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YOU WILL COME BACK

A Conversation about Reincarnation and Karma

*If a man will begin
with certainties, he
shall end in doubts;
but if he will be con-
tent to begin with
doubts, he shall end
in certainties.*

—Francis Bacon.

Mr. Asketh: I have been studying the Christian faith more seriously of late than I have ever done before, and I have raised doubts on several points. Have you read *Mere Christianity*, by C. S. Lewis, and *Christian Faith Today*, by Bishop Stephen Neill?

Student: Yes, I know both of them. Are those the books you're reading?

Mr. Asketh: Those and several others, along with the Bible. Somehow the things that bother me most I find aren't dealt with at all in these books.

Student: What, for instance?

Mr. Asketh: Well, it seems to be assumed that we're born once and then, hopefully, we live forever. I'm beginning to wonder about that and to question whether it is true.

Student: What's the matter with it?

Mr. Asketh: I think it is absurd to say that souls are created at a point in time, then survive the death of the physical body and go on living forever. It's illogical and unscientific to say that we survive the body but did not pre-exist it. In other words, that you have a beginning, but no end!

Student: Yes, I know what you mean.

As one observes life, there seems to be a law of periodicity operating. There's day and night, life and death, sleeping and waking, winter and re-birth in spring, and the ebb and flow of the seas. If there is such a law of the universe, it is by-passed in the one-life theory.

Mr. Asketh: Another thing involved in the one-life theory which I don't think is logical is that one's destiny forever is determined in seventy or even 100 years of earthly experience. Such a short life span is utterly insignificant compared with the eternity the churchmen talk about, or even that geologists and astronomers deal with. It seems to me the be-ye-perfect command must take more than one lifetime to fulfill.

Student: Yes, indeed. It would seem logical, wouldn't it, that it would take hundreds of successive human existences. And that reminds me of the way Wordsworth puts it:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.

The soul that rises with us, our
life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.
Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness
But trailing clouds of glory do we
come

From God who is our home."

A point you might consider in relation to this one-life theory is that from the days of Jesus, there was the division of His teaching into two parts—the revealed and the unrevealed, the Mysteries for the disciples, given in secret and apart, and the Parables for the multitude. The Bible is clear on that: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." That's St. Mark. Then again, we find Jesus saying to His disciples, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet."

Mr. Asketh: Although those words are so familiar, I have never known any emphasis to be placed on the existence of a hidden teaching. Do you think this has real significance?

Student: Certainly. We could talk about it for hours. Chapters could be written to show that Christianity, like other great religions, had its secret teaching which was confined to the few. Clement of Alexandria, one of the early Church Fathers, is quoted as saying, "The Mysteries of the Faith are not to be divulged to all . . . It is requisite to hide in a mystery the wisdom spoken."

Mr. Asketh: What happened to this secret teaching?

Student: The inner, esoteric side of Christianity was lost in the flood of ignorance which swept over Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. The crude interpretation—the teaching for the multitude—replaced the spiritual truths originally known to the few. Some fragments survived but as a systematic teaching it dis-

appeared. As you know, the struggle between learning and ignorance, knowledge and superstition has raged for centuries. What emerged from this struggle is enough of original Christianity for the heart, but not nearly enough to satisfy the inquiring intellect.

Mr. Asketh: Another teaching which I don't understand or accept is the one about forgiveness. How can you square that with what St. Paul said in his sixth letter to the Galatians about not being deceived, that God is not mocked: "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Student: Actually, I don't think you can reconcile the two. This is a universe of law. There'd be chaos if that weren't so. It is the inviolability of law that alone makes science possible. Sir Edwin Arnold has put it rather beautifully in *The Light of Asia*:

Before beginning and without an end,
As space eternal and as surety sure,
Is fixed a Power Divine which moves
to good,

Only its Laws endure. . . .
It knows not wrath nor pardon;
utter-true
Its measures mete, its faultless
balance weighs;
Times are as nought, tomorrow it will
judge,

Or after many days. . . .
Such is the Law which moves to
righteousness,
Which none at last can turn aside
or stay;
The heart of it is Love, the end of it
Is Peace and Consummation sweet.
Obey!

Whether people consciously recognize them or not, these laws exist. There they are! They operate, and it is we who reward or punish ourselves according as we work in harmony with the laws of the universe, or are foolish enough not to do so.

Mr. Asketh: St. Paul states very clearly that the individual is responsible for his actions, and that makes sense to me.

Student: Of course, what we are real-

ly discussing are the ancient teachings of reincarnation and karma. Jesus and His disciples knew about them. Remember the saying of Jesus: "With what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again." (St. Matthew 7:2). I think you will agree that that is a stern statement, one which neither expresses nor implies salvation by proxy or future mercy.

Reincarnation means rebirth, and karma is the word for cause and effect. Karma is the law of consequences, the universal law of unerring justice. Karma also means action, and ordinarily an action is thought of as a separate isolated physical act. But it is much more than that. It is all that led up to the act plus the results that follow it. That's karma. The effect is inherent in the cause.

The Hebrew Scriptures abound in statements about this law of consequences. The Psalmist recognized this law when he declared "Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou renderest to every man according to his work." (Psalm 62:12).

Mr. Asketh: One wonders why a teaching so in harmony with law and common sense could be set aside in favour of forgiveness, but could we go back to reincarnation and talk about that first. Is there any reference to it in the Bible?

Student: The truth about reincarnation was taken for granted by Jesus and the Apostles as well as by people generally at that time. That would be natural since the doctrine of rebirth was taught practically universally in those days. All the Egyptian converts to Christianity, Church Fathers and others believed in this doctrine, as is shown by the writings of several. You'll remember that when Jesus came to the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" And they said: "Some say thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one

of the prophets." (St. Matthew 16: 13-14). Reincarnation is certainly implied there.

Mr. Asketh: Yes, and I've always been puzzled about that incident of the blind man. You remember in St. John 9:3 the disciples asked Jesus who sinned—this man or his parents that he was born blind. When could the man have sinned to have been born blind?

Student: He couldn't have done so except in a former life. The question itself is the equivalent to saying that he had lived and sinned before being born blind. That story is one of the best examples of the disciples and Jesus taking the truth of reincarnation and of karma for granted. Another striking allusion to rebirth is in Matthew 11:14 where Jesus said of John the Baptist, "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias (Elijah) which was for to come." This statement by Jesus is also repeated in Mark's gospel, 11:13.

Mr. Asketh: You're saying then that reincarnation was part of early Christianity? Is that right?

Student: Yes, certainly. Up until the sixth century.

Mr. Asketh: What happened then? How did it become lost to us?

Student: It was expurgated, declared heretical by the Second Council of Constantinople in A.D. 553. This assembly was in reality only the last phase of the violent ten-year conflict inaugurated by the edict of the Roman Emperor Justinian in A.D. 543 against the teachings of the Church Father Origen. Justinian had assumed the headship of the Church. "Imperial edicts regulated public worship, directed ecclesiastical discipline, and even dictated theological doctrines. The Church had to submit for a time to 'Caesaro-papism,' a papacy of the Emperor." (*The Story of the Faith*, p. 178).

According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. X, p. 311) this Second Council of Constantinople, having been called by Justinian, was attended

by very few bishops and was presided over by Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople. Though Pope Vigilius was in Constantinople, he refused to attend.

Regardless of who made up this Second Council, it declared the teaching of the Church Father Origen in regard to the nature and destiny of the soul to be heretical and that declaration has had far-reaching effects. What Origen said, in part, was this: "Is it not more in conformity with reason that every soul for certain mysterious reasons is introduced into a body, and introduced according to its deserts and former actions?"

Mr. Asketh: Tell me about this man. Was he the only Church Father who taught this doctrine?

Student: By no means. But Origen was undoubtedly the most outstanding of many who believed and taught as he did. About the man: by race, he was an Egyptian, a Copt, born at Alexandria, 185 A.D., of Christian parents. His father, Leonides, was a man of piety and culture and under his tutelage the precocious boy was educated in the various branches of Grecian learning. As a man, Origen's character was singularly pure and noble and his moral qualities were as remarkable as his intellectual gifts. He belonged to the Alexandrian School of Platonists and was a pupil of Ammonius Saccas who became one of the greatest philosophers of Alexandria. Origen was a most devout Christian; St. Gregory of Nyssa called him "the prince of Christian learning in the third century." Origen wrote voluminously; his *De Principiis* (On First Principles) and other works are available in English as part of the Ante-Nicene Christian Library.

Mr. Asketh: And you say it was the teaching of this brilliant man that was banned?

Student: Yes, though actually, the teaching was never intelligently met and disproved. It was summarily ousted as incompatible with the

weight of prejudice brought against it. In this connection, it is useful to know what *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. X, pp. 236-7) says under the heading "Metempsychosis."

"In the face of a belief at first sight so far fetched and yet at the same time so widely diffused, we are led to anticipate some great general causes which have worked together to produce it. A few such causes may be mentioned:

(1) The practically universal conviction that the soul is a real entity distinct from the body and that it survives death;

(2) connected with this, there is the imperative moral demand for an equitable future retribution of rewards and punishments in accordance with good or ill conduct here. The doctrine of transmigration satisfies in some degree both these virtually instinctive faiths.

(3) As mentioned above, it offers a plausible explanation of the phenomena of heredity.

(4) It also provides an explanation of some features of the infra-rational creation which seems to ape in so many points the good and evil qualities of human nature. It appears a natural account of such phenomena to say that these creatures are, in fact, nothing else than embodiments of the human characters which they typify. The world thus seems to become, through and through, moral and human. Indeed, where the belief in a personal Providence is unfamiliar or but feebly grasped, some form of metempsychosis, understood as a kind of ethical evolutionary process, is almost a necessary makeshift."

(The words metempsychosis and transmigration are generally misunderstood. Pre-existence, rebirth, reincarnation, are better terms to describe this ancient teaching).

The teaching of reincarnation has never been lost to any but *exoteric* Christianity. It has always been available to the seekers. Most of the

human race lives by this teaching of rebirth, and hundreds of volumes in English and many other languages deal with it. But having been banned by the Second Council, this great truth has been neglected for centuries. However, it is coming back to the Christian world. For instance, convincing evidence that reincarnation is a fact of life is contained in Dr. Gina Cerminara's popular book, *Many Mansions*. Her evidence is based on the life readings of the late Edgar Cayce, one of the greatest American psychics of our time. Dr. Cerminara says:

"Any number of men of intellect in our hemisphere have accepted this idea, and written about it. Schopenhauer thoroughly believed in it. So did Emerson, Walt Whitman, Goethe, Giordano Bruno, Plotinus, Pythagoras, Plato. . . . Besides, if one studied the history of the early Christian Fathers one learned that many of them had written explicitly of their acceptance of reincarnation, and had openly taught it as well. Origen, for example, . . . Justin Martyr; St. Jerome, Clemens Alexandrinus; Plotinus; and many others. Could it be possible that they—being so close in point of time to the fountainhead of Christ's actual presence—had somehow learned and perpetuated teachings that He had given His twelve disciples in secret, and that had come down through the esoteric tradition since the most ancient times?"

Mr. Asketh: But why, in heaven's name, should this teaching have been banned?

Student: It's fairly easy to see. To admit the teachings of reincarnation and karma is quite incompatible with ecclesiastical Christianity. What becomes of intermediaries if *you* are responsible? If you unfold your God-given nature life after life, who can help you—except as Jesus and other great teachers always help—by pointing the way? But you, the individual

must travel the way. It is not possible to abdicate responsibility in favour of any intermediary whatsoever. Men are fallible, in spite of their claims to be otherwise. Fallible men placed in positions of authority are responsible for much that has gone wrong, not only in Christianity, but in the affairs of the world generally. If you want the history of Christianity, you cannot do better than read *The Story of the Faith*, and *The Seekers*, both by Dr. William Alva Gifford.

Mr. Asketh: Most histories of religion are pretty stuffy!

Student: These aren't. Dr. Gifford is Professor Emeritus of Church History and the History of Religions of the United Theological College in Montreal, and his books are a readable and priceless instruction. Let me whet your appetite: In *The Seekers*, the shorter of the two books, he begins with Neanderthal Man, to remind us that Christianity is a very late episode in the life of mankind. He sketches the religious quests of ancient peoples, and then deals with the history of Christianity. He says:

"Orthodox Christian theology never could have arisen except for two things: It gathered about a historic Figure . . . and it developed in an intellectual vacuum. The collapse of the Roman Empire and the slow emergence into civilization of its heirs in western Europe, the Germanic nations, gave Christian orthodoxy nearly a thousand years in which to establish itself. It never could have arisen in a more enlightened society; it will not forever survive free enquiry."

Dr. Gifford says further:

"The times are critical. We live, as did the first Christians, at the end of an era, and the Church is entering the new age in an extremely difficult position. . . . The historic credentials of most Christian dogmas are quite inadequate, and neither Catholic authoritarianism nor Protestant evasion avails

any longer to hold enlightened minds to them. More serious now than the differences between Roman and Protestant Christianity is the indifference of enlightened minds to both."

When you finish reading *The Seekers*—and, of course, you are a seeker—you realize that many present-day so-called Christian teachings bear little if any relation to Jesus' original message. They have been pieced together through the centuries, like a mosaic.

Mr. Asketh: To come back to reincarnation, what would you say are the main arguments in favour of it, and against it?

Student: To take the negative side first: The leading objection seems to be that we have no memory of our past lives. The second objection revolves around the apparent injustice that man suffers for actions he is not conscious of having committed. The third has to do with heredity, the relations of the parents to the child; and the fourth objection is that the idea of returning to earth again and again is unwelcome to some people.

Mr. Asketh: Could I interrupt right there to ask whether one has any choice about returning?

Student: You have no choice. You will come back.

Mr. Asketh: Assuming that I have lived before, why don't I remember my past lives?

Student: You do. Character itself is memory. It is the cumulative distilled essence of your previous experience. Successive bodily lives are linked together like pearls on a cord, the cord being the soul, and the pearls the separate human lives.

Except under hypnosis, you probably could not possibly say what you did exactly ten or twenty years ago today, but you're quite sure you lived. You are a candid, honourable man, but you know there are liars, thieves and murderers at large. You have learned—by precept, example or ex-

perience—in past incarnations that dishonesty is base and murder a violation of the law of life. So this time you were born with this knowledge innate, as part of your total character. Dominant tendencies and the resolute following of any line of thought and action reappear as innate qualities. The liars, the thieves and the murderers still have to achieve these lessons. The whole of life is a learning process.

Genius also is memory—cumulative memory. What else explains a Mozart touring Europe at the age of six? The arguments for reincarnation are quite conclusive:

1. The whole idea of immortality demands it. It is unthinkable that from infinitude the soul enters this world for its first and only physical experience, and then shoots off to some endless spiritual existence.
2. Analogy strongly favours reincarnation. The old Hermetic saying "As above, so below" indicates that analogy formed part of the study of life and death in ancient Egypt and Greece. Everything in the world follows analogy. Man is the microcosm of the universe. Analogy is the first key to world problems. It is the guiding law in nature.
3. Science confirms the basic laws governing reincarnation. Nothing is created; nothing is destroyed.
4. The unfoldment of the powers of the soul and the plan of human evolution require rebirth as the method of development.
5. Reincarnation provides a complete answer to the most perplexing problem of theology—original sin. This Gordian knot cannot possibly be untied by the one-life theory.
6. Reincarnation explains many curious experiences. The books of Dr. Gina Cerminara — *Many Mansions* and *The World Within*—give ample and arresting evidence on this point.
7. Reincarnation alone explains the injustice and misery that pervade the world. It also explains the joy.

Mr. Asketh: Supposing I ask "What am I, what is it that reincarnates?" can I get a satisfying answer?

Student: Yes. Paul is direct in his statement: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." To use one of the oldest of similes, you are a spark of the Divine Fire, a part of that Boundless First Principle which created the universe, which cannot be described, but which is LIFE itself.

Mr. Asketh: Does that explain the hunger so deeply hidden within each of us? The Psalms retell it again and again.

Student: I think so. It is the yearning of the part to re-become the whole.

Mr. Asketh: It seems to me we need much more specific information about our divine nature, and instructions about how to uncover it, how to know our real selves.

Student: That sort of thing is part of the esoteric or hidden part of Christianity, the Mysteries of the Faith, and of other religions also. The lost keys, reincarnation and karma, and other instructions must be sought by individual students like yourself. They are available.

Mr. Asketh: Of course, you might say, what good are instructions if people are indifferent to them? Take "Love thy neighbour as thyself." That's a straightforward command, but do we love our neighbour? We don't love him, we exploit him, and call it good business.

Student: But there are those who *do* love their neighbours, who *do* probe deeper into their faith, as you are doing. Today, with the advance of science, a religion which fails to teach about the nature of the universe and the nature of man will certainly fail to attract men and women who are intellectually and spiritually alert. One day these students will discover the statement of the greatest of the 19th century spiritual teachers:

"There being but One Truth, man requires but one church, the Temple of God within us, walled in by matter, but penetrable by anyone who can find the way."

Mr. Asketh: To find the way! That is not easy. Where does one look, and where does faith come in? Don't we have to take on faith what we cannot prove?

Student: Yes, of course. Most of what each of us calls "religion" is what we *believe*. Except for the mystics of all nations and all religions — who have had first-hand experience of Reality or God—most of us can only say that we *believe* certain things. We *know* very little. But modern men and women need a much more adequate working hypothesis than is now provided in orthodox, exoteric Christianity. This is found in reincarnation and karma. These teachings fill a great gap in Christianity. They were once part of Christian teaching and they should be brought back into it.

Mr. Asketh: Does returning life after life mean that it was we who formed the civilizations of the past?

Student: Who else? What but reincarnation explains the rise and fall of civilizations through the departure of advanced men and women to other races and to other continents?

Mr. Asketh: Look at what is happening here in America now! People are pouring into this continent from every corner of the globe.

Student: They'll be developed through the process of reincarnation into the America of the future. This continent has a great future stretching ahead thousands upon thousands of years when the race will have become much more mature than it is now.

Mr. Asketh: I suppose that is what you call the sweep of evolution.

Student: Rebirth is the *method* of evolution. It is the process by which Nature progressively unfolds the limitless capacities latent in all forms of life, including human beings. By the way, I suggest you memorize

these Three Great Truths. They are as potent today as when they were first spoken, some centuries ago.

I The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit.

II The principle which gives life dwells in us and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen or smelt but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

III Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.

Mr. Asketh: Sounds like St. Paul. According to that a person at least has the opportunity to make choices.

Student: And it's up to him to make intelligent choices that won't backfire.

Mr. Asketh: In view of the fact that reincarnation was blotted out of "official" Christianity for so many centuries, one wonders how men and women have managed without it.

Student: Many of them re-discovered it just as you are doing. One of the profoundest statements in the Bible is "Knock and it shall be opened unto you, seek and ye shall find." A long list could be cited of the poets, scholars and mystics of every country and of every century who have believed in and taught reincarnation.

Here is one verse from *My Creed*, by John Masefield:

I hold that when a person dies,
His soul returns again to earth
Arrayed in some new flesh disguise,
Another mother gives him birth.
With sturdier limbs and brighter
brain,

The old soul takes the road again.
And then there is the famous epitaph of Benjamin Franklin:

The Body
of
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
Printer,

Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents worn out,
And stripped of its lettering and
gilding,

Lies here, food for worms.

But the work shall not be lost,
For it will, as he believed, appear
once more,

In a new and more elegant edition,
Revised and corrected

by

The Author.

Mr. Asketh: I wonder what effect it would have on people if these teachings of reincarnation and karma were taken seriously by a large number of people.

Student: But they are taken seriously by a large number of people. Two-thirds of the human race believe in reincarnation. It is the materialistic Christian West that put it aside. The East never lost it.

Mr. Asketh: Come to think of it, in *Christian Faith Today*, Bishop Neill testifies to "the determinative influence" in Indian history over more than 2,000 years of these great truths of reincarnation and karma. But he doesn't go on to explain them.

Along with the teaching that what he sows, man will surely reap, it seems to me that it would have a most sobering effect on people in general to be confronted with these truths.

Student: Not just sobering! There is hope as well, a great deal of hope. Character is the spiritual fabric woven by evolution. It is the only thing we take with us through the portal of death. And it is what we bring back with us as our heritage from the past when we return to incarnation. The modern philosophy of eat, drink and be merry has developed out of the loss of these teachings of rebirth and karma. The best way to build noble character is to dedicate one's best effort toward some form of personal discipline including being

kind, decent, and peaceable towards others. Reincarnation and karma are the hidden core of the gospel of Jesus as of all other great religions and philosophies. They unite all the family of men into a universal brotherhood. One of the pivotal doctrines of the esoteric philosophy was and is and ever will be the fundamental unity of all life. Brotherhood isn't merely a sentiment, it is a living fact, a law of our being.

Mr. Asketh: I still have a good many unanswered questions.

Student: That's understandable, but if people ask questions in sincerity, they usually find the answers. We've been talking about just two of the fundamental teachings but their study opens upon the road that leads to the heart of the universe. Here is the instruction:

"Have perseverance as one who doth for evermore endure. Thy shadows [personalities or physical bodies] live and vanish; that which in thee shall live for ever, that which in thee *knows*, for it is knowledge, is not of fleeting life, it is the man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike."

And the instruction regarding karma is equally heartening:

"Learn that no effort, not the smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causes. E'en wasted smoke remains not traceless. . . . Thou canst create this 'day' [incarnation] thy chances for thy 'morrow' [next incarnation.] In the Great Journey [the whole complete cycle of existences] causes sown each hour bear its harvest of effects, for rigid Justice rules the world. With mighty sweep of never erring action, it brings to mortal lives of weal or woe, the karmic progeny of all our former thoughts and deeds."

(to be continued in our next issue)

ON "FINDING FAULT"

ANN LLOYD

"Unto thee who findeth no fault I now make known this most mysterious knowledge." Was this meant for the "expounders of the letter of the law," or for those who refuse to take without question the persons and circumstances they meet in life? Fortunately, the critics have told us that criticism can concern values as well as faults. We also know that we could not know good without evil, optimism without pessimism, and ideals without failures to test their value. Then should we ignore the existence of evil and become critics of critics?

Patience with life is a wonderful thing. It very often keeps us from complete discouragement with things as they are, and reminds us of what they might be. It helps us to face others as they really are, and yet find no fault with the fact they are here with us to be understood.

Couldn't we say that complaint is the only harmful aspect of criticism, something "out of harmony with the scheme of Nature"—due to wrong thinking, as W. Q. Judge reminds us. But then it isn't the recognizing of "wrong thinking" that is bad, but the failure to do anything about it! Have you ever known one of those rare individuals who can complain constantly of society and

(Continued on Page 95)

TELEPATHY

Murmurs from the grasses—
Whispers from the trees—
The wind is singing low
Celestial harmonies;
Mysteries in message flow
From the hidden places.
Secrets of the universe abound
In this gentle blend of sound.
Sweet sibilances fill the ear—
Mediums are needed here.

Laura Baldwin.

THE ORIGINAL PROGRAMME

(2) *Universal Brotherhood*

T. H. REDFERN

The shaping of the purposes of The Theosophical Society was an evolutionary process, and the demonstration of universal brotherhood became its prime object in 1881; but in her memorandum of 1886, published as *The Original Programme* in 1924 and 1931, H. P. Blavatsky puts it as No. 1 of the four objects given to her by her Master in 1875 for the "regular Society" whose nucleus she was charged to form. When this came into being it adopted at first a single object: "to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe". The emphasis that the Adept-instigators laid on the law of Brotherhood in the letters of guidance and instruction in the early years is well-known to students. It is first expressly declared as an official object in the New York circular of 1878—"finally, and chiefly, to aid in the institution of a Brotherhood of Humanity, wherein all good and pure men, of every race, shall recognize each other as the equal effects (upon this planet) of one Uncreate, Universal, Infinite, and Everlasting Cause".

The first public circular of the British Theosophical Society, formed in 1878, declared that the Fellows "believe in a Great First Intelligent Cause, and in the Divine Sonship of the spirit of man, and hence in the immortality of that spirit, and in the universal brotherhood of the human race."

Brotherhood came to the fore then as a *fact* in nature, arising from the Supernal Cause from which we all derive our life, inspiration and intelligence, and it followed that the Society had a duty to do something about it—not at first to *demonstrate* the principle by bodying it forth in the members' relationships, though the example for that

was there in the earliest of the Masters' letters to Col. Olcott before the Society was founded. The aim to "aid in the institution of a Brotherhood of Humanity" was developed in the revision of 1879, issued from India: "to promote a feeling of brotherhood among nations; and assist in the international exchange of useful arts and products . . . provided . . . that no benefit or percentage shall be taken by the Society for its corporate services".

As in 1878, when it was through "good and pure men of every race" recognizing each other as of spiritual kin that world-wide brotherhood was to be promoted, so in 1879 it was to "all worthy individuals and associations" that the Society looked and offered "advice, information and co-operation". It saw its function partly as co-ordinative, and partly as conducive by opposing bigotry and superstition in all quarters, and honestly seeking true knowledge.

That The Theosophical Society should seek to be the pivot of this trend, and to form "the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity", emerged in the rules of 1881. Our Adyar Society altered this to "a nucleus" of "the Universal Brotherhood" in 1896. This change stressed that men *are* brothers whether they recognize it or not, since brotherhood is a fact in Nature—but it abandoned the attempt to be a pivot, and accepted that it was only *one* of the nuclei. Secting was beginning by then, so this was consistent with the trend.

All members of Theosophical Lodges and Societies in the Blavatsky heritage-stream acknowledge the world-wide brotherhood of mankind. In this we are all akin. We *are* united about it.

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

As will be noted in the Annual Meeting report our Editor, Mr. Dudley W. Barr has been granted six months' leave of absence; editorial correspondence should therefore be addressed to the Acting Editor, Miss Laura Gaunt, B.A., at same address.

I attended the Convention at Olcott in July and was delighted to see so many theosophists from Canada present. I understand that ten others attended the Summer School that followed. Altogether our representation at the convention was the best ever. It was a pleasure to meet again our President, Mr. Sri Ram, also Mr. Boris de Zirkoff, Miss Clara Codd, Mr. Sam Wylie and others too numerous to mention. The lectures throughout were of a high calibre and I can safely assert that all who were fortunate enough to hear them and to participate in the hive of theosophical activity that prevailed were more than compensated for the distance that they had to traverse in order to be present. Altogether a very instructive and happy interlude.

I regret to announce that Mrs. Helen Smook, a valued member of the Vancouver Lodge, was killed in an automobile accident recently. Mrs. Smook joined the Society in February 1952 and was a regular attendant at the lodge meetings. Her demise is deeply lamented and our sympathy is extended to the members of the family in their sad bereavement.

Again the total membership of the Canadian Section has been considerably reduced by the dilatoriness of those who for reasons of their own have not paid their dues for last year. These have now been removed from the Magazine

Mailing List. If and when they put themselves in good standing the back numbers will be forwarded to them.

I have been agreeably surprised by the fact that practically all the lodges have spontaneously sent in their programmes of work for the ensuing season. And what is more these reports show without exception a recrudescence of activity and enthusiasm which is most heartening. I intended tabulating them for this issue but find the time, and space in the magazine to be prohibitive.

It is with much pleasure I welcome the following members into the Society: Mr. Eric C. Horwood, Mrs. Betty Miller, Mrs. Doris Davy and Mr. David Fisher all of the Toronto Lodge.

The Executives of Lodges are reminded that there is a supply of pamphlets at headquarters which may be obtained free on request.

E. L. T.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the General Executive of the Theosophical Society in Canada was held at 52 Isabella St., Toronto, on Sunday July 20th, 1958. The following members were in attendance: Mrs. M. Harley, Miss M. Hindsley, Mr. C. E. Bunting, Mr. C. M. Hale, Mr. G. I. Kinman and the General Secretary. Mr. D. W. Barr, Editor, was also present *ex officio*. The General Secretary welcomed the members and congratulated them on being re-elected to give service for another year and reminded them that it was an honour and a privilege to give their services for the Section. He then reviewed the general situation and further stated that although we had sixteen new members during the past year our total was thirty-two less, brought about by nine deaths and fifty inactive. The financial

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OFFICERS OF THE T. S. IN CANADA

GENERAL SECRETARY

Lt.-Col. E. L. Thomson, D.S.O., 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5, Ont.

To whom all payments should be made, and all official communications addressed.

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EDITORIAL BOARD, CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

All Letters to the Editor, Articles and Reports for Publication should be sent to The Acting Editor,

Miss L. Gaunt, B.A., 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5, Ont.

Letters intended for publication should be restricted to not more than five hundred words.

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situation could not be considered satisfactory as will be seen when the Financial Report is read. However, in regard to these matters, there were some proposed changes which would be brought before the meeting which he hoped would be salutary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The Financial Statement after due discussion was also approved. Colonel Thomson then brought up the question of raising the annual dues. He pointed out that as the Statement plainly shows, we are steadily losing ground and that something will have to be done to put us on a sound financial basis. Annual dues that were adequate thirty-eight years ago were now thoroughly demod and should be

brought into line with current conditions. The Meeting concurred and much discussion followed as to ways and means. As a preliminary move toward alleviating the situation, Mr. Bunting moved that Article 7 of the Constitution be deleted and the following substituted: "The Annual Dues of members attached to lodges shall be \$3.50 and the annual dues of members-at-large be \$5". This was unanimously approved and carried. Mr. Kinman also moved that a letter be sent from headquarters signed by all the members present to every member of the Section pointing out that although we have a workable balance to-day, that balance is gradually diminishing due to increased expenses and unless dues are raised we will find ourselves in an unfortunate position and unable to function properly. He also suggested that a voting slip go with this. This motion was also carried unanimously.

Mr. Barr as Editor of the magazine reported progress. He then outlined to the meeting his position as editor in view of his retirement into civil life in the near future and the prospects of being able to carry on. Prolonged discussion ensued and finally it was moved that Mr. Barr be given six months' Leave of Absence and that Miss Laura Gaunt be appointed Acting Editor *pro tem.* This was carried unanimously.

The General Secretary brought up the question of discontinuing the issuance of Diplomas at a charge and the substitution of a Certificate. This was considered favourably but as we have recently had a supply of diplomas printed it was decided that we use them until exhausted when the subject would be considered again. Various correspondence was then dealt with. The appointment of an auditor was discussed and the General Secretary was requested to write Mr. Ralph Webb asking him to act

in that capacity. The next meeting was arranged for the 5th October 1958. There being no further business the meeting adjourned.

General Secretary.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor.

Dear Sir:

Commenting on Mr. T. B. G. Burch's letter in your July-Aug. issue: the rise or fall of the earth's population is dependent upon changes in the length of the Devachanic period, which in turn is determined by the relative materialism or otherwise of the population—the more spiritual the longer the period. When a period of materialism sets in, the period shortens, hence the number of living increases, and *vice versa*; the

effect is of course delayed to the extent of the average devachanic period prevailing at the time the change sets in. The current increase of population would thus be due to something that started a change in that direction about 1500 years ago, or the time of the fall of the Roman Empire.

It is impossible to make a precise calculation because there is no mathematical formula applicable to spiritual status; but an idea of the magnitude of possible changes may be had from the following:

Assume that the average lifetime in the flesh is 50 years—for the world it is much less than that—then 50 years are lived for every 1500 spent in devachan, 1500 years approximately being the average period given. This means that 30 times as much time is spent in

(Continued on Page 86)

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN CANADA

Statement of accounts as at June 30th, 1958.

RECEIPTS

Balance from last year	\$1999.98
(Includes W/E Lodge \$29.30 and Vulcan Lodge, \$36.88)	
Lodge Dues and Fees:	
1958	\$692.70
1959	182.50
	<hr/>
	875.20
Magazine Subscriptions	214.50
Magazine Donations	54.50
General Donations	43.00
Sales	66.80
Bank Interest	6.73
Invest. Certif. No. 8353	1000.00

Total\$4320.71

New Members 18
New Subscribers 10

EXPENDITURES

Adyar, per capita	\$ 97.69
Magazine Cost:	
Printing	\$1023.00
Postage	48.90
Envelopes	119.67
Zincs	10.53
Indexes	47.98
	<hr/>
	1250.08
General Funds:	
Postage	\$ 22.74
Office	43.28
Stencils	4.72
Stationery	50.05
Extras	61.88
	<hr/>
	182.67
Copy of Bh. Gita	20.00
Travelling Expenses	154.25
Fire Insurance	9.10
Bank Charges	4.58
Premier Trust	1000.00
Cash in Bank	602.34
Funds Invested	1000.00

Total\$4320.71

E. L. THOMSON,
General Secretary,
Theosophical Society in Canada.

non-physical status as in physical; hence, shorten the superphysical period only $3 \frac{1}{3}$ percent, and the population will double; lengthen it the same, and the globe will be depopulated. The wonder is not that such marked fluctuations occur as it is that they are not greater.

Of course the periods are very different for different peoples and cultures but the principle is the same.

It is to be noted that the above condition accounts for both the sudden disappearances of populations, such as those of South and Central America, the American Desert, much of Africa, very much of Central Asia, etc., etc., as well as the sudden growths of the present.

There are plain signs of enormous past populations in all these regions and the statistics of the past century or two—the only ones which are anywhere near reliable—are far from telling the story.

It would be quite possible for the huge and growing population of China or India, because of the above relationship, to reverse direction within a generation or two and be virtually gone within another century or two.

It is impossible to calculate the total number of Egoes because of disparity among different peoples and also because the total population in the flesh is always shifting. It is undoubtedly known, but not to us. It cannot in any case be less than 75 thousand million.

Sincerely,

Victor Endersby.

The Editor.

Dear Sir,

I have reference to Mr. T. B. G. Burch's letter on pages 60-61 of the Canadian Theosophist for July-August 1958.

The whole universe is evolving, including matter and this takes place in steps. Many religious sects refer to the end of the age which I believe is close at

hand. As matter becomes more refined the coarser members of the race will not be able to reincarnate until a whole manvantara has elapsed and conditions become suitable for them to progress. Perhaps as many as one third of the egos belonging to the present cycle will have proved they are unable to reach the mark of perfection set for our humanity and as these are holding back human advancement it would stop the progress of the remaining two thirds of humanity if conditions were such that they could continue to reincarnate. Indeed with the scientific knowledge now available a few evil egos could wreck the whole earth causing upsetting conditions in other planets of our solar system.

Some years ago I figured there were something like sixty four thousand million belonging to our present age, but I do not remember how I arrived at that number of human egos.

There is also the question of the evolution of other kingdoms. I believe the refining of metals in mining operations helps the evolution of the mineral world. The breeding of rust resistant wheat helps the evolution of the plant kingdom but the vivisection experiments greatly hinder the advancement of those animals experimented upon.

Geology shows there have been several definite times when conditions for the manifestation of life have changed. The start of the Cambrian period made possible the preservation of life in fossils. Pre-Cambrian fossils are a rarity. Then the start of the Mesozoic era conditions were such that the dinosaurs developed. The start of the tertiary period gave conditions for mammals to develop and the withdrawal of life from dinosaur forms.

At the present time there are not 1% of the buffaloes living that there were in the middle of the last century. Elephants and whales have also been

greatly reduced and there are millions less wild fowl now in North America, not to mention the complete destruction of the passenger pigeon of which there were also tens of millions as late as 1880. Insect pests and virus diseases have on the other hand increased. While insecticides reduce them for a time, strains develop which are immune to the first insecticide used and a new one has to be found. Indeed I have heard that some soils are now getting so full of pest control poisons that health authorities see a danger of such poisons getting into fruit with danger to humans.

It seems to me that the world's resources are being squandered; oil, lumber, tin and coal have been greatly lessened in quantity during the past century. Drinking water is quite a problem in many cities and unless some big discoveries are made in the near future I would judge there will be a big reduction in human numbers, or a lowered standard of living. Man will have to realize that there is a biological balance to which he has to conform, the same as members of the animal and plant kingdoms.

I hope that the above will give you some useful ideas on this very important subject.

Yours fraternally,
P. H. Stokes.

Editor, *Canadian Theosophist*:

In your May-June number of this year you reprint from *The Middle Way* of November 1957 an article by Christmas Humphreys, entitled "Theosophy and Buddhism". This article is excellent in many ways and would have my wholehearted approval were it not for one single paragraph on page 34, which slanders *Mahayana* by classifying it with the "progressive" modern Theosophy, and which makes a subtle propaganda for Zen, by comparing it to the "back to Blavatsky" movement, as if Zen were a "back to Buddha"

movement, which it by no means is. I am referring to the following:

'After the death of H. P. Blavatsky in 1891 the movement split up . . . into several societies. Among them are, as in Buddhism, always the Blavatsky or "original" groups and the "progressive" (Mahayana or modern Theosophy) groups. Always from time to time there is a sudden movement of "back to the source" of which the Zen and the present "back to Blavatsky" movements are examples.'

I shall first discuss the misuse of the word "sudden" as symptomatic of Humphreys' great love for Zen, which teaches the so-called "sudden" enlightenment (*Satori* in Japanese). It stands to reason that no "movement" is ever sudden and neither was Dr. H. N. Stokes' decision to adopt the slogan "Back to Blavatsky" a "sudden" one, although, of course, there was a particular moment when he used this slogan for the first time in writing. But to call it therefore a "sudden" event is as meaningless as to call the 2nd World War a "sudden" event, as it also started—officially—at a particular moment in history. It is always possible to establish more or less arbitrarily a beginning for any occurrence, which would make a "sudden" event out of all of them. In this way Alan Watts makes Buddha's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree a "sudden" one, a propaganda stunt for Zen, which claims that enlightenment comes of a sudden, without any previous preparation, or striving for it. This I call a misuse of the word "sudden," and it is this misuse which has resulted in the phantastic claims of enlightenment or *satori* by writers on Zen, either on their own behalf (e.g. Alan Watts) or on behalf of a great number of "Zen Masters" or even a still greater number of all those who attained to Zen understanding (D. T. Suzuki in *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. III, p. 25). On this

point Dwight Goddard has to say the following:

‘ . . . the different principles of the two schools, “Sudden Enlightenment” of the Sixth Patriarch’s Southern School and “Gradual Attainment” of Shin-shau’s Northern School, have continued to divide Buddhism and do so to-day. The principle in dispute is as to whether enlightenment comes as a “gradual attainment” through study of the scriptures and the practice of dhyana, or whether it comes suddenly in some ecstatic samadhi, or, as the Japanese say, in some sudden and convincing and life-enhancing “satori.” . . . It is the question whether enlightenment comes at the culmination of a gradual process of mental growth, or whether it is a sudden “turning” at the seat of consciousness from an habitual reliance on the thinking faculty (a looking outward), to new use of a higher intuitive faculty (a looking inward).’

(*A Buddhist Bible*, footnote p. 547, 2nd Edition.)

Considering that “Shin-shau” of the Northern School is the “Shin-Sien” of H.P.B. in note (6) to Fragment II of *The Voice of the Silence* . . . “the sixth Patriarch of North China who taught the esoteric doctrine of *Bodhidharma*” (see also note (1) to Fragment II) it should be clear to all Theosophists, if not to Mr. Humphreys, on which side H.P.B. stands.

The whole position of the present day Zenists, all of whom follow the Southern School of Hui-neng, Shen-hui, and Ma-tsu, has become precarious because of the contents of certain Mss. found in the Tung-huang caves. These Mss. have been even more revealing than the Dead Sea Scrolls, inasmuch as they prove that the whole Sutra spoken by the Sixth Patriarch must have been a pious fraud, because the events described therein never happened. Quite to the contrary, it was Shin-shau, or Shen-hsiu as

his name is now written by Chinese scholars, who was honoured by the whole country, including the reigning Empress and her two emperor-sons, as “the Lord of the Law at the Two National Capitals of Changan and Loyang and the Teacher of Three Emperors.” (cf. *Ch’an Buddhism in China*, by Hu Shih, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. III. 5/6). Shen-hsiu’s “competitor”, Hui-neng, only became known a generation later, through the propaganda of a heretical monk, Shen-hui, who was at first exiled and later, for purely political reasons, called back to the Capital to make propaganda for the imperial regime. This was the start of the corruption of Buddhism in China. The new Ch’an (Zen) of Shen-hui and Ma-tsu—a Ch’an without ch’an (dhyana, or meditation)—appealed to the hoi-polloi because of its promise of an easy and sudden enlightenment, without the need of any effort, and so Buddhism gained in numbers, but lost in purity. Indeed, the fact of its great popularity should arouse suspicion as to its depth.

This brings me to Humphreys’ insinuation that Zen is a “back to Buddha” movement. How inconsistent he is I shall show by quoting from his latest book, *Zen Buddhism*, as reviewed in *The Golden Lotus* of April-May, 1958:

‘Zen is an affair of character, not of intelligence—p. 165.

. . . the Zen ideal “Be business-less in mind; be mindless in business”—p. 174.

Zen is to be used, not sought, or described, or understood—p. 211.

Life is flow and Zen is the flow of it. It is therefore neither Buddhism nor any other “ism”—p. 221.

The presence of purpose in the mind is a hindrance—p. 108.

Being essentially beyond reason, it is useless to reason about it, or to use a normal reasonable approach—p.99.’

D. T. Suzuki has the following to say:

... Zenists have never ceased to proclaim, even in China, that they transmitted the *spirit* and not the writing of Buddha. From this we can conclude that they are independent of the original Buddhist doctrines . . . ' (*The Buddhist Sects of Japan*, by E. Steinilber-Oberlin, p. 147).

And Mr. K. Nukariya, professor of the Buddhist College of the Zen Sect in Tokyo, claims:

"The universe is the Holy Writ of Zen. Text-books are but scraps of paper. Zen is placed on the highest spiritual plane which Shakamuni himself has reached . . . Buddhist scriptures have no sacred character' . . . (Ibid, pp. 147/8).

proving thereby that modesty is quite unknown in Zen. I do not know of any place in the literature where a Zen Master called for a "back to Buddha" attitude.

Listen to the "famous" Rinzai:

'Inwardly and outwardly, do try to kill everything that comes in your way. If the Buddha be in your way kill the Buddha. If your father and mother be in your way, kill them too . . . That is the only path to your liberation, your freedom.' (Hu Shih's article, quoted above, p. 19).

Humphreys' placing Mahayana and modern Theosophy in the "progressive" group, and Zen in the "original" group is curious, because all Zen authorities classify Zen as Mahayana Buddhism, at least as to its origin. It certainly has no relation to Hinayana.

Zenists play at being enlightened, like little children play quite seriously at being grown-up. Childish stories as well as artificial paradoxes are supposed to have "profound" meanings, only understood by enlightened Zenists. A knock on the head, a shout, or a cryptic statement may one and all produce satori, which is greatly coveted by them, although to covet it is an unsurmount-

able obstacle. Clear thinking, reasoning, logic, etc., are all of no value to them. They claim intuition (*prajna*) as their possession, and pride themselves on being *irrational*. They have a great aversion for the *abstract*, which is typical of children and immature people, and so they have managed to mix up thoroughly statements pertaining to the Absolute, using as pattern the *Tao-Te-King*, with quite concrete ideas and facts, often inverting the order of things. Typical of the latter is when Suzuki speaks of "unknown knowledge" which "is absolute and transcendental and is not communicative through the medium of ideas (sic) . . . it is a state of inner awareness. And this awareness is singularly contributive to keeping one's mind free of fears and anxieties . . ." (*Zen: A Reply to Hu Shih, Philosophy East and West* Vol. III, p. 33). Note how in Zen *first* you obtain enlightenment, and as a result your ordinary mind becomes tranquil! Is Humphreys really not aware of the incompatibility of Zen with the true teachings of the Buddha and with those of H.P.B. and her Mahatmas?

It would be a good day for Buddhism were Zenists really to go "back to the Source," i.e., to Bodhidharma and his Dhyana, and to a study of the Lankavatara Sutra 'which . . . Bodhidharma was said to have told his followers to regard as "the only translated Scripture which, if followed in conduct, may lead to salvation." . . . ' (Hu Shih, op. cit., p. 5, footnote).

Willem B. Roos.

Sacramento, California,
July 31, 1958.

ATTENTION! PLEASE

Cheques should be made payable to THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN CANADA and a slip enclosed marked 'Attention: General Secretary'. Please! There may be a discount on foreign money or bank charges!

"THE GOLDEN STAIRS"

Theosophic Light on Daily Living

BY IVERSON L. HARRIS

Light on daily living is what thoughtful men and women are seeking; it will be my effort to point to the bright Theosophic light shed by great Sages and Seers in different countries and among different peoples upon this matter of intimate importance to all of us. The eternal ethical verities of life are like the masterpieces of music: they bear frequent repetition. We all prefer to hear these musical masterpieces interpreted by a Toscanini; but even when this is not possible, we still recognize them as masterpieces. So it is with the eternal verities.

One of the Adepts who inaugurated the modern Theosophical Movement by sending H. P. Blavatsky to America in 1873, transmitted through her to her disciples the following instructions, which proclaim a complete philosophy of life, insofar as one's relations to one's fellowmen are concerned; and these instructions will serve as the text of this article:

Behold the truth before you: a clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for one's co-disciple, a readiness to give and receive advice and instruction, 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; a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, a valiant defense of those who are unjustly attacked, and a constant eye to the ideal of human progression and perfection which the Secret Science (*Gupta Vidya*) depicts — these are the golden stairs up the steps of which the learner may climb

to the temple of Divine Wisdom.

Let us now study each step enunciated in the foregoing instruction from one of the Masters of Wisdom, in order to appreciate the light they throw upon daily living.

'A Clean Life'

A clean life is one in which the real man, *manas*, the thinker, cleanses his mind of all ill-will, jealousy, hatred, anger, self-seeking, or desire for anything whatsoever that will bring unhappiness or loss to a fellow-human being. A clean life does not necessarily imply the life of asceticism, because, unless the ascetic is also a man of warm and tender sympathies, with a compassionate heart that refuses to be self-centred, asceticism *per se* can often degenerate into exaggerated concentration upon one's own progress; and the self-centred man is apt to become sadly constricted in his feelings and callous to the calls of compassion, no matter how 'virtuously' he may abstain from eating flesh or from otherwise indulging normal appetites. It is a man's thoughts and feelings that make him clean or unclean. In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, one finds the following warning, which, if heeded, will cleanse the mind quite as effectively as soap and water will cleanse the body:

Beware then, of an uncharitable spirit, for it will rise up like a hungry wolf in your path, and devour the better qualities of your nature which have been springing into life. Broaden instead of narrowing your sympathies; try to identify yourself with your fellows, rather than to contract your circle of affinity. P. 367.

'An Open Mind'

The next flash of Theosophic light on daily living which the Master projected

in his radio-beam of high thoughts, challenges those seeking truth to have 'an open mind'. There seems to be a tendency in some of us to think like *ex parte* pleaders rather than like open-minded judges. We allow our prejudices to serve as prosecuting attorneys against people and things which we don't like, and our predilections to serve as counsel for the defense of ourselves and those people and things that are pleasing to us. But, as Confucius wisely said:

The nobler sort of man in his progress through the world has neither narrow predilections nor obstinate antipathies. What he follows is the line of his duty.

—Lionel Giles,

The Sayings of Confucius, p. 57.

The characteristic open-mindedness of such a superior man is well illustrated in the following story about Abraham Lincoln:

Some weeks after the election of 1860, John W. Bunn, on his way to Lincoln's room at the State House in Springfield, met Salmon P. Chase coming away. To Lincoln Bunn said: "You don't mean to put that man in your Cabinet, I hope?" "Why do you say that?" asked Lincoln. "Because," said Bunn, "he thinks he is a great deal bigger than you are." "Well," replied Lincoln, "if you know of any other men who think they are bigger than I am, let me know.—I want to put them all in my Cabinet."

—Clarence E. Macartney.

Lincoln and his Cabinet.

How many of the asperities of life could be avoided if each one of us was determined at all times to approach every subject with an open mind! How many of the greatest difficulties in our social and political life, national and international, would vanish, if all people trained themselves to try to be so open-minded that they could always see the

other fellow's point of view! One of the worst curses of the present age is the attempt of individuals or groups to force their ideas upon other individuals or groups.

'A Pure Heart'

Another step on the Golden Stairs described by the Master is reached by means of 'a pure heart'. In the esoteric sense I believe that a man of pure heart is one whose whole being irradiates goodwill, compassion, high thoughts, wise words, and helpful deeds, just as a healthy physical heart pumps good fresh blood to every smallest tissue and cell in the whole body. Moreover, a man of pure heart is one that has had the dross of self-seeking burnt out of him, either in some previous incarnation or in this one, by the fires of trial and suffering. 'For as gold must be tried by fire, so the heart must be tried by pain.' Only when the soul has been purged of personality; that is, when the masks of selfishness and ambition have been torn off and cast into the 'furnace of living pain', can one's heart be pure enough to respond, understandingly and effectively, to the cry of suffering from his fellow-human beings and even from the creatures below the human. Only when we have compassionate and understanding hearts are they pure. Then are we worthy to follow in the footsteps of the Buddhas and Christs. In *The Voice of the Silence*, translating from an ancient Eastern scripture, H. P. Blavatsky tells us:

Let thy soul lend its ear to every cry of pain, like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun; let not the fierce sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye. But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain; nor ever brush it off until the pain that caused it is removed.

(to be continued in our next issue)

ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

Dear Associates:

In this annual letter, it has been the custom to speak of events in the Theosophical world, and to draw encouragement from the burgeoning signs of the times for the work of the Theosophical Movement in the world about us, for which we labour and to which we stand in intimate relation. This year, the promise is even more abundant, although the pain and anxieties of the world seem unreduced, and an air of emergency is, if anything, increased; yet, that promise seems definitely marked by a new hospitality to Theosophical ideas.

Direct developments formerly noted in the fields of psychology and in what may be more broadly termed "philosophy," are indirectly evidenced in the search for a more natural life on the part of many, affecting the areas of diet, health, and the environment of home and community. More broadly, it is possible to discern a heightened perceptive power as to the psychological ends and aims of man, among thinking people in every walk of life. This trend comes into view generally through modern fiction, essays and magazine articles, whose writers, it may be assumed, are natural mirrors of the times, and reflect attitudes becoming now more widespread.

It is as though the psychic and intellectual environment of the modern world were rising to a new level, by an action almost effervescent in character, and in accelerating pace. One might think that the seeds of the Theosophical Movement, nurtured through the years by faithful students, had at last accomplished a measurable flowering—that

the influence thus generated has penetrated to the core of human dynamics and exerted a transforming effect which is now becoming plain. One might think this and be correct, without needing to claim it as part of the accomplishment of Theosophy, since the fact of the development is the important thing. But whatever the causes at work, the contemporary scene has changed largely for the better. Where, twenty or thirty years ago, students of Theosophy seemed to feel themselves surrounded by wholly alien forces—intemperate bigotry, on the one hand, and harsh materialism on the other—today both religion and science have undergone a leavening influence. Distinguished individuals in both camps have broken with their respective orthodoxies, charting paths of independent thinking.

Most of all has the change been in the direction of a new appreciation of Oriental philosophy and of Eastern thought generally. There are good historical reasons for this emergent consummation of a great theosophical objective—as William Q. Judge wrote: "The deeds of men, the enterprises of merchants, and the wars of soldiers all follow implicitly a law that is fixed in the stars, and while they copy the past they ever symbolize the future." Whatever the explanation of the new interest, however, it may be expected to produce far-reaching effects. The day may not be far off when people generally begin to think of themselves as members of a world community to whom the resources of the world community belong and are naturally accessible. This might prove an end to provincialism in religion and

philosophy; and it remains for Theosophists, under such conditions, to make every effort to reveal the practical wisdom of their studies, to show in their lives, as well as they may, a true comprehension of the needs of the world. A time of freedom of the mind is on the way—indeed, has already arrived for some. As theosophists cleave to the soul-values of human life, through the light provided by their philosophy, that light may be recognized by others for what it is—an immeasurable responsibility in these closing years of the interim cycle.

What significance have these developments for students of Theosophy? First of all, Theosophy need no longer sound "strange" or "different" to the inquirer. Quite otherwise, since for some, Theosophy may seem to be so "familiar" as to warrant no further investigation. Instead of competing in the market place of ideas with harsh opponents who reject its teachings as fanciful or unorthodox, Theosophy may now have to make its way against a flood of oversimplified and even sentimental doctrines which seem to the superficial inquirer to be "just like" Theosophy! What will distinguish Theosophy, in such case, is the rigor of its logic, the discipline of its thinking, and the universal character of its ethics. Not doctrinal novelty, but philosophic comprehension—and even the profound insight of its occult wisdom—will be the key to recognition of the unique value and importance of the Theosophic tradition and the authentic literature of the Theosophical Movement.

The present is spawning movements, cults, and sects with astounding rapidity. The immediate effect of all such formations is the break-up of old orthodoxies, just as, in another area, the shake-ups on the international scene are gradually wearing away confidence in old and familiar political forms. Actu-

ally, the world is being made *plastic* by the shock of events and the erosion of psychological strain. May we not, then, recognize the present as a cycle of preparation for further great changes?

It is moral, and not political events, in the world of our time which require identification: these are shaping the future. And it is Manasic events, not the merely intellectual sequences and the psychic reflexes of the age, which bespeak the true history of the present. There are many signs of a potential of this sort among Theosophists around the world. For a number of years Lodges have been sending down roots in their communities, acquiring their own quarters, and finding hard-won security for the future. Latest of these achievements was the inauguration of a great new Theosophy Hall in Bombay, India, which formally opened its doors to the public on last November 17. This was an event appropriate to the new birth of India only a decade before, and the auspicious beginning of a new cycle of effort by our Indian brothers.

For all students, the promise of the time is the welcome opportunity of the time. While the opening of men's minds will undoubtedly present new problems, it also affords evidence, however obscure of work well done in the past. This, more than anything else, is a demonstration of capacities equal to the challenge of the present and the future.

Sincerely and fraternally,
Parent United Lodge
of Theosophists.

BOOK REVIEW

Religion and the Rebel, by Colin Wilson, published by Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1957, 318 pp., price \$4.25.

This is a continuation of the theme outlined in Wilson's first book, *The Outsider*, which was published in 1956 and which the author described as "an enquiry into the nature of the sickness of

mankind in our twentieth century." (See *The Canadian Theosophist*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 5.)

The remarkable success of his first book brought to the young author (he is now twenty-seven) sufficient money to enable him to devote himself to writing without having to earn his living in other ways. Gone were the days of writing in the British Museum in the daytime, staying in a sleeping bag at night on Hampstead Heath and taking on jobs whenever he needed funds for his small needs. During this new period of financial freedom *Religion and the Rebel* was written along with a ten thousand word 'credo', *Beyond the Outsider*, which appears in *Declaration*, a collection of the beliefs and attitudes of eight of the younger generation of British writers. *Declaration* was published later in 1957 by MacGibbon and Kee, London.

Religion and the Rebel gives further evidence of the author's omnivorous reading and of his very perceptive, retentive and original mind. Over two hundred authors are mentioned in the text and his reading ranges all the way in time from *The Bhagavad Gita* and the *Tao-te-King* to Toynbee, Gurdjieff and modern Existentialism. Madame Blavatsky is mentioned four times, twice linking her with Mrs. Baker Eddy as a 'cranky messiah', and there is a reference to *The Secret Doctrine* as being "a vast learned piece of mythology".

"The meaning of life must lie outside life", quotes the author from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and this quotation sums up the central theme of the book. But man does not realize the truth of this as long as he is satisfied with the world and his own personality. If he awakens to an awareness of the essential irrationality and purposelessness of the round of ordinary human activities and interests, a sense of futility and failure

may arise within him and he may become a blind rebel, an unbalanced neurotic, hating the world and its inhabitants. If he stops there he is lost; if he is to recover sanity he must press on to the super-sanity of the spiritual explorer. He must break through the prison walls of his personality and explore the possibilities of his latent self through an intense and continued application of will, imagination and spiritual disciplines. His task is in essence a spiritual one. Mere retreat from the chaotic and meaningless round of triviality will only postpone the day when by self-induced and self-devised methods, he shall find within himself the meaning of life and find 'life more abundant'. The way will differ with the individual, but it will not be found through the intellect alone: the whole being of man must be aroused.

Through concisely written biographies and an abundance of illustrations from the writings of the characters whom the author has selected as examples for his thesis and from other sources, Wilson shows how various Outsiders and Rebels have reacted to and have expressed the inner impulses which moved them. In *The Outsider* he used T. E. Lawrence, Van Gogh, Dostoevsky, and Nijinsky; in *Religion and the Rebel* a longer list appears, the poets Rilke and Arthur Rimbaud, mystics such as Boehme, Ferrar, Pascal, Swedenborg, William Law, Cardinal Newman, Kirkegaard, the dramatist Bernard Shaw, and two modern philosophers Wittgenstein and Whitehead. For Whitehead the author has a deep respect, "one of the broadest and most profound minds since Plato".

Wilson considers that the Outsider as a phenomenon of modern civilization is a symptom of the decline of civilization. Religion, man's intuitional sense of the wholeness of life and of his own relation to life, has been replaced by the false

and misleading dogmas of the Church. The scientific materialism of our day has helped to slay the spiritually adventurous self of man. The Rebel is in rebellion against the Church and scientific materialism, and forsaking both, seeks inward for light.

"I believe that every civilization reaches a moment of crisis, and that Western civilization has now reached its moment. I believe that this crisis presents its challenge: smash, or go on to higher things. So far, no civilization has ever met this challenge successfully."

It is interesting to note how closely Wilson's views on this and of the Outsider's function in the crisis parallels that of Mabel Collin's in *Through the Gates of Gold*. There she speaks of civilization after civilization—Egypt, Rome, Greece—having rolled the stone up the Hill of Difficulty only to watch it roll back again after the summit is reached. There is a "summit to which, by immense and united efforts, he attains, where there is a great and brilliant efflorescence of all the intellectual, mental and material part of his nature". Then when the climax is reached, he weakens and falls back into barbarism. But from this height attained by the race, a few have looked forward to the further heights and the brilliance in the distance, and some of these have seen the Gates of Gold which admit us to the sanctuary of man's own nature. The few were the Outsiders of their age.

Religion and the Rebel is an important contribution to the subject with which it deals. The author's future books will be looked forward to with interest. He may have exhausted for the time being, the material for any further critical approach to the subject and may be on the way to a deep experience within himself, in which he will lose himself—and find himself.

ON "FINDING FAULT"

(Continued from Page 81)

life in general and still do something quite effective in another direction toward his ideal? Sometimes such men are recognized years later—writers whose private letters or diaries show more daily hope for humanity than their works reveal, or poets whose last line brings a word of encouragement.

One of the fundamental ideas of Theosophy is that "The Self is within all things, yet is without them all." We learn to understand that the soul knows its own, and that at each step in evolution we come to realize that what we once were aware of as reality cannot comprehend what we now *think* we have reached. If knowing Truth means seeing both good and evil as aspects of the One reality, perhaps discrimination without "finding fault" is the key to criticism.

from *Theosophia*.

Therefore, these words were written in the Gospel,

'*Date and dabitur vobis* for I share all with you',

And that is the lock on the door of love that lets forth grace

To comfort the sorrowful burdened with sin.

Love is the physic of life, most like to God himself,

It is also the straight way that goeth to Heaven;

Therefore, I say, as I said formerly by the text,

'When all treasure has been tested, Truth is the best'.

Piers the Plowman, Passus I.

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