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“I PRESS ON”

The habit of making New Year's Resolutions has been largely discarded, perhaps because these were seldom adhered to beyond the first few weeks of the New Year, and we have realized that the taking of vows which will not be kept is not desirable. But an impulse stirs human hearts at New Year's; it is the beginning of a new cycle and there is the vision of an unsullied period stretching out before us, a period which like an artist's untouched canvas, will be covered with colours and designs of our own making.

The past is gone; its mistakes and errors are behind us, and regrets are useless and encumbering. The seeds of good and evil have been sown in the womb of time, and in due season will come to fruition. The law of cause and effect cannot be circumvented, but we can determine how we shall meet past causes when they are next encountered as events in the coming future. We can learn from our errors; we can meet our self-projected 'evils' with courage and dignity, and learn to accept our 'good' with humbleness.

Theosophy has been described as an attitude towards life, an attitude which embraces a few fundamental concepts.

Among these is the undying hope of ever-new beginnings, leaving behind the limitations of the past and moving forward into lives of ever deeper significance. St. Paul said in his message to the Phillipians, "This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on." For Theosophists, life is a continuous pressing onwards.

In *The Idyll of the White Lotus* it is written,

"The soul of man is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limits."

What a kingly thought to carry through the coming new cycle; to have it always at the back of our minds and to bring it forward frequently when events press in upon us, would help to abate irritation, to moderate desires and to still impatience. The constant remembrance that the soul of every man is immortal and that in our casual daily intercourse with others we are touching divinities, would carry us a long distance towards that Path the golden key to whose first gateway is "Charity and love immortal."

ON MYTHS, ANCIENT AND MODERN

BY W. F. SUTHERLAND

(Continued from Page 158)

V.

Sallust, the Neoplatonist, goes much farther than either Jung or Cornford in his interpretative work *On the Gods and the World*⁸ as the following excerpts will attest.

"What the Requisites are which an Auditor concerning the Gods ought to possess; and of Common Conceptions. "It is requisite that those who are willing to hear concerning the gods should have been well informed from their childhood, and not nourished with foolish opinions. It is likewise necessary that they should be naturally prudent and good, that they may receive, and properly understand, the discourses which they hear. The knowledge likewise of common conceptions is necessary; but common conceptions are such things as all men, when interrogated, acknowledge to be indubitably certain: such as, that every god is good, without passivity, and free from all mutation; for everything which is changed, is either changed into something better or something worse; and if it be into something worse, it will become depraved, but if into something better, it must have been evil in the beginning."

(Not all are competent to become philosophers, nor are all competent to penetrate into inner secrets of the mysteries.)

"That a God is immutable, without generation, eternal, incorporeal, and has no subsistence in place."

"And such are the requisites for an auditor of the gods. But the necessary discourses proceed as follows: the essences of the gods are neither generated; for eternal natures are without

generation; and those beings are eternal who possess a first power, and are naturally void of passivity. Nor are their essences composed from bodies; for even the powers of bodies are incorporeal; nor are they comprehended in place; for this is the properties of bodies; nor are they separated from the first cause, or from each other; in the same manner as intellections are not separated from the intellect, nor sciences from the souls."

(One would hardly think that Sallust was speaking of the philandering Gods of the Greeks; but that he was, subsequent quotations show.)

"Concerning Fables, that these are divine, and in what account they are so."

"On what account then the ancients, neglecting such discourses as these, employed fables, is a question not unworthy of our investigation. And this, indeed, is the first utility arising from fables, that they excite us to enquiry, and do not suffer our cogitative power to remain in indolent rest. It will not be difficult, therefore, to show that fables are divine, from those by whom they are employed: for they are used by poets agitated by divinity, by the best of philosophers, and by such as disclose initiatory rites. In oracles also, fables are employed by the gods; but why fables are divine is the part of philosophy to investigate. Since, therefore, beings rejoice in similitude, and are averse from dissimilitude, it is necessary that discourses concerning the gods should be as similar to them as possible, that they may become worthy of their essence, and that they may render the gods propitious to those who discourse concerning them; all of which can only

be effected by fables. Fables, therefore, imitate the gods, according to effable and ineffable, unapparent and apparent, wise and ignorant; and this likewise extends to the goodness of the gods; for as the gods impart the goods of sensible natures in common to all things, but the goods resulting from intelligibles to the wise alone, so fables assert to all men that there are gods; *but who they are, and of what kind, they alone manifest to such as are capable of so exalted a knowledge.* In fables, too, the energies of the gods are imitated; for the world may very properly be called a fable, since bodies, and the corporeal possessions which it contains, are apparent, but souls and intellects are occult and invisible. Besides, to inform all men of the truth concerning the gods produces contempt in the unwise, from their incapacity of learning, and negligence in the studious; but concealing truth in fables prevents the contempt of the former, and compels the latter to philosophize. But, you will ask, why adulteries, thefts, paternal bonds, and other unworthy actions are celebrated in fables? Nor is this unworthy of admiration, that where there is an apparent absurdity, the soul immediately conceiving these discourses to be concealments, may understand that the truth which they contain is to be involved in profound and occult silence."

"That there are five species of Fables and Examples of each."

"Of fables some are theological, others physical, others animistic (or belonging to soul), others material, and lastly, others mixed from these. Fables are theological which employ nothing corporeal, but speculate the very essence of the gods; such as the fable which asserts that Saturn devoured his children: for it obscurely intimates the nature of an intellectual god, since every intellect returns into itself. But we speculate fables physically when we

speak concerning the energies of the gods about the world; as when considering Saturn the same as Time, and calling the parts of time the children of the universe, we assert that the children are devoured by their parents. But we employ fables in an animistic mode when we contemplate the energies of soul; because the intellects of our souls by a discursive energy proceed into other things, yet abide in their parents. Lastly, fables are material such as the Egyptians ignorantly employ, considering and calling corporeal natures divinities; such as Isis, earth; Osiris, humidity; Typhon, heat; or again, denominating Saturn, water; Adonis, fruits; and Bacchus, wine. And, indeed, to assert that these are dedicated to the gods, in the same manner as herbs, stones, and animals, is the part of wise men; but to call them gods is alone the province of mad men; unless we speak in the same manner as when, from established custom, we call the orb of the Sun and its rays the Sun itself. But we may perceive the mixed kind of fables, as well in many other particulars, as in the fable which relates, that Discord at a banquet of the Gods threw a golden apple, and that a dispute about it arising among the goddesses, they were sent by Jupiter to take the judgment of Paris, who, charmed with the beauty of Venus, gave her the apple in preference to the rest. For in this fable, the banquet denotes the supermundane powers of the Gods; and on this account they subsist in conjunction with each other: but the golden apple denotes the world, which, on account of its composition from contrary natures, is not improperly said to be thrown by Discord or strife. But again, since different gifts are imparted to the world by different Gods, they appear to contest with each other for the apple. And a soul living according to sense, (for this is Paris) not perceiving other

powers in the universe, asserts that the contended apple subsists alone through the beauty of Venus. But of these species of fables, such as are theological belong to philosophers; the physical and animistic to poets; *but the mixed to the initiatory rites*, since the intention of all mystic ceremonies is to conjoin us with the world and the gods. But if it be requisite to relate another fable, we may employ the following to advantage. It is said that the mother of the gods, perceiving Attis by the river Gallus, became in love with him, and having placed on him a starry hat, lived afterwards with him in intimate familiarity; but Attis falling in love with a Nymph, deserted the mother of the gods, and entered into association with the Nymph. Through this the mother of the gods caused Attis to become insane, who cutting off his genital parts, left them with the Nymph, and then returned to his pristine connection with the goddess. The mother of the gods is then the vivific goddess, and on this account is called mother; but Attis is the Demiurgus of natures conversant with generation and corruption; and hence he is said to be found by the river Gallus; for Gallus denotes the Galaxy, or milky circle, from which a passive body descends to the earth. But since primary gods perfect such as are secondary, the mother of the gods falling in love with Attis imparts to him celestial powers; for this is the meaning of the starry hat. But Attis loves a nymph, and nymphs preside over generation; for everything in generation flows. But because it is necessary that the flowing nature of generation should be stopped, lest something worse than things last should be produced; in order to accomplish this, the Demiurgus of generable and corruptible natures, sending prolific powers into the realms of generation is again conjoined with the gods."

"But these things indeed never took place at any particular time, because

they have a perpetuity of subsistence: and intellect contemplates all things as subsisting together; but discourse considers this thing as first, and that as second in the order of existence. Hence, since a fable most aptly corresponds to the world, how is it possible that we, who are imitators of the world, can be more gracefully ornamented than by the assistance of the fable? For through this we observe a festive Day. And, in the first place, we ourselves falling from the celestial regions, and associating with a nymph, the symbol of generation, live immersed in sorrow, abstaining from corn and other gross and sordid aliment; since everything of this kind is contrary to the soul: afterwards the incisions of a tree and fasting succeed, as if we would amputate from our nature all further progress of generation: at length we employ the nutriment of milk, as if passing by this means into a state of regeneration and lastly, festivity and crowns and a re-ascent, as it were, to the gods succeed. But the truth of all this is confirmed by the time in which these ceremonies take place; for they are performed about spring and the equinoctial period, when natures in generation cease to be any longer generated, and the days are more extended than the nights, because this period is accommodated to ascending souls. But the rape of Proserpine is fabled to have taken place about the opposite equinoctial; and this rape alludes to the descent of souls. And thus much concerning the mode of considering fables; to our discourse on which subject, may both the gods and the souls of the writers of fables be propitious."

VI

Sallust's treatment of the myth is quite typical of the allegorizing tendency so prevalent among the Greeks and Hebrews, especially at Alexandria. Philo the greatest of the Hellenists in his *De Vita Contemplativa*, written during the first quarter century of the

Christian era, says of the Therapeutae that they took the sacred writings and spent their time in study, interpreting their ancestral code literally "for they think that the words of the literal meaning are symbols of a hidden nature which is made plain (only) by the under meaning. "The foregoing quotation is taken from G. R. S. Mead's *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* and Mead goes on to say that Philo himself a great admirer of Plato brought out many similarities between Rabbinical thought and Greek philosophy. "It is true that Philo's method of allegorical exegesis whereby he reads high philosophical conceptions into the crude narratives of the myths of Israel, is no longer regarded as legitimate; but his writings are nevertheless of great value. Philo believed not only that the Old Covenant documents were inspired in part, but also that every name therein contained a hidden meaning of the highest import. In this way he strove to explain away the crudities of the literal narrative."

Philo's semantic efforts would seem to be about on a par with those of his predecessor Plato who attempted much the same task in the *Cratylus*. Neither could hope for much success except on the basis of their respective languages being highly artificial in origin, a point of view, incidentally which is held by some in respect of Hebrew and Sanskrit but not of Greek.

We need not go quite so far as either Sallust or Philo in recognizing that the myth in its own right and in its origin may be quite as valid an expression of certain aspects of reality as is the spoken word. Such a point of view may be thought to be conformable to that of Jung, and it may be thought to be not inconsistent with the Gestalt psychology in which forms and wholes are important. They carry with them their own meanings not always easily describable in terms of the mechanistic psychologies.

VII.

In 1942, Susanne K. Langer published *Philosophy in a New Key* in which symbols and symbolism are considered to be basic tools of human-kind. Mathematics is symbolic and much of language also and both distinguish us from the brute creation around us. There are few tribes, even primitive, which lack an extensive language or a colourful and rich mythology. Primitiveness here in the sense of the naive is no index to age or origin. The savage laughs at the teachings and antics of our missionaries even as we are inclined to treat his myths and ceremonies with more than a little of indulgence. To Langer we are just beginning to realize this and are concerned with the meaning of meaning the symbolism of truth, language and reality, to quote a few of the matters she refers to in pointing up the idea that we are approaching a new philosophic era.

Modern logic and psychology are cited as examples of a new approach, for each in its own fashion has discovered the power of symbolism, though in different fields. Physical science has been of avail here since it has done little else than furnish us with a more abundant physical life. The new interest in the symbolic though oftentimes under other names has furnished us with a new logic and the beginnings of a new theory of knowledge, a tool for the evaluation of science and certainty on the one hand; and on the other psychiatry, the study of the emotions, religion phantasy and everything but knowledge. In both branches we have the human response, and in the fundamental notion of symbolization, mystical, practical, or mathematical, "we have the keynote of all humanistic problems."

The power of speech, of making symbols makes man lord of the earth. It becomes of importance in the study of intelligence and opens up a completely new horizon for study and investigation.

"The essential act of thought is symbolism", a phrase quoted by Langer from A. D. Ritchie in *The Natural History of Mind*.

Symbols are to be distinguished from signs, for animals use signs and respond to them even as we do. The use of signs can lead to error or mistakes, but the troubles with which man is plagued arise from another source—his symbol making faculty. Symbolization "is the starting point of all intellection in the human sense, and is more general than thinking, fancying or taking action."

Symbolization begins in infancy, in the childish babble of the infant who loves to talk. Communication with others comes later when he feels the necessity for satisfying other needs. Speech, however, is only one kind of symbolic process since ritual also is symbolic, and music, and indeed much which is found in the arts and the aesthetic. It is here that we may link up the myths and fables of the Greeks with Dr. Langer's theory of symbolism for she goes on to say that "Magic, then, is not a method, but a language; it is part and parcel of that greater phenomenon, *ritual*, which is the language of religion. Ritual is a symbolic transformation of experiences that no other medium can adequately express.

We might point out here that the myth accompanies the ritual and the latter is most frequently built around the myth.

Dr. Langer is inclined to agree with Bergson in his evaluation of "intuitive knowledge", which he extols above all rational knowledge for rationality is the essence of mind and symbolic transformations are its elementary process. Rationality, therefore, does not exist only in the phenomenon of systematic explicit reasoning.

Here one is tempted to close this excursus into the myth, sketchy and inadequate though it is with a quotation from

Hermeas, the Neoplatonist.

"From the beginning, therefore, and at first, the soul was united to the Gods and its unity to their one. But afterwards the soul departing from this divine union, descended into intellect, and no longer possessed real beings unitedly, and in one, but apprehended and surveyed them by simple projections and, as it were, contacts of its intellect. In the next place, departing from intellect, and descending into reasoning and dianoia, it no longer apprehended real beings by intellections but syllogistically and transitively, proceeding from one thing to another, from propositions to conclusions. Afterwards, abandoning true reasoning and the dissolving peculiarity it descended into generation and became filled with much irrationality and perturbation.

Myth, fable, and symbol may well belong to the realm of intellect of which Hermeas speaks, as much as, if not more than, to the realm of reasoning and dianoia.

8. Sallust: *On the Gods and the World*, trans. T. Taylor. London, 1793.
9. Mead: *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, Rider, London.
10. Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, Harvard Press, 1942. A cheap but badly bound reprint is to be had in the Mentor edition, The American Library, 1952.
11. Scholia to Plato's *Phaedrus* in Thomas Taylor's translation of Iamblichus on the *Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians*.



CAU-ZEN-EFFECT

For his koan a student of Zen
 Considered the Egg and the Hen.
 After weeks he cried "How
 Are they *both* Here and Now?"
 The Master replied, "Now and Then."
 T.C.H., in *The Middle Way*, London.

THIS I BELIEVE

(The Columbia Broadcasting Corporation of the U.S.A. are running a series of 3½ minute talks on *This I Believe*, and have asked the British Broadcasting Corporation to get a number of Englishmen to contribute. This is a copy of the talk which Mr. Christmas Humphreys recorded on 16th July last. His views, of course, are personal.—Ed.)

It has been said that a man believes a doctrine when he behaves as if it were true. This is a high standard for belief, but worth attempting.

I was brought up in the Church of England, and as a boy at school in the first World War sincerely followed its doctrine. When I found that nations on opposite sides appealed to the same God for victory, and bishops blessed the arms of war, I turned my thoughts elsewhere. I read widely of comparative religion, and found Theosophy, as taught by Mme. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*, to be the tree of which all religions and philosophies, and most forms of science, were the branches. But I wanted a way of life which would satisfy both reason and the heart, which was utterly tolerant of other ways of reaching the same goal, and which might be trodden at every moment of the waking day. I found it in Buddhism. I read Coomaraswamy's *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, and at once accepted it as attractive theory. In thirty years of application I have found it to be true.

I accept the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, for I find that the world is filled with suffering and that the cause of most of it is selfishness, the rival claims of a thousand million petty "selves", each one of which believes that its desires may be pursued at the expense, if need be, of the whole. I find that the cause of suffering, the craving

of self for self, may be removed by mental and moral training applied in daily life, and that the Buddha's Eight-fold Path provides that training. I have found that the law of cause-effect applies to the moral as well as the physical realm, and that we experience, and indeed largely consist of, the effects, pleasant or unpleasant, of all our thoughts and actions in this life and in the long series which preceded it. For I cannot believe that this is our only life on earth. I believe that we have lived on this earth many times before and will return to it many times again. When we sleep, we wake again to continue learning the lessons yet unlearned; and the same applies to the illusion men call death. For indeed, as modern scientists are beginning to learn, there is no death.

I believe that life is one, and that all things, without exception, manifest that life. But I do not believe that this unity is a God to be reached by hymns or prayer. It is Absolute and therefore unthinkable, and I delight in the Buddha's recorded words, "Work out your own salvation, with diligence".

In 1946 I went round the world, and stayed with friends in a dozen countries of the East and West. All I found were men, women and children; with jobs for the men, homes for the women, and children at play. The rest is politics, and other offensive forms of interference by the power-loving few in the lives of the peace-loving many.

I believe in the spiritual brotherhood of man, and the essential nobility and freedom of each. Each must develop the best within him for the good of all, and all that leads to that end is good. I agree with the tremendous words of Thoreau: "I know that the enterprise is worthy. I know that things work well. I have heard no bad news."

—*The Middle Way*, London.

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33 Somers Avenue,
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26 Oct., 1953.

The Editor,
Canadian Theosophist.

Dear Brother,

I have read Mr. Lloyd Jones' letter in your August number regarding the refusal of certain books by General Secretary N.Z. Section and I cannot say that I am surprised at the books being refused, as I know only too well the limited outlook which has developed among certain groups of a Society which has for its motto: "There is no Religion higher than Truth", but has in some

circles unfortunately changed it to "There is no Truth higher than our Religion".

While I personally have little time for any "authorities" whether Leadbeater, Besant, Judge or others, I am always ready to hear what any of them has to say, and think I have broadened my conception of the Ancient Wisdom as a result. To exclude some theosophical works from a library because of apparently ingrained prejudice is amazing, but, as I have said, not surprising.

However, we need not be unduly disturbed about it, because such limiting action carries its own automatic penalty under the Law of Karma, and will inevitably produce a crop of limitations in the future, which may bring home to the sowers a realization that no one can acquire a monopoly of the Eternal Wisdom.

Fraternally,

L. Furze-Morrish.

3006 Glenridge Ave.,
Alhambra, Calif.,
December 5, 1953.

Editors, *Theosophical Notes*,
Box 65,
Berkeley, Calif.

Gentlemen:

In the November, 1953, issue of your readable and thought-provoking publication, you devote five pages to comments upon, and discussion of, my article in the October issue of *The Canadian Theosophist* under the title "Centrifugal and centripetal Forces in the Theosophical Movement." You also refer to private correspondence which has passed between us, which included copy of a letter you wrote on November 12th to Mr. Dudley W. Barr, Editor of the C.T. You offer me space for a reply in your own magazine and in your last letter you say: "We feel sure that Mr. Barr will publish anything you write, subject to space limitations." I am

therefore addressing this to you and sending a copy to Mr. Barr for possible publication in whole or in part, with authority to delete any part of it which the Editors feel is not in harmony with their own policies as regards either quality or quantity. I am taking the liberty of lifting from our correspondence passages that seem appropriate for publication, partly to save time and space, but mainly because I feel that in our correspondence we have come to a far better understanding of one another's positions than would appear from your article in *Theosophical Notes*.

First, let me say that I am still one hundred per-cent in favour of the position taken by you in the passage from *Notes* which I quoted in my article in the *C.T.*, especially the concluding lines:

"It looks to us very much as though the original aim, the coming together on a basis of mutual toleration of people with fundamentally the same idea but considerable difference of individual opinions is really alive again after 57 years. If so, the Masters will be behind it—and not very far behind."

While, with you, I am all for "mutual toleration", I think you have shown that you also agree with Carlyle that "There are some things which are intolerable"! In this I concur.

Both from your article and from your letter to *The Canadian Theosophist*, I gather that what gives you most concern—summarized in your warning that "history has proven never-ending vigilance to be the price of liberty"—is whether two of those standing for centrifugalism in the Theosophical Movement—Mr. Boris de Zirkoff and I—"may not still hold 'centrifugalism' as merely an interregnum between the fall of one form of centripetalism and the establishment of a legitimate successor thereto." You make centripetalism and authoritarianism synonymous. But if you will read again the quotation which

I used from *The Key to Theosophy* in opening my article, you will note that H. P. B. says that the centrifugal spirit and the centripetal spiritual energy have to be in perfect union and harmony in order to produce one result. It seems to me that in establishing the Esoteric Section, H.P.B. very definitely supplied the spirit, and the pledged loyalty of the members constituted a legitimate centripetal force to manifest, when properly functioning, the perfect law of equilibrium and harmony of which she spoke. Is there in this '*the slightest deviation in either doctrine or conduct from the original teachings*'? (Underscoring yours.) For my part, I should certainly feel that a glorious day had dawned for the Theosophical Movement and for the world at large if in 1975 or before or after that date, someone of H.P.B.'s stature could again re-establish the balance between the centrifugal and the centripetal forces of which she spoke. But "a burnt child dreads the fire", and I should be thrice skeptical of anyone offering himself in that rôle. The test would be that given by Jesus with which I closed my article in the *C.T.* and summarized in the words: "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

Because Mr. de Zirkoff and I both supported Katherine Tingley and Dr. de Purucker, you express some anxiety over the possibility that "it is only centripetalism or authoritarianism *in some hands* that they [we] object to." My own attitude is as above stated. Mr. de Zirkoff is fully competent to speak for himself. As for my attitude towards Katherine Tingley, I repeat here what I have already said to you in sharing personal correspondence: How well did you know Katherine Tingley? In fact, did you know her at all? Well, your present correspondent knew her as few people now living knew her. When she started her Raja-Yoga School for children at Point Loma in 1900, I was one of the first five pupils. In my early teens—

around 1904—I took down on the typewriter her dictation of the story ‘A Donkey-Ride in Egypt’ written for her children’s magazine, ‘The Rāja-Yoga Messenger’. In 1906 I accompanied her to Cuba as one of her amanuenses. In 1909 she appointed me officially as her Assistant Secretary. As her Traveling Secretary I accompanied her across the American continent some thirteen times, to Cuba, twice, and to Europe seven times. I served her, to the very best of my ability, right up to the time that I bade her goodbye on her last trip to Europe in 1929. I know that I am a better man and, I hope, a better Theosophist, because of the powerful influence for good that Katherine Tingley had in moulding my character, and I am grateful. Did not the Masters say: “Ingratitude is not one of our vices”?

The facts of Katherine Tingley’s administration and policies, insofar as they are publicly known, must speak for themselves. Whether one approves of them or not, one must face them, and every critic has just as much right to comment on them unfavourably as has every follower to support them, provided both are sincere. For my own part, I do not feel competent to pass upon the *motives* of one who was my teacher from childhood until the day of her passing twenty-nine years later in 1929. I realize that I can hardly expect her critics to have my scruples. But let me remind these critics of the poet’s words: “Judge not; the workings of his brain And of his heart, thou canst not see. What looks to thine eyes a stain In God’s pure light may only be a scar, Brought from some well-won field, Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.”

Katherine Tingley’s critics often refer to her as a ‘medium’. Well, if she ever was one, it was before I started taking her dictation in 1903-04. Certainly during the whole of my rather intimate

association with her from then until her death in 1929, I never once saw her exhibiting or attempting to exhibit any mediumistic powers. On the contrary, she was most vigorously opposed to and discouraged, both in public and in private, any sort of dabbling in ‘occult’ or psychic practices. If I recollect aright, in her successful libel suit against Harrison Gray Otis and the *Times-Mirror Company* early in this century, she denied under oath that she had ever been a medium. In any case, as I knew her intimately for a quarter of a century, she was always what Ray Stannard Baker called her in his appreciative article about Point Loma in the *American Magazine* for January, 1907: “A clear, strong, practical mind.” Even if she had been a medium before I knew her, was she any more or less of a ‘medium’ than was H.P.B. by her own admission, in her early days?

As for Dr. de Purucker, he liberated my mind, expanded my consciousness, nourished my spiritual aspirations and helped me to grasp and understand some of the more recondite teachings which H.P.B. brought us, and to him, also, I am profoundly grateful.

This brings me to the only basic position which you take, in which I think our views may be difficult to reconcile. As a young man I learned by heart and have frequently quoted the teachings of the Masters: “Behold the Truth before you.” I am sure you are familiar with the passage. Therein truth is partially defined as “A loyal sense of duty to the Teacher, a willing obedience to the behests of Truth, once we have placed our confidence in and believe that Teacher to be in possession of it.” You seem to take exception to the ‘loyal sense of duty to the Teacher’. I cannot go along with you in that attitude, and if you cannot understand mine in this respect, I fear you have missed something which has enriched my life.

In our judgments of fellow-Theosophists, can't we all stop permitting our prejudices to act as prosecuting attorneys and our predilections as counsel for the defense? Can't we try to act like intelligent Justices of the Supreme Court, abide by the rules of evidence, and interpret the law as best we understand it—leaving the bickerings to attorneys working to earn their fees?

Let me here say that I think the Declaration of the United Lodge of Theosophists, formulated by Robert Crosbie, adopted in 1909 and published again by you immediately following your comments on my article in the November issue of *Notes*, is a magnificent basis for unity among all Theosophists; and insofar as the Associates of the U.L.T. have adhered to those principles, I am sure they have served the Masters well and prospered. But even with such a grand Theosophical platform, it is possible for those in organizational authority to practise anonymously as much regimentation of the thinking and the activities of individual associates and groups as under an authoritarian constitution. I do not say that this has been done. With your U.L.T. background you are much better qualified than I am to know. But I do know this: despite the authoritarian constitution of the Point Loma Society, even as amended under G. de P.'s inspiration in 1929, he scrupulously safeguarded the freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and freedom of action of all members, lodges, and national sections. In fact, if the truth be told, the constitution of 1929 would have been far more democratic than it is, had not the members of the Cabinet who helped G. de P. to draft it (I was one of them!), having been steeped for so long in the Point Loma tradition, insisted on leaving in this newly drafted constitution formal authority to permit G. de P., whom we trusted implicitly, to safeguard the best interests of the T.S.—which he tried so hard to do in his last

instructions to the Cabinet. Since his death, let me add here, Mr. de Zirkoff and I, and others, endeavoured to bring about a change in the constitution—more in keeping with that adopted by the Founders in 1875.

Before closing, let me say that I fully agree with many of your comments in *Notes* and in your personal letters to me. I cite just a few of your statements with which I am in particularly strong agreement:

“Centrifugalism (ours, at any rate) holds that the only authority that a man may depend upon is his own mind and soul; it is a responsibility that can not possibly be transferred, because no matter on what ‘authority’ he seeks to place the burden, *he is the man who has to choose that authority*. . . .

“No organization whatsoever—not even the ‘esoteric section’ of H.P.B.’s time—is more than an instrument for carrying out the work of teaching. . . . While organizations are fallible, undependable, it is nevertheless necessary to work either with them or at least with other people, whether formally organized or not. . . . Only an Adept has a complete mind. The rest of us are fairly whole human beings only when the fragmentary intelligence we have is supplemented by contact and intercourse with others’. An intelligent student works with whatever seems the best group. . . .

“Behind personality worship and organizational servility lies a dark occult field; the same power that has kept mankind in superstition under the guise of religion for ages. . . . The mission of Theosophy is to lead mankind to the *arupa* world of no-form and the clear perception of the unconfined *Self*; a mission too often reversed.”

In conclusion, may I share with your readers a bit of the Wisdom of Old China, which I believe holds inspiration for all earnest Theosophists and for aspiring truth-seekers everywhere? Be-

fore Laotse there had been a Teacher, Kuan—a statesman-philosopher of the Seventh Century, B.C., who also taught the Tao. He spoke of ‘a mind within the mind’, which, according to the eminent British Sinologue, Arthur Waley, “bears to the economy of man the same relationship as the sun bears to the sky. . . It is a *shen*, a divinity. . . The place that man prepares for it is called its temple (*kung*). ‘Throw open the gates, put self aside, bide in silence, and the radiance of the spirit shall come in and make its home’, taught Kuan. ‘Only where all is clean will the spirit abide. All men desire to know, but they do not inquire into that whereby one knows. . . What a man desires to know is *that* (i.e., the external world). But his means of knowing is *this* (i.e., himself). How can he know *that*? Only by the perfection of *this*.’” Here, indeed, is a stream of pure Theosophy that has flowed down to us crystal-clear for twenty-six hundred years or more. Later, another Sage, Mang, or Mencius, the great expounder of Confucianism, was to write: “The ten thousand things (meaning the whole cosmos), “are there complete, inside us.” And Laotse tells us in the Fourteenth Verse of the Tao-teh-King, as translated by Dwight Goddard: “By holding fast to the Tao of the ancients, the wise man may understand the present, because he knows the origin of the past. This is the clue to the Tao.”

Iverson L. Harris.

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND ADMISSION OF MEMBERS

Some confusion has at times arisen in the minds of Branch officers and members on the point of admitting persons to the T.S. It has been asked, Why, if we hold to Universal Brotherhood, should we refuse to admit those to whom there is objection? The answer seems to be the same as one would give if the question related to admitting all persons to one's family or house. Indeed, the relation of Branches to the T.S. is much like that of the family to the State. Every individual not positively criminal has the right to citizenship, and may, subject to the statutes, take part in civic affairs, express his convictions as to public policy, join in meetings of citizens for discussion or new movements, and everywhere be regarded as on a par with his fellows. But this gives him no right to entrance into any family, and a claim that his citizenship entitled him to cross whatever threshold he liked and establish himself as a member of the domestic circle would be laughed at. Every one would say that families had a right to their privacy and to select their associates, and that if they saw fit to exclude any person from their home, there was no canon of justice or proper feeling which should restrain them to do otherwise. It was wholly for them to say who was congenial, acceptable, welcome.

Just so in Branches of the T.S. Every sincere and reputable person is free to join the Society, and as a member of it to enjoy all the privileges belonging to membership. He can attend all meetings of Theosophists as such, join in petition to the constitutional authorities, use his diploma for purpose of identification, claim the documents due to F. T. S., and, in general, have full possession of every right conferred by our rules. But this does not empower him to demand admission to private meet-

Canada's contribution to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for 1951-52-53 has been \$500,000 per year. UNICEF is bringing aid to twenty million children in 69 countries, and those who wish to endorse Canada's continued and increased support of this work may do so by writing to the Department of External Affairs, and to the Department of Finance, Ottawa, Canada.

ings of a Branch, much less to election to its membership; nor can there be any ground of complaint if its existing members decline to elect him.

This will be clearer if we consider the nature and purpose of a Branch. It is a union of a group of members having a common ground of interest in Theosophic study or work, a certain general conception of desired methods, and a more or less intellectual or social or personal sympathy. The basis must of course be Theosophy, but the local superstructure takes shape and colour from the quality of those who plan its erection. Now it is the continued harmony of the constituents which is to determine both its endurance and its activity. If an applicant for Branch membership is known to have views as to its policy which are in marked contrast to those prevalent within it, or to be offensive in manner, of ill-repute in the community, quarrelsome, heady, flighty, certain to excite discord inside or to compromise the Society outside, there is no possible reason why he should be accepted. To admit him would do no good, for he is not in harmony with the rest of the organization, and would simply be introducing an element of discord certain to eventuate in ill feeling, contention, a check to work, and possible disintegration. One factious or indiscreet Branch member may paralyze a Branch. Nor is his exclusion an injury. He has no claim to entrance, and consequently no grievance at denial; and he is altogether at liberty to join the Society as member-at-large, to assist its operations, and to study its literature. He can be a citizen of the commonwealth without being a member of a particular household in it.

More than this. Where a Branch is aware that a person is sure to cause trouble or to act as a stumbling-block to other and worthy men and women, it is its *duty* to prevent that catastrophe. Sentiment should not be a bar to justice.

To protect the Society and to secure peace to existing workers is of more importance than the self-love of a single individual. Indeed, if he resents the expression of the Branch's preference in the case, he shows that he has not that respect for others' rights, judgments, and feelings which is essential to any true Theosophist, and is destitute of the elementary qualifications for close union in Branch life. His very pique justifies the Branch action and affirms it.

Of course it cannot be said that no sacrifice of personal desires or preference is ever to be made by Branch members in elections. That would be queer Theosophy. It may very well happen that a person somewhat distasteful in ways may yet give promise of a valuable future, and a sincere member may, and should, concede personal considerations to a larger good. But this is a different case from that radical unfitness which cannot be smoothed over by tolerance or by phrases, and which demands the blackball for protection.

To recapitulate: We believe in unity, but at the same time we know that it is not possible for all to live intimately with each other because of various differences existing among individuals as to race, manners, and style of mind as well as of nature. Brotherhood does not require that we shall take into our home the vicious, even though we are working for their reformation; nor that we should bring into our own circle those whose manners and development are vastly different from our own. And just as it is in our private life as human beings, so it is in the Theosophical Society.

We have no right to deny to any one the right to be alive and one of the human family, and neither have we the right to deny to any one the right to belong to the Society so long as the applicant is not a criminal unreformed. But

in the Society the Branch represents the family, and it has a right to draw a line or make limit, and to say who shall and who shall not belong to that family. Hence each Branch has to decide upon whom it will admit. If some apply who are sure to bring trouble to the Branch or who are of a nature that will not permit free and harmonious work with the others, the Branch has the right from all points of view not to admit to the Branch roll. This very question was once raised very needlessly in a place where there were many coloured people and where a sentiment existed against their associating intimately with whites. It was settled by deciding that if coloured people desired a Branch of their own they could have it and would be helped by the other. Brotherhood does not demand that elements wholly dissimilar must be violently mixed. Neither party would be comfortable in such circumstances. They can work apart for the common aim.

But the rules provide for cases where applicants wish to enter the T.S., as any Branch President may admit the applicant as a member-at-large if willing to endorse his character in general. In such an event the transaction is between the president, the applicant, and the office of the General Secretary. It does not concern the Branch at all.

And so the union of right feeling and sound reason will usually solve duty when uncertainty occurs, and the Branches be secured the largest proportion of good material, with a minimum of risk to harmony, effectiveness, and continuing life.

W. Q. J.

—*Theosophy*, November, 1953.

Be neither volatile to joy, nor condensable to sorrow. But be serenely equable to both.

—*The Book Mirdad*,
by Mikhail Naimy.

IS CHRISTIANITY DECLINING ?

“Christianity—Revival or Decline” by Mr. Fred Bodsworth, (*Maclean's*, Dec. 15, 1953) is a national survey and study of the position of world-wide Christianity. Well-documented facts are presented, optimists and sceptics are quoted, and a few conclusions are drawn by Mr. Bodsworth and the Editor.

Communism has driven Christianity underground in half of Europe and Asia and political nationalism has checked whatever gains Christian missions have made in Africa. Sceptics attribute Christianity's decline to “its arrogant dogmatism, intolerances and insistence on blind unquestioning faith.” Science, particularly astronomy, geology and anthropology, and the extension of the educational system to include science at high school level, are said to be among Christianity's chief challengers.

The evidences of Christianity's decline are most apparent in three of the six continents—Europe, Asia and Africa; least evident in materialistic North America although “the body of teaching called Christianity is not the code by which North America lives,” according to the Editor, and “only that small percentage of North Americans who have managed to make a religion of materialism will be deceived by the figures on church attendance and new church buildings,” he continues.

In Canada, about half our people are actively associated with a church, but one-third rarely or never go to church. Only 25% of Canadian youth are religious; 50% are slightly religious and 25% are completely indifferent or hostile; 70% of university students are not interested in the Church. Canadians spend only 1% of their personal earnings in support of their 15,000 churches, which is just one-eighth of what they spend for tobacco and liquor. The growth of 40 small sects is commented

on and the census figures for these sects are considered to be more accurate than those for church membership where there is glaring discrepancy between what people told census enumerators and official church membership records. The latter show far fewer members than the census reports.

A statistic to give one pause is that since 1901 the denominations which have gained in membership in Canada are those which stress fundamentalist ideas—Roman Catholicism, and the smaller evangelical Protestant sects. There are nearly five Jehovah's Witnesses today for every one the census showed in 1941, and the "no religion" category ranks second in growth.

Figures for other countries are significant: 50% of Britons do not attend church and only 10% are practising Christians. Gallup polls reveal atheism growing in Europe. In the United Kingdom the figure is 16%; Finland 17%; Sweden 20%; Holland 20%; France 34%. In Canada and the United States, the atheist percentage is lower—5% and 6% respectively. Sixteen percent of Canadians have no belief in a life after death.

Both the article and the editorial stress the difference between Christianity as an organized institution with robes, rituals, rites, formal membership, high finance and political influence, as compared with Christianity as a *way of life* and a code of ethics. The *way of life* may be gaining strength. Support for this point is seen in such organizations as UNESCO, World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization and the Colombo Plan. During the last two or three generations the author thinks Christianity has drastically changed the old social order, fostering a deepening sense of responsibility for humanity generally; especially the aged, the sick and children. For instance, many social welfare activities formerly supported entirely by voluntary contributions have passed from private hands

—often the hands of the church—to be greatly extended and become the responsibility of public, tax-supported departments of governments. But, says the Editor, "There is no form of evil now extant that was not also extant before Christ. There is no form of good needed now that was not needed two thousand years ago. The difference is that, now, we grasp the definitions better. Millions of people who deny both Christ and God accept Christ's distinctions between good and evil. . . Christianity has given us standards and made the standards plain. Perhaps in time we'll have courage enough and sense enough to live up to those standards. Until we try, it is grotesque folly to say that Christianity has failed us. It is we who have failed ourselves."

The author does not seem to have taken into consideration the ever-growing number of persons in Canada who are not members of any Christian Church but who are followers of one or other of the various "esoteric" schools of thought.

It is interesting to note that H.P.B. in her *The Esoteric Character of the Gospels* says: "Belief in the Bible *literally*, and in a *carnalized* Christ, will not last a quarter of a century longer. The Churches will have to part with their cherished dogmas, or the 20th century will witness the downfall and ruin of all Christendom, and with it, belief even in a Christos as pure Spirit. The very name has now become obnoxious, and theological Christians must die out, *never to resurrect again* in its present form. This, in itself, would be the happiest solution of all were there no danger from the natural reaction which is sure to follow: crass materialism will be the consequence and the result of centuries of blind faith, unless the loss of old ideals is replaced by other ideals, unassailable, because *universal*, and built on the rock of eternal truths instead of the shifting sands of human fancy."

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