditioned* it, gave it its specific character.

As long as we conceive (and I am happy to say that in its sober reflection the T.S. mostly does so conceive it) that Karma is educative, instead of penal, the reference is to it as motivated to the future goal. Education has no reference except to the future. I am convinced that the simple logical shift of attitude and view on Karma may go far to regenerate a decadent Theosophy. People call it gloomy and somber. Perhaps its common concept of Karma as compensatory and mostly retributive for a bad past is a vital reason for this posture of the public mind.

Our entire life and all our lives were given us to teach us the laws of growth and the majesty of being. Is it preposterous, then, to think that particular detached events in these lives are purely designed to instruct us—always of course under the conditions imposed by our progress to a given point and not beyond it? H.P.B.’s way of stating that we are now “working off evil Karmic causes produced by us in Atlantean

bodies” is, if I may say so, a loose and somewhat crude form of expressing what might have been just as accurately phrased otherwise: that we are now working away from the limitations imposed on us by our failure to have developed farther and acted more wisely in Atlantis. We didn’t learn them; we must really learn now. Karma is the cosmic pressure that we are under to learn, to know.

I am accused of believing in “bad Karma.” I used the term not as a statement of *my* idea of Karma, but as all too commonly bandied about among Theosophists. It is not my phrase, but theirs. I did not sponsor or endorse it. Karma as a whole, being God’s ordinance for the growth of his children to glory, is all good. Isolated phases of our experience with it can seem “bad” enough. In that loose usage the term is perfectly legitimate—at any rate inevitable. But in all soberness we ought to cease this incessant prattle about “past Karma.” All Karma is to educate us for Godhood. We have it because it is our glorious privilege to learn, and it is caused, arranged, designed to teach us. It is as silly for us to go on thinking that Karma is always dumping our past upon us, as it would be to think that our schools and colleges are places where we are to be punished for our past ignorance. Though some severe pressure must be applied when the child’s interest in the main objectives is not yet awakened, the one motive is education for the future. The past may be a factor in setting the present *conditions* of the problem; the present instruction and its severe pressures surely look only to future goods.

In this the 75th year of our Society’s life I propose a toast:

**KARMA: THE SCHOOL OF
FUTURE GLORY!**

Alvin B. Kuhn.

SPIRITUALISM—FACT OR FRAUD?

(Continued from Page 84)

in some cases, to almost if not quite every medium in America and Europe, for they were the tongues of Eastern tribes and peoples. . . ." "But, nevertheless, these figures were *not* the forms of the persons they appeared to be. They were simply their portrait statues, constructed, animated and operated by the elementaries." (p. 70.)

And this is precisely the crux of the matter: the phenomenon is *true*, the interpretation *false*. For the "elementaries" are often what the Hindus calls the "devils," the disembodied, conscienceless, earth-bound remains of suicides, executed criminals, etc., which often preside as "controls" of mediumistic seances.

In the course of my investigation of the phenomenon of "spirit-materialization," there appeared among the masquerading seance "ghosts" one in the attire of a Catholic nun; an unusually tall, Hindu in the characteristic turban headgear; and a number of apparitions with appearance and size of children of various ages. They were seen by men and women who, like myself, had paid their admission fees. Our individual descriptions tallied factually. Not the remotest possibility of fraud could be detected.

"Spirit" Or "What"?

Since the apparition cannot be regarded as the "spirit" of the departed, *what* else is *it* and how does it manifest into visibility? A thought-provoking answer is offered in the following extraordinary statement printed in the "Path" magazine, New York City, July 1891:

"In October, 1887, beginning on the 13th, the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* began a series of interviews with a medium in Chicago in which questions

were put to the control by the reporter of that paper. This "control" was called Jim Nolan, and the medium was Mrs. M. J. Hollis Billing. Her reputation has never been assailed, nor has she been ever accused of lying or fraudulent practice. The place where the interviews took place was 24 Ogden Avenue.

"The first question was whether Nolan understood the process of spirit materialization. He replying from the "spirit world" said he did, and proceeded in substance thus:

"The electrical particles in a dark room are in a quiet condition; they are collected by us and laid upon one another until we have made an electrical form (still unseen). We then take magnetism from the medium or from the sitters in the circle and with it coat this electrical form. After that the form is used by the "spirit" who steps into it and uses it as a form!"

As a matter of record it should be stated that almost every sitter experiences a strange feeling of exhaustion after attending a seance, a sensation of having been drained of vitality. Does it then lend credence to the statement quoted above: "We then take magnetism from the medium or from the sitters in the circle. . . .?"

In the Fort Wayne Sentinel, published by Judge Andrew Purman in Fort Wayne, Indiana, there appeared a series of articles written by William Quan Judge in 1892, from which we abstract the following:

"Materialization of a form out of the air, independent of the medium's physical body is a fact. But it is not a spirit. . . . One way to produce this phenomenon is by the accretion of electrical and magnetic particles into one mass upon which matter is aggregated an image reflected out of the astral sphere. This is the whole of it; as much a fraud as a collection of muslin and masks. . . ."

Another Explanation

"The second method is by the use of the astral body of the living medium. . . . The medium's astral body having the power of extension and extrusion forms the framework of what are called "materialized spirits," makes objects move without physical contact, gives reports from deceased relatives, none of them anything more than recollections and pictures from the astral light, and in all this using and being used by the shells of suicides, executed murderers, and all such spook as are naturally near to this plane of life."

Assuming if not granting the plausibility of the advanced rationale, it strengthens the case of opponents to capital punishment on philosophical rather than sentimental grounds, for by execution the State destroys *only* the criminal's body, not his evil desires. These are set free, analogous to the release of a deadly poison gas by breaking the container. It also argues forcefully against the futility of suicide, the self-inflicted agonizing horror, as an hoped-for escape.

And does it throw any light on "Bennie's" psychic escapades with the "two negroes," as previously cited?

The fractional observations set forth in the preceding pages are intended to be just that: one man's fragmentary experiences in practice of the healing arts for over three decades.

The urge to share them is prompted by the uncomfortable knowledge of the wide-spread experimentation in psychism. It involves the related practices of hypnotism, and telepathy in institutions of higher learning, including experiments in "Extra Sensory Perception" at Duke University. It is gaining momentum in the nation at large, particularly among practitioners and patients of every branch of the healing art.

These practices, however well intentioned, *never* promote energization of

will power, assumption of individual responsibility or self-reliance. As a rule, the contrary effects, passivity, negativeness, fear and indecision are the result. The appalling number of men in their prime, disqualified from our armed services on grounds of varied neuroses, is disquieting testimony.

We are approaching the end of a century cycle, begun in the year 1848, which had inaugurated psychism in its crude forms of mediumship and spiritualism. It spread like wild-fire, from the home of the Fox sisters in Rochester, New York, throughout the United States and Europe.

As cycles are known to repeat themselves, the present increasing interest in the subject is both an explanation and a warning. With the approaching new cycle the danger of psychism is the more threatening because of quasi-scientific approval and sponsorship. From its early confines in spiritualistic circles, Ouija board and table-tipping practices, psychism is finding its menacing way into accepted parlour entertainments. An evaluation of its effect upon humanity in the last hundred years is timely. The crucial junction of changing cycles adds urgency to such examination.

(This article appeared in the Journal of the National Medical Society.)

THE DISASSOCIATION POLICY

The announcement by the President, Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, of the policy of disassociating the Theosophical Society from the various movements which have grown up within its ranks (see C. T. May 1950) has aroused discord in some sections of the Society. The turmoil seems to be confined to the application of the policy to the work of the Besant Cultural Trust which occupies under short term leases certain lands and building which form part of the Adyar estate.

There does not appear to be any serious objection to the policy itself under which various so-called 'allied activities' such as the Liberal Catholic Church, Co-Masonry, Order of the Star, Mystic Star, etc., etc. were declared to be disassociated from the Theosophical Society itself, although of course members of the Society could continue to support them if they so desired.

This policy it seems to us is unquestionably right and Mr. Jinarajadasa should be strongly supported in the stand he has taken.

The President considering that the property leased by the Besant Cultural Trust would soon be required by the Society gave notice in 1948 to vacate by Feb. 16th, 1953. This arrangement was mutually satisfactory at the time and the long notice period was accepted with gratitude by the Trust as it would give ample time to secure new quarters.

Now the Trust does not want to vacate and Shrimati Rukmini Devi, the President of the Trust has mentioned invoking the provisions of the rent control legislation. Charges have been made of bad faith, concealed motives, etc., etc. Reading between the lines of the voluminous correspondence, we would judge that 90% of the problem is financial and that the Trust is short of cash.

The work of Rukmini Devi in the arts and crafts is one which no one would wish to see destroyed or hampered in any way. The work however, should not be dependent upon the T. S. for financial support and if the lands are required, the Trust should move.

This is a matter for the officers at Headquarters to decide. They have knowledge of the conditions on the ground and have power to act. It is most unfortunate that the Society as a whole has been drawn into the controversy.

WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE KING

Death has written the final word to the story of the life of 'Mackenzie King of Canada' one of Canada's outstanding statesmen.

Very early in life he decided upon a political career. His outstanding qualifications were recognized by Sir Wilfred Laurier and at the age of twenty-five, King was appointed Deputy Minister of Labour. After the defeat of the Liberal party, King became Director of Industrial Research with the Rockefeller Foundation. At forty-five years of age he was chosen leader of the Liberal party and became Prime Minister when his party was returned to power. He was Prime Minister for twenty-one years.

He was not a brilliant personality; his speeches were often long, tedious, meticulous; he had not the capacity to turn out scintillating, memorable phrases, but he did have a quiet, plodding determination, 'stubbornness' his opponents called it, which carried him through to each goal.

The ideal of social justice for all was a guiding principle in his life. In the funeral oration reference was made to Dr. Albert Schweitzer's ethic of "reverence for life", an ideal which King well understood and accepted. He hated war but in the conflict he gathered around him a body of outstanding, capable men and fulfilled his duty of providing wise leadership in the critical times. The influence of his life on social thought and legislation in Canada will continue for many years.

The Times of London, on the occasion of his receiving the honour of the Order of Merit, said, "He has been loyal to Canada, loyal to the Commonwealth and loyal also to the larger vision of the Brotherhood of Humanity."