

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

VOL. 41, No. 6

TORONTO, JAN.-FEB., 1961

Price 35 Cents

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LT.-COL. E. L. THOMSON, D.S.O.

June 7, 1879 — November 14, 1960

LT.-COL. E. L. THOMSON, D.S.O.

The sudden death of our General Secretary, Lt. Col. E. L. Thomson, D.S.O. on Monday, Nov. 14, came as a great shock to all who knew him. He had been ill for a short time only; the illness did not seem to be serious, but a long-standing heart condition suddenly became acute and the end came swiftly and unexpectedly.

But while the conventional word is the "end", one cannot think of a life such as his as ending. As General Secretary for the Theosophical Society in Canada for fifteen years he had created intimate links with the members in Canada and with Theosophical students in other lands. He had at all times maintained the Canadian Section's attitude of independence, encouraged the study of the original source books of Theosophy, and while fully recognizing the Canadian Section's position as a Section in the Theosophical Society, Adyar, had fostered cordial relationships with all other Theosophical Societies and groups. His devoted labours for Theosophy will inevitably draw him back again into future cycles of fellowship with those to whom Theosophy is, as it was to him, the main-spring of existence. He passed away without seeing the fulfilment of his many dreams and plans for the effective use of the legacy from the Mark Dewey Estate, but he left behind a thick file of notes and suggestions, and when the legacy is finally received these will be of great help. Perhaps even now on the inner planes, the re-incarnating Ego of the personality that was is finding joy and satisfaction in developing and extending those plans; when the next cycle of incarnation comes in its due season, the distilled wisdom gained in the more subtle realms will influence his future work in the old Cause.

Theosophy to Colonel Thomson was his "life-meditation" and was never out of his thoughts despite his interest in other fields.

His artistic ability was considerable and many young artists were indebted to him for the help and encouragement he gave them both personally and through the artists' Society which he founded. Another deep interest was the Veterans' group which he established at the headquarters of the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario where he was employed from 1923 to 1945. Colonel Thomson had had a distinguished military career—he took part in the Boer War and in the first World War was in France from 1914 to 1918, most of the time in the front lines—and although his affection for his old comrades-in-arms remained constant, war became for him a brutal, stupid and totally ineffective method of settling national differences. A detachment of the Ontario Hydro Veterans attended the Theosophical funeral service in St. James Crematorium on Nov. 17 and deposited a wreath on the casket.

Messages of condolence were received from the Canadian members and Lodges, from the Canadian Federation of Lodges and from Theosophical friends elsewhere. The President, Mr. Sri Ram, wrote, "I am very, very sorry to hear that Lt.-Col. E. L. Thomson has passed away. He was a special friend of mine and it was a pleasure to meet him every time." A telegram was received from Dr. Henry A. Smith, National President of the Theosophical Society in America, expressing the deep sympathy of the officers and members of the American Section. Colonel Thomson was well-known to many American members through his visits to the Annual Conventions at Olcott. Friends in and near Los Angeles whom he had visited last summer, sent flowers and a message of sympathy. Mr. and Mrs. Iverson L. Harris of Alhambra, California, telegraphed as soon as news of the Colonel's death was received and later sent the following memorial;

In Memoriam—Lt.-Col. E. L. Thomson

"Each one of us is a pilgrim, lantern in hand, traversing the dark and difficult path. It is only by persevering with a steady purpose and with an open and contrite heart, that we can hope ever to see the Light."

—Lt.-Col. Thomson

On November 15, 1960, upon learning by wire of the sudden death of the General Secretary, we dispatched the following telegram to 52 Isabella St., Toronto:

"To Fellow Theosophists in Canada our sincere sympathy for your loss in the passing into peace of your General Secretary, Colonel Thomson, a gallant gentleman and loyal servant of the Cause. (Stop) We cherish his memory as a respected official of the Theosophical Society and an esteemed personal friend."

We hereby reaffirm our feelings as summarized in the foregoing wire.

Regular readers of *The Canadian Theosophist* for the past fifteen years are acquainted with Colonel Thomson's administrative talents and his genial, friendly attitude towards all the members through his monthly "Notes and Comments" as General Secretary. But a self-revealing flashlight-picture of the man himself is afforded by the leading article in the C.T. for January, 1944, *How a Soldier Found Truth*. In it, as evidenced by the following extracts, the Colonel pens his own memorial:

"A large number of us are not satisfied to rely on faith alone. Many of us are like scientists, we must have facts, absolute facts Once you begin to question the validity of your belief and that of your neighbours you are treading on dangerous ground. There is such a thing as ostracism. Few people dare to risk it"

"I do not pretend to have anything new to tell you. I am quite a common-or-garden person who has spent a number of years in searching for that something that will intuitively tell me that it is what I am searching for. In that purpose I have gone after many will-o-the-wisps and many times

been almost bogged down in the process. I think it helps one to know some of the difficulties that one's fellowmen have met with when they are on a quest similar to one's own"

"When I was in command of a line of blockhouses in the Transvaal every Sunday I made it my business to go to as many as I could in order to hold some sort of religious service for the men. I was always in the good graces of the padres. I read the Lessons for them at their services both in peace and in war. I often played the organ when the organist was away. With all this you will understand that I was spiritually inclined and looked after the spiritual welfare of my men. I am telling you all this because I want you to understand the kind of background I had before I came to a crisis in my life"

"In the course of my reading I was impressed with one fact, and that was that every man born into the world seemed to have an innate feeling that there was some omnipotent being who was responsible for the creation of the universe, and to whom they were in some sort of way intimately connected"

"I think that you will find that it is the ancient Gnosis that seems to permeate all religions. It is the mystic knowledge which effects regeneration, rebirth, into the full consciousness of one's divine nature and powers as a Son of God. It is the super-knowledge which can be traced back to the remotest ages and the oldest scriptures of which we have any literary records, and which was taught by Initiates, Adepts, and Masters of the Ancient Wisdom in the inner circles of those Mysteries and Mystery Cults which are known to have existed in Egypt and elsewhere, even in remotest time;"

"Briefly and broadly speaking, I have found that Gnosis of which I have just spoken. And when I say found, I mean I believe it explicitly and know it to be true intuitively. There is no question in my mind but that by studying that subject I am on

the right track. It satisfies me both mentally and morally. By studying it one realizes that religions are the product of Religion. We begin to realize that Religion itself is neither a belief nor ritual, nor worship. These are but the expressions of the religious instincts in man, but are not Religion itself. And when Religion has been found, all these things are transcended. Finally it dawns on us that Religion is a Life, the inherent life of the Spirit

"Out of all this we have to make our own credo. To take this learning and all that we get out of it, is not enough. It is only by intuition and experience can we hope to get anywhere. And finally, above all, we must live the Life. Head learning without the innate spiritual understanding of the heart is useless."

We shall very much miss the correspondence we have had with Col. Thomson over the past four years and cherish his oft-repeated expressions of warm appreciation for our labors of love in connection with Mr. Mark Dewey and his bequest to the Theosophical Society in Canada.

Iverson and Helen Harris

The following tribute was received from Dr. Henry A. Smith:

It is only in recent years that it has been my privilege to meet Lt.-Col. Thomson. At the last annual Convention at Wheaton, Illinois, we had several conferences, and this acquaintance then changed into warm friendship. We had the occasion to discuss theosophical activities in our various countries, as well as the international activities.

During these conferences, I became aware of the geniality and warmth of his personality and of his fine sense of humor. It was delightful to find in him a keen sense of appreciation of all good theosophical activities and his profound loyalty to the work. He stated that there is an underlying unity in our diversified approaches to Theosophy, and suggested that on this basis lies the answer to a close co-operative effort in the Work, which was launched by the Adepts of our Society.

It is only natural that there will be felt a distinct loss in the ranks of the workers. His warm friendship and genial co-operative spirit shall be missed but shall remain for us a pleasant and inspiring memory.

Henry A. Smith

National President

The Theosophical Society in America

In saying farewell to a staunch comrade of the way, we in the Theosophical Society will remember with deep gratitude the part he played in this incarnation in the war "longer and greater than any", the war against ignorance, intolerance, superstition and bigotry, the war for the sake of man's Eternal Soul. We value deeply the experience of knowing him and working with him, and will look forward to the Reveille.

The portrait on the front page was taken from a photograph of the happy occasion in September 1956 when the late General Secretary presented the Charter to the newly formed Phoenix Lodge of Hamilton.

* * * *

The Editor,

The Canadian Theosophist

15 November, 1960

Dear Sir:

It will be sometime before the Theosophical Society, in Canada and elsewhere, will be able to function without looking for the familiar touch of Colonel Thomson.

His many years as General Secretary of the Canadian Section have made him well-known to all of us in his official capacity; in private I have known him as a gentle man, an artist of many talents—painting, sculpturing and fine draughtsmanship—and as one with strong opinions who nevertheless respected the opinions of others. He took a sincere interest in my own work, and both remembered and aided my small boy's interest in foreign stamps.

For my own sake I am glad that I knew the Colonel, and for his own sake I am glad that his last illness was brief.

Cedric Weaver

THE THEOSOPHY OF ZEN BUDDHISM

BY STEPHAN A. HOELLER

We are told in the ancient legends that once during the days when Gautama the Buddha walked this earth, teaching and instructing his disciples in the Noble Law, He arrived at a place called "The Vulture's Peak." Here, the Lord, surrounded by his disciples seated himself to discourse upon the elements of the Wisdom which he brought to the children of this world. As he thus sat in profound meditation, he was approached by a high-ranking Brahmin who presented him with a beautiful lotus flower and beseeched him to preach the Good Law, using this ancient symbol of the flower as the basis for his sermon. Instead of proceeding with one of his priceless discourses the Buddha merely remained silent, gazing with divine serenity upon the flower. After awhile, one of his disciples, the venerable Mahakasyapa began to show upon his countenance an expression resembling the one exhibited by the Enlightened One. Quickly the Buddha turned to Mahakasyapa and informed him, that since he alone of all the disciples was able to partake of the teaching contained in the Buddha's "silent sermon" on the Lotus Flower, he, Mahakasyapa, had now become the recipient of the treasury of the secret teaching and was destined to transmit the same to future generations for the enlightenment of countless beings.

In this strange and subtle way, so tradition declares, the Buddhist Order of Silent Instruction, known in later years under the names of Dhyana, Cha'an and Zen, was established. Handed down in an unbroken succession of Patriarchs and enlightened teachers this school of truly esoteric Buddhism, like its symbolic ancestor the golden lotus flower, has been transplanted, has taken root and has blossomed forth in great splendour in India, China and Japan, and according to all indications is now in the process of adapting itself to the hard and

strange soil of America and Europe, attracting vast numbers of students of various degrees of ability and perception in all walks of life.

An informed surveying of the contemporary scene inevitably leads to the recognition that the West is experiencing an unprecedented upsurge of what could be called a trend toward a non-structured, non-symbolic, immediate approach to life and its meaning. It is only natural that Zen Buddhism, which alone of all oriental religious philosophies can rightly claim to have consistently refused to become contaminated by the elements of metaphysical speculation, symbolism and unnecessary verbalization should attract the attention of those whose inclinations impell them to proceed with their studies in this general direction. There is no single reason for the extraordinary growth of modern Western interest in the "direct approach" to reality, as exemplified by Zen. The spiritual sterility of the churches and their Social Gospel philosophy, the loss of faith of many intellectuals in the beneficence and utopian aims of modern science, the practical failure of the once universally accepted theory of inevitable progress through evolution augmented by scientific advancement; all these and many more factors have contributed toward the upsurge of this special type of "direct" mysticism. Oriental ideas, climaxed as it were by the popularization of Zen Buddhism in our days, have steadily increased their influence in the West and have literally transformed a large portion of religious thought in the Christian Churches. One might mention also the affinities between oriental mysticism of the Zen Buddhist type and such purely Western ideas as the philosophies of Bergson, Wittgenstein, the Existentialists, the semi-academic (or perhaps rather pseudo-academic) teachings of general semantics, and certain

recent movements in psychotherapy. The present study is motivated specifically by the relationship of Zen Buddhism to the concepts and methods of spiritual progress taught by the modern Theosophical Movement, notably in the works of the founder of that Movement, H. P. Blavatsky.

When toward the end of the last century Mme. Blavatsky in her monumental works manifesting the spirit of a true pioneer courageously expounded about the existence of a "Secret Doctrine" or esoteric teaching present within the framework of Buddhism, Western scholars delighted in mocking at her, being utterly convinced that there was no such thing. "Esoteric Buddhism! What nonsense," they declared, and believed that the Ethics and Philosophy of the Hinayana of Ceylon constituted the sum total of Buddhism in all its aspects. Mme. Blavatsky proceeded to show the existence of such a secret doctrine, and as we all know wrote her greatest and immortal work in the form of an extensive commentary on certain ancient scriptures which she called "The Stanzas of Dzyan." H.P.B. tells us, regarding the origin of these Stanzas, that they are taken from a collection called "*The Book of Dzyan—from the Sanskrit word 'Dyhana' (mystic meditation) which is the first volume of the Commentaries upon the seven secret folios of Kiu-ti . . .*" (S.D., I, xxii, and S.D., III, 405-6) H.P.B. knew many portions of these books by heart and translated passages from them not contained in *The Secret Doctrine* for the private use of her personal pupils; these were known as *Notes from the Book of Kiu-Ti* and have been published by C. Jinarajadasa in 1923. (*The Early Teachings of the Masters*, pp. 184-193) The language of these curious works is supposed to have been an unknown, ancient tongue, called by H.P.B. "Senzar," but the version contained in her works represents a translation into English of Chinese, Tibetan and Sanskrit copies of the original works. Now, in regard to Zen Buddhism it is of great importance that H.P.B. admits (in the above quotation) that

Dzyan is but a Mongolian corruption of the Sanskrit word *Dhyana* which, we may add, is the name of both the school and the method of meditation of the esoteric Buddhist Sect founded by Buddha (according to the Legend) and later imported into China and Japan where it assumed the names Cha'an and Zen. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the *Book of Kiu-ti* and the *Book of Dzyan* are topically as well as historically related to the school of Zen Buddhism probably through both its Indian and Chinese branches. It is interesting to note in this connection that Dr. D. T. Suzuki, the greatest living authority on Zen Buddhism has repeatedly endorsed *The Voice of the Silence* (another Theosophical classic originating from the same source as the aforementioned works) as one of the best representatives of Mahayana Buddhism and being very much akin to Zen. Similarly the late Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup, teacher and co-worker of Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz has stated that H. P. Blavatsky's works contain adequate internal evidence of their author's acquaintance with the secret lamaistic teachings of Tibet. Inasmuch as there exists an ever-increasing body of evidence indicating the virtual identity of the secret Lamaistic teachings with the central philosophy of Zen, this latter evidence is also of greatest interest as far as the present study is concerned. (On the latter see *The Secret Oral Teachings of Tibetan Buddhist Texts*, by A. David-Neel, page 37).

What then, we may ask, is Dhyana, also known as Cha'an and Zen? Like the majority of the technical terms of oriental philosophy this word has no true equivalent in English. As a school of religious philosophy it can be described as *Esoteric Buddhism* at its best. The word "esoteric" has never been more properly applied than in this context. For what is truly "esoteric" can clearly never be the object of verbal communication and therefore is unutterable and cannot be written down. Zen, therefore, is characterized as a "special transmission,

outside the scriptures;" in other words, a kind of tradition which although not subject to the ordinary means of communication can nevertheless be transmitted in a mystical manner, by inducing or facilitating the arising of a profound mystical insight in the consciousness of the person to whom the esoteric "doctrine" (if it can be called a doctrine) is transmitted. It is this esoteric way of communication or transmission which is indicated in the legend regarding the founding of the Zen school by the Buddha and recounted at the outset of the present study. As a method or form of meditation it is described thus by the noted Theosophist and orientalist, Prof. Ernest Wood:

"The Zen meditation, which has come from China via Japan, dispenses with the critical observations and logical comparisons, and proceeds at once to let the object have full command over the mind. Perhaps I should say full entry into the mind, as the mental process while facilitating observation of the details and the entirety of the object also introduces a bias into the receptivity which can only be overcome by *complete* mental meditation. In the samadhi of the old method of India one goes on looking at the object by a continuation of the act of will which directed the attention to the object in the first place, now being still carried on. A Zenist who follows the school of 'no mind' very thoroughly, will try to leave the mind out altogether, and see the object without any opinion or bias. It would be too much to ask that it should eliminate the 'point of view,' because the senses, not the mind, are the providers of that; but not too much to ask that it be without relation to oneself . . . since one's idea of oneself and one's condition and place in the world are mentally formulated." (Answer by Prof. Wood to Question No. 62, in E.W.Q.&A. Bulletin, No. 7, p. 5)

Professor Wood is further of the opinion that this form of meditation is akin to the

state of samparajñata samadhi, taught by Patanjali, in which one can receive new awakenings or profound insights from common objects in the world of sense, and experience a state of great joy and strength as a result. This state of joy and strength is called in Zen by the name of Satori.

Zen, then, teaches what may be called "knowledge without thought." Though this may seem like a preposterous statement at first, Prof. Wood goes on saying that actually all knowledge is of such a character: "Just as we walk to arrive somewhere for some purpose and then stop walking, so also we think to reach some knowledge, and then stop thinking. Thinking and knowing are not the same—far from it." This does not mean, however, that thinking is to be abandoned altogether for any purpose, what is implied is the truism that an intense and supremely beneficial experience can be had by the individual who at certain times stops walking mentally and allows the forces of life to enter his consciousness with their full natural impact, unchecked and unmitigated by the barrier of conceptual thinking. It is commonly taught that Zen has received its present doctrine of "No Mind" together with the method of "Sudden attainment" through the agency of a curious and somewhat controversial personage, namely the sixth patriarch of Chinese Cha'an (Zen) Buddhism, Hui-neng, also known as Weilang. We are told that Hui-Neng's predecessor in office, the fifth patriarch, Hwang Yan, when attempting to decide who should be found worthy to be chosen as the recipient of the traditional green robe of the Zen patriarch, together with the esoteric transmission of the doctrine, had impelled an ambitious and highly intellectual monk, Shin Shau to write a verse on the monastery wall, in order to demonstrate to the patriarch his own excellence. The stanza is said to have read: "Our body is the Bodhi-tree, and our mind is like a bright mirror; carefully we wipe them hour by hour, so that no dust will settle upon them." Seeing the above verses on the wall, a newly ar-

rived monk from another monastery, far less intellectual than Shin Shau, but excelling in mystical insight, added the following to the poem: "There is no Bodhi-Tree, neither is there any mirror; since all is void, there is no place for the dust to settle." The Patriarch instantly recognizing that the second monk was the true mystic who had a practical comprehension of the Buddha's doctrine of the voidness of all manifest forms made Hui-Neng his successor in office and gently rebuked the brilliant but proud Shin Shau who had a long way to go before reaching the spiritual stature of the mystic junior monk Hui-Neng. So, Hui-Neng became the sixth patriarch and leader of Zen.

It appears that Shin Shau was a rather bad loser and organized a schismatic order, which fought the sixth patriarch bitterly, even threatening his life on several occasions. Shin Shau's order being more intellectually minded became known as the school of gradual attainment while Hui-Neng's order was called the sudden school, because of its great emphasis on the immediate element in the process of realization. With the passage of time Hui-Neng became universally recognized and revered in China, while the schismatic order has lapsed into obscurity and eventually disappeared completely, until today all the existing schools of Zen derive their teachings and succession from the sixth patriarch, Hui-Neng. Now it so happens that in that singularly beautiful Theosophical classic, *The Voice of the Silence*, there can be found a statement repeating the words of Shin Shau, "The mind is like mirror, it gathers dust while it reflects," and to this is appended a footnote by H.P.B. in which she refers to Shin-Shau (whose name she spells Shin-Sien) and seemingly upholds this leader, calling him "the sixth patriarch of North China, who taught the esoteric doctrine of Bodhidharma." Now it is important to remember that Shin Shau was regarded as patriarch by his followers, and lived and taught in Northern China, while Hui-Neng moved to

South China where he had the greatest following. The two men were *both* patriarchs of two slightly different branches of the same school, co-occupants as it were of the same office. They both taught the esoteric doctrine of Bodhidharma, the esoteric doctrine being simply Zen Buddhism in its totality irrespective of small sectarian feuds within its organized adherents. Mme. Blavatsky's reference to Shin Shau should not be construed as a clear endorsement of the Shin Shau school, because she makes no reference to the dispute between the two schools and, therefore, cannot and should not be represented as taking sides in a dispute in which she had little or no interest. H.P.B. never wrote or said anything uncomplimentary about Hui-Neng or the schools of Zen which developed out of the "sudden school"; it is nothing short of absurd to label Hui-Neng a pseudo-patriarch and all the existing schools of Zen as false Zen, merely because she happened to quote his one-time rival and had a few kind words for him in a more or less incidental footnote to *The Voice of the Silence*.

More important than H.P.B.'s endorsement of Shin Shau (which we repeat is not an endorsement of his position versus *Hui-Neng*), is her clear statement naming Zen Buddhism as the vehicle of the esoteric teachings of Buddhism. In *The Voice of The Silence*, attached to the first two pages of Fragment II, Chapter on The Two Paths, there can be found two footnotes by H.P.B. which carry a message of far-reaching implications regarding the relationship of Theosophy and Zen Buddhism. Explaining the meaning of the words "heart doctrine" and "eye doctrine," she quotes the Chinese names for the exoteric and esoteric schools and says that these were so called by "*The Bodhidharma, the Wisdom-Religion in China.*" In the second footnote referred to above she states: "*The tree of knowledge is a title given by the followers of . . . Bodhidharma . . . to those who have attained the height of mystic knowledge—Adepts.*" Both of these statements refer to

Boddhidharma and one of these references is made in a manner linking Boddhidharma with the "Wisdom-Religion in China" and this is of greatest importance. According to tradition Boddhidharma was the name of an Indian Buddhist monk who after his initiation into the Dhyana Mysteries by his Master Panyatara became the twenty-eighth patriarch of the Dhyana in India, journeyed to China where he established the Order and became its first patriarch in China. His life is embellished by countless legends and amazing tales. From the Theosophical point of view it is of considerable interest that he was regarded by his followers as a messenger of the Adept-Rulers of Shamballa. A Chinese author, San-Kian-yi-su states:

"Boddhidharma brought from the Western Heaven (Shamballa) the 'Seal of Truth' and opened the fountain of contemplation in the East. He pointed directly to Buddha's heart and nature, swept away the parasitic and alien growth of book-instruction, and thus established the Tsung-Men, or Esoteric branch of the system containing the tradition of the heart of Buddha." (As quoted by Joseph Edkins in *Chinese Buddhism*)

This very word 'Tsung-men' is used by H.P.B. in one of the footnotes quoted above and in connection with Boddhidharma. The fact that she uses the name Boddhidharma as a generic term meaning Enlightenment (Bodhi) Doctrine (Dharma) rather than the proper name of the historical personage need not concern us for it is quite likely that Boddhidharma's name is of symbolical significance. The one important conclusion remains that H.P.B. unequivocally recognized the Chinese Cha'an (Zen) school of Boddhidharma as the authentic representative of the "heart doctrine" or Esoteric Buddhism, or if you please—Theosophy!

Summing up the objective portion of our study regarding the common origins and historical relationship of Zen Buddhism and modern Theosophy we may declare that:

(1) The ancient documents which formed the "skeleton" of such theosophical first-rate classics as *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence* bear implicit and explicit testimony to their intimate relationship and near-identity with Chinese and Indian Zen Buddhism.

(2) H. P. Blavatsky's statements regarding the schismatic Zen Patriarch Shin Shau do not mean that she condemned the "sudden school" of Hui-Neng and, therefore, Theosophists are safe in assuming that the present schools of Chinese and Japanese Zen (which are all subdivisions of the "sudden" school) are authentic representatives of the esoteric or "heart doctrine" advocated and endorsed by H.P.B. and the Mahatmas.

(3) Since modern Theosophy and Zen Buddhism both originate from one source and partake of an inner identity there is no valid reason why students of the two schools of thought could or should not study the teachings of both schools without suspicion of each other's authenticity from the point of view of esoteric tradition.

Since it would be presuming to expound what Zenists could learn from Theosophy we shall only outline what we feel Theosophists should learn from Zen. Strange as it may seem, modern Theosophy, just like ancient Buddhism, also has its "eye" and "heart" doctrines. There is a phenomenal Theosophy, or a tendency represented by many authors and lecturers within the movement, which abounds in highly technical verbalization and conceptualization, largely neglecting and occasionally even antagonistically discarding a less concrete approach to Theosophical teaching. There also is a noumenal Theosophy, exemplified by such works as *The Voice of The Silence*, and at least portions of *The Secret Doctrine* which may also be called a theosophical mysticism, concerned with the direct, immediate, and absolute apprehension of Reality rather than with the thinking and verbalizing about the mechanisms of Karma, Reincarnation, the exact nature of the

Hierarchy of Adepts; the Occult history of the world, not mentioning the near-extravaganzas of "clairvoyant research" and similar activities.

Enjoyable and important though thinking is, it is no substitute for experience; mere thinking about the Real will not bring us closer to it at all. There is a fine Zen saying: "He who knows does not talk, he who talks does not know." Among Theosophical students—as among the adherents of other schools—we quite frequently encounter persons who talk eloquently and strenuously about things they don't know anything about. Zen may teach us to attempt to know first and talk later; it may also bring to us the truth that hero-worship is no substitute for the experience of reality. One Zen teacher admonished his pupils that if on their path to Nirvana they encountered the patriarch they were to slay him and if they chanced to meet the Buddha they were to destroy him also. Personalities—whether living or dead—should not take the place of our active and informed effort toward direct seeing into the heart of life and dear though teachers and messengers of light are to us it would defeat the purpose of their lives to worship their words instead of going forth on the journey to the ever available source from which they have gathered their treasuries of truth which they brought to us.

Rather than resting content because of having received the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom in Theosophy and assuming our beliefs to contain "the whole truth and nothing but the truth" let us regard these teachings as having been given to us by Those who Know in order to help us to know also. Let us also remember that it is better to know than to believe and that the enlightened ones of every age are the perpetual-living monuments, bearing testimony to the essential fact that we *can* know. Buddha—like all enlightened knowers—never claimed to have revealed enlightenment, but he did teach a way to enlightenment. He taught practical ethics and con-

ceptual understanding, but only as "fingers pointing to the moon," to yet another region, another experience. Hence the Zen Buddhist verse:

"When they curiously question thee, seeking to know what It is,
Do not affirm anything, and do not deny anything.

For whatsoever is affirmed is not true,
And whatsoever is denied is not true.
How shall anyone say truly what That may be

While he has not himself fully won What is?
And, after he has won, what word is to be sent from a Region

Where the chariot of speech finds no track on which to go?

Therefore, to their questionings offer them silence only,

Silence—and a finger pointing the Way."

This we may learn; to point the way and for the rest be silent. For such is the amazing Theosophy of Zen.

WHEEL OF LIFE

I shall be sad to leave
When earthly life is near its end,
Yet will not grieve
For long. I shall count
My blessings; from them weave
A ladder for my soul to mount
In everlasting song, and know
That Death is but another bend
Round which all steps must go.
I shall look back again
When earthly life is near its end,
And scan the way
Which, stumbling—I have come.
Ponder awhile each precious day,
Its laughter, and its deepest pain;
Sudden sunlight round a bend,
And busy traffic's rolling hum.
Yet will I come again
The wheel of life moves on.

—Leonora Parker

SCHOOL STUDY SHOWS BELIEF IN REINCARNATION

There is a strong preoccupation among senior school children with some form of reincarnation judged on informal talks among them on religious education in secondary modern schools. There is also a strong similarity in their religious approach, whether they or their families go to church or not.

Tape recordings of the talks, taken with the knowledge of the boys and girls, have been used as the basis for a report on the religious education of the seniors in secondary modern schools, particularly those in their last year. The recordings were made in eight schools, including some in London, Leeds, Oxford and Porsea, Hants.

Part of one answer to the question "Is there a heaven?" was: "I think that you kind of come back into the world again, to live and lead a better life, and you go on coming back until you're perfect, and then, well, there isn't a place, but I think you go to God when you're perfect."

"God with a Beard"

Afterwards, children at 12 other schools were asked to write down anonymously, their views on such remarks as: "I've always imagined God as an old man with long hair and a beard, wearing white robes, with a nice calm face and that."

In all, 700 to 800 boys and girls from secondary modern schools or the secondary modern streams of comprehensive schools had a chance to enter the discussion. The schools were in such widely varying places as Northeast England, Scotland, Wales, Somerset, Bournemouth and Tunbridge Wells.

Approached from the children's point of view, the report has been prepared by a research group under Mr. Harold Loukes, Reader in Education at Oxford University Education Department. The Institute of Education, which includes Anglicans and Nonconformists on its council, plans to publish the report early next year.

"Adult Treatment"

The final draft will not be ready before the autumn. Suggestions in it are likely to endorse the children's demand for "adult treatment" of religious education.

There is also a strong feeling that straight teaching from the Bible is inadequate. Religious instruction should be concerned with the children's interests and problems, followed by the demonstration of the relevance of the Bible to them and the teaching of the Biblical answer.

Issues felt to be "live" and important to the children included parental and other forms of authority, suffering and death, particularly if experienced personally, love and sex and fairness and justice. Other concerns were about employment and the need of character training for it, and money and possessions, including gambling and drink.

—From *The Daily Telegraph*, London, England.

THE THREE TRUTHS

There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, yet remain silent for lack of speech.

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

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

Each man is his own absolute 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.

Idyll of the White Locust

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST
 THE ORGAN OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
 IN CANADA
 PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY
 AUTHORIZED AS SECOND CLASS MAIL,
 POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, OTTAWA.
 SUBSCRIPTION: TWO DOLLARS A YEAR



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PRINTED BY THE BEAMSVILLE EXPRESS,
 BEAMSVILLE, ONT.

EXECUTIVE MEETING

In the emergency created by the sudden death of Lt.-Col. Thomson, General Secretary, a special meeting of the Executive was held at 52 Isabella St., Toronto, on November 17. The Executive members directed that a letter be sent to Mrs. Viola Gaille Campbell, Colonel Thomson's daughter with whom he lived in Toronto, expressing on behalf of the Canadian members of the Society, their deep sympathy for her, her two sisters, Mrs. Phoebe Stone of Montreal

and Mrs. Gretel Roca of Porta Rica, and her brother, Cecil, of London, England.

Mr. D. W. Barr was appointed Acting General Secretary until the next Annual Election.

THE ANNUAL ELECTION

Nominations for the office of General Secretary and seven members of the General Executive should be made during March and should be received at Headquarters by April 1.

Will the officers of each lodge kindly have this matter brought before their Lodge and then have the nominations sent at once to the Acting General Secretary at 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5. According to the Constitution, nominations must be made through a Lodge and the consent of the persons nominated should be obtained.

D. W. Barr,
Acting General Secretary

1975?

In considering my own attitude toward the promise of a new messenger about 1975, I discovered that my consciousness still included a remnant of the old church attitude of "leaning on a saviour"!

It was not so much an idea, for I knew better, as a *Feeling* that once 1975 arrived, one would be able to rely on the new impetus to the Movement without expending so much effort as is needed now. Of course as soon as I recognized that latent feeling, I realized that the impetus will have to come through human beings, no doubt spear-headed by one or a group of advanced souls, but that work, much work, will be needed all along the line, just as it is needed now to keep the Movement vital enough to accept the expected impetus.

Then I wondered if other members had the same undiscovered feeling, and so this item has been written to draw attention to it.

—A Student

A DOCTOR OF MYSTICISM: RICHARD MAURICE BUCKE

JOHN ROBERT COLOMBO

When Dr. R. M. Bucke died in 1902, Canada lost a most unusual literary figure at the height of his achievement. Bucke's fame apparently perished with him, for it is unusual for him to be recalled at all. When Bucke is remembered, it is invariably in connection with a bulky volume entitled *Cosmic Consciousness* which Bucke published a year before his death. Bucke's other contributions are even less well known. A leading medical doctor in his day, he was the author of numerous pamphlets on medical subjects, including one called "A Short History of Sewage Disposal at the Asylum for the Insane, London, Ontario"; he was a leading alienist who directed for a quarter of a century one of Canada's largest asylums; he was, as one Canadian encyclopaedia phrases it, an "early friend of Walt Whitman" and he eventually became one of Whitman's literary executors; and, finally, he did pioneering work in the field of religious psychology.

It can easily be seen that Richard Maurice Bucke was not primarily a man of letters although his three books, in their own way, are interesting in themselves. *Man's Moral Nature*, which was published in 1873, was an exercise in what William James would have called "medical materialism" because it sought the psychophysical basis of human emotion. *Walt Whitman*, appearing in 1883 and nine years before Whitman's death, was the first major biography of the poet. His last book, which appeared in 1901 bearing the imprint of a practically unknown American publisher, is an amazing synthesis of history, religion, medicine, literature and psychology. *Cosmic Consciousness* was Bucke's *magnum opus* and it is probably the best known Canadian work of religious psychology. It is even a best-seller; since

the rights were acquired by E. P. Dutton, its present publisher, *Cosmic Consciousness* has gone through seventeen editions and has never been out of print.

Richard Maurice Bucke was not born in Canada, but at Methwold, Norfolk, England, on March 18, 1837. His great-great-great-great grandfather was the Prime Minister of England, Sir Robert Walpole. Bucke was the seventh child of a minister in the Church of England, a man of scholarly attainments, a linguist and a Latinist. When young Richard was one year old, the entire family emigrated to Upper Canada and settled three miles east of London, Ontario. Bucke was educated "not a hundred rods" from the location of the asylum which he was later to superintend. At sixteen after the death of his mother he decided to see the world so he spent five years in the far western United States as an adventurer. Bucke trekked overland to California and was among the first to discover silver west of the Rockies. He fought the Shoshone Indians, was robbed, almost died of hunger and thirst, mined gold on the Carson River and then lost one foot and part of another from frostbite in the Rockies. His adventures read so much like fiction that on a number of occasions in his later years Bucke was able to publish them as fictional accounts of the opening of the west. He finally returned home by way of Panama in 1858.

Bucke was twenty-one and a new person when he appeared in London. His father and his step-mother had both died but a small legacy from his mother's will permitted him to enrol in a medical course at McGill University. Bucke was an excellent student and he graduated in 1862 with the distinction of having his graduation thesis "The Correlation of the Vital

and Physical Forces" published in a learned journal. While an undergraduate Bucke taught himself to read French and German and he rapidly acquired a wide knowledge of scientific and literary works in both languages. Bucke pursued his graduate studies in England and France, returning to Canada in 1864 to begin his medical practice at Sarnia, Ontario, where his older brother, who was also a doctor, had died a few months earlier. The same year he married Jessie Gurd of Sarnia and the couple eventually had eight children.

Bucke was a successful small-town physician whose first patient was said to be Alexander Mackenzie, but Mackenzie was not the last influential figure to enter his office. After twelve years of practice at Sarnia, Bucke was appointed to the superintendency of the newly-erected Asylum for the Insane at Hamilton, Ontario. A year later, in 1877, he was promoted to a similar position at the asylum in London, the largest in Ontario. Bucke's professional qualifications were the highest and his reputation was established from the beginning. He was apparently the first alienist in North America to adopt completely the system of non-restraint in the treatment of the insane.

Bucke filled this position for a quarter of a century, constantly introducing new improvements and publishing widely in the medical journals of his day. He was an honorary fellow of the Royal Society of Canada from its inception in 1882 and in 1888 he was President of the Psychological Section of the British Medical Association, a year later being elected to a similar position in the American Medico-Psychological Association. Bucke corresponded with most of the English and American literary figures of his day and his works on Whitman were known to them. Bucke died from an accidental fall on February 14, 1902, and was buried with the rites of the Anglican Church in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, London, Ontario. His wife survived him but died in 1926.

The standard Canadian biographies give only a restricted account of Bucke's literary interests and their bibliographies fail to mention his study of Whitman. Besides his three books—*Man's Moral Nature*, *Walt Whitman* and *Cosmic Consciousness*—Bucke wrote a surprisingly large number of magazine and newspaper articles and most of the talks he gave before learned societies were published in various medical journals. In addition he edited, with Thomas B. Harned and Horace L. Traubel, *In Re Walt Whitman* in 1893, and by himself he edited two collections of Whitman's letters, *Calamus* (Whitman's letters to Richard Doyle) in 1897, and *The Wound Dresser* (Whitman's letters to his mother) in 1898, plus the last of Whitman's remains *Notes and Fragments* in 1899. The best account of Bucke's life with a complete bibliography is that of James H. Coyne in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* for 1906, although a revised form of this study was privately printed in 1923 as *Richard Maurice Bucke: A Sketch*.

Bucke's literary works at first sight appear to be more diverse than they really are, for they actually form a whole when they are viewed from the point of view of Bucke's religious philosophy. In an early form this was clearly outlined in *Man's Moral Nature*, the book which led to Bucke's fellowship in the Royal Society. The phrase "moral nature" is rather old-fashioned but Bucke used it synonymously with man's emotional nature, which he placed between man's intellectual and his active natures, corresponding to human thoughts and movements. Bucke was careful to distinguish between emotions or "moral states" and concepts or "intellectual states". In *Man's Moral Nature* Bucke outlined their points of difference but held that their interaction in human experience accounted for the great variety of emotional states that can be experienced. Moral states, however, are ultimately reducible to four "simple" states which exist separately in the mind and defy further analysis.

“Faith”, “love”, “fear” and “hate” are the four simple states which readily pair off into their opposites: faith—fear; love—hate. The complex human passions are a little more than emotional states experienced alone, in relation to one another, or united with any number of simple concepts. Bucke takes for an example joy, which is a combination of love and faith; jealousy, of love and fear; grief, of love combined with the concept of death. Of the four simple emotional states, the role of faith is the most misunderstood, since faith is frequently confused with belief, which is its corresponding intellectual state. To Bucke, faith is an attitude and not a belief of the human mind in regard to the great unknowable problems, “the condition after death” and “the government of the universe”. The savage and the civilized man respond to these questions in their respective ways but the difference between their responses is not based on increased knowledge, for there is no new knowledge, but on the attitude which determines belief. Faith, then, is a kind of existential commitment which permits the possibility of moral and spiritual knowledge, and the well-being of every individual is determined by the amount of faith in his moral nature.

In an earlier talk called “Man’s Moral Nature and the Great Sympathetic” Bucke first located the intellectual nature of man in the cerebral-spinal nervous system and the seat of the moral nature in the great sympathetic nervous system. The latter is the obvious seat of the moral nature because structurally it is buried in the human body and this feature accounts for its fundamental position in human nature. The cerebral-spinal system is less central and pervasive but it has the advantage of being able to give expression to its concepts. As Bucke phrased it, the great sympathetic has no vocal organs.

“I can tell you that I am afraid or that I love. This, however, would not be an expression of an emotion. This would be only an issue of intellectual

paper intended to represent emotional gold, which last never leaves the vault of the bank.”

Hence reason is determined by emotion. Bucke finds in great men a natural correspondence between “moral elevation”, as characterized in leaders moved by faith or benefactors moved by love, and “intellectual elevation”, exemplified in the scientist. Bucke cites a great deal of statistical evidence to prove that well-being and longevity are ultimately dependent on the proper functioning of the moral nature. Many of the details dealt with in *Man’s Moral Nature* are inferior to the argument in general but what is most unusual about the book is the dedication:

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO THE MAN WHO
INSPIRED IT—TO THE MAN WHO OF ALL
MEN PAST AND PRESENT THAT I HAVE
KNOWN HAS THE MOST EXALTED
MORAL NATURE—
TO
WALT WHITMAN

Man’s Moral Nature was written two years after meeting Whitman. It began in 1867 while Bucke was practising in Sarnia, when a friend quoted some of Whitman’s lines in his presence, and it reached its climax a year later when Bucke secured a copy of Rossetti’s selections from *Leaves of Grass*. In July of 1877 Bucke was on his way to an exposition so he visited Whitman at Camden and he was not disappointed with the poet in the flesh. He wrote in the preface to *Calamus* that the very sight of Whitman “lifted to and set him upon a higher plane of existence”. Bucke and Whitman became fast friends and *Man’s Moral Nature* was an attempt to account for the feelings that Bucke felt.

The influence of Whitman was a decisive factor in Bucke’s life but it was not the only factor. Perhaps the most important single one was the sudden experience of enlightenment which Bucke received in London in the year 1872. His third-person account of it is given in *Cosmic Consciousness*.

It was in the early spring at the beginning of his thirty-sixth year. He and two friends had spent the evening reading Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Browning, and especially Whitman. They parted at midnight, and he had a long drive in a hansom (it was in an English city). His mind deeply under the influence of the ideas, images and emotions called up by the reading and talk of the evening, was calm and peaceful. He was in a state of quiet, almost passive enjoyment. All at once, without warning of any kind, he found himself wrapped around as it were by a flame colored cloud. For an instant he thought of fire, some sudden conflagration in the great city, the next he knew that the light was within himself. Directly afterwards came upon him a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination quite impossible to describe. Into his brain streamed one momentary lightning-flash of the Brahmic Splendor which has ever since lightened his life; upon his heart fell one drop of Brahmic Bliss, leaving thenceforward for always an after taste of heaven. Among other things he did not come to believe, he saw and knew that the Cosmos is not dead matter but a living Presence, that the soul of man is immortal, that the universe is so built and ordered that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all, that the foundation principle of the world is what we call love and that the happiness of every one is in the long run absolutely certain. He claims that he learned more within the few seconds during which the illumination lasted than in previous months or even years of study, and that he learned much that no study could ever have taught.

Bucke's account is a careful and well thought out exposition of the experience. From this point on he regarded his scientific training and his literary interests as

merely a "preface" to this experience. At the age when most men settle comfortably into the routine they have established for themselves, Bucke found that he was unable to forget this sudden awareness, so he devoted the rest of his life towards systematizing its findings. It is probably of crucial importance when trying to understand Bucke's motives to remember that, as an alienist, he would find it absolutely necessary to establish a rational framework in order to understand such an experience and differentiate it from the abnormal functions of the insane mind.

Bucke's interest in Whitman as an instance of cosmic consciousness culminated in his study of the poet which he published in 1883. The biography grew out of Whitman's visit to Canada in 1880, after Whitman accepted Bucke's invitation to live with him and his family for four months in London. The proximity of the two minds kindled Bucke's desire to deal with Whitman's past and his poetry at some length. The following year the two men visited Long Island and for the first time extensive biographical material was accumulated and set in order. Thus it was that a Canadian wrote what Gay Wilson Allen called "the first formal biography of Walt Whitman".

Walt Whitman was an uneven book, full of gossip and extraneous detail. Whitman wrote part of it himself and altered a few facts to create a portrait which would be favourable to himself but, at the same time, Bucke used Whitman as an instance of his general theory of morality. Strangely, Bucke championed Whitman for the very reasons others condemned him, for he found in Whitman's poetry a genuine and deep religious feeling and a frankness of expression which displayed only "moral elevation". *Walt Whitman* is full of exemplary instances culled from Whitman's life and it could safely be said that Bucke reacted more to the "unparalleled perfection" of the man than to his poetry. The book was moderately popular and an edition was is-

sued from Glasgow a year later. Through the two editions, Bucke began a voluminous correspondence with most of the literary figures of his time.

Bucke helped Whitman in many ways and he visited Camden many times before the poet died in 1892. Bucke acted as an honorary pall-bearer and he delivered part of the funeral oration. In the meantime Bucke's theory of morality was growing in a new direction and the first appearance of his new approach, interest and terminology was a paper entitled "Cosmic Consciousness" which he read before the American Medico-Psychological Association which met in 1894 in Philadelphia. But it was not until 1901 that the complete theory was worked out and applied to human evolution. The result was *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*, edited by Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke, published by Innes & Sons, Philadelphia. Edward Carpenter in his biography *My Days and Dreams* drew attention to Bucke's achievement in *Cosmic Consciousness*, but he noted that it was "a bit casual, hurried, doctrinaire, un-literary" and practically ignored by the "accredited authorities".

Bucke claims to be only the editor of *Cosmic Consciousness* although the book does bear the stamp of a single mind. Of its three hundred pages, seventy-five are explanatory and the rest are exemplary. The exemplary instances are of two kinds: "Instances of Cosmic Consciousness" and "Additional—Some of them Lower, Imperfect, and Doubtful Instances". There are twelve men in the first category: Buddha, Christ, Paul, Plotinus, Mohammed, Dante, Las Casas (the Spanish conquistadore), John of the Cross, Bacon (whom Bucke believed to have written Shakespeare's works), Boehme, Blake, Balzac, Edward Carpenter and, of course, Walt Whitman. There are thirty-five lesser figures including Moses, Lao Tze, Pascal, Wordsworth, Emerson, Tennyson, Ramakrishna, Richard Jefferies and Horace Traubel. The

principle of selection is little more than caprice. Bucke admits his list is partial but in a work of this sort he must do the best he can. Wordsworth is only a minor instance of cosmic consciousness because of the "doubt" which troubled his mind precluding only the "twilight" of illumination. In the same way Tennyson felt only "weird seizures" and these were relegated to his notebooks. On the other hand, Blake is a surprising inclusion, but Bucke included him on the authority of the Rossetti and Gilchrist biographies. The imaginative vision is, of course, identified with cosmic consciousness, but no attempt is made to understand Blake's lyrics or prophetic books in light of the vision. Speaking generally Bucke had little insight into the conventions of poetry and *Cosmic Consciousness* demonstrates again and again his inability to discuss even the simplest aspects of a poem.

Bucke's thesis in this book is that "a higher form of consciousness than that possessed by the ordinary man" is historically appearing in the human race. Ordinary consciousness, characterized by man's awareness of himself as a distinct entity apart from the rest of the world, is called "self consciousness". The consciousness of an animal is termed "simple consciousness" because the animal is aware only of its body and the world but not of any individual distinction. Man's ability to use language is a proof of self consciousness for Bucke holds that language and consciousness are "two halves of the same thing". A consciousness which is superior to self consciousness just as self consciousness is superior to simple consciousness is called "cosmic consciousness". This capacity for a superior awareness of the cosmos, of life and order in the universe, is present only potentially in man.

The three levels of consciousness are related historically as evolutionary steps. Each level was attained by a psychological revolution which occurred in the human mind, upsetting its normal operation with

a superior one. Bucke holds that this occurs individually and historically. The intellect responds to sense impressions with "percepts" first; once these have crowded the mind the intellect at one point begins to form "recepts" which have the power to represent percepts; when the mind becomes overcrowded with recepts "concepts" are formed which represent recepts. This is the stage of self consciousness which characterizes man. What is happening now in certain instances, and what will happen at a greatly increased rate, is that the mind will become overcrowded with concepts and under favourable conditions "what is akin to a chemical union takes place and the result is establishment of intuitional mind". "Intuitions" correspond to the new mode of cosmic knowledge and an intuition is capable of representing thousands of concepts.

Through a number of ingenious arguments Bucke attempted to prove the evolutionary development of this consciousness on a racial and individual level. When he feels he has established this, he finds that the new awareness has eleven characteristics, and these include an awareness of immortality, the knowledge that the universe is alive and the feeling that life is essentially good. Bucke then traces this awareness in the case studies. He finds that on the average cosmic consciousness descends upon the individual at the age of thirty-five, in males of good intelligence, high morality and superior physical qualities. The awareness is appearing almost five times more frequently than it did before the nineteenth century. Bucke believes that with it will come social revolutions which will literally "create a new heaven and a new earth". Whitman is seen as the most perfect embodiment of the new faculty and at every step in the argument the figure of Whitman can be seen guiding him.

Bucke has had little influence on his contemporaries and even less on posterity. His theory was too elaborate for the layman and too inexact for the specialist, but

as Carpenter (who is an instance according to Bucke, of cosmic consciousness) noted the book has been read and highly regarded as a pioneering work in its own way. P. D. Ouspensky, the Russian philosopher who wrote *Tertium Organum*, devotes a full chapter in that book to the work of Carpenter and *Cosmic Consciousness*. Ouspensky regarded both writers as among the "literary forerunners" of a new theory of man which would bridge the gap between man's spiritual potential and his physical nature. Ouspensky correctly noted that Bucke was attempting a scientific study and that his approach was essentially that of a positivist. But Carpenter and Ouspensky were not the only writers to take Bucke to task. William James, in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience* which appeared one year after *Cosmic Consciousness*, and Evelyn Underhill, in her *Mysticism* which appeared in 1910, both quote Bucke favourably but they find no reason to deal with his multiple levels of consciousness or his theory of evolutionary consciousness at any length. Even Henry Miller found Bucke a guide to Whitman.

One influence which has been entirely overlooked by everyone except Professor John A. Irving is Bucke's impact on Theosophical and artistic thought. Irving writes in his "The Development of Philosophy in Central Canada from 1850 to 1900", in the *Canadian Historical Review* for September 1950: "Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* (1901) has been widely read in Canadian theosophical circles. Lawren Harris and J. E. H. MacDonald were strongly influenced by Bucke, as was also their friend Frederick B. Housser, author of the best book on the Group of Seven. It is not generally realized how much the abstraction of Lawren Harris is a direct result of his prolonged studies in theosophy."

While Bucke's influence has been small, what he has attempted to do is only now being accomplished. Bucke attempted to account for religious experience from the standpoint of human physiology and he in-

terpreted this in light of the Darwinian hypothesis. A product of the nineteenth century, he took his tools from Darwin and T. H. Huxley, but if he had lived a few decades later, he would probably have adopted the method known as "comparative religion". He would have sought a theological rather than a biological equivalence between mystical experiences. Where Bucke failed, Aldous Huxley succeeded. Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy* does not take into account the mystical exper-

ience *per se*, but it places these experiences in a philosophical framework in which a comparative analysis is possible. Hence the difference between Huxley and Bucke is a difference in method and not aim. Even in his failure, one cannot but help admire the honesty, intelligence and perseverance of this Canadian medical doctor who evolved a thesis and refused to be satisfied with it until he expressed it as fully and as clearly as he could.

WHY I BELIEVE IN THAT MYSTERIOUS THING - REINCARNATION

BY LAURENCE EASTERBROOK

The following article appeared October 8, 1960 in *The News Chronicle*, London, England, which has a circulation of 1,169,000, being one of the six largest newspapers in Great Britain. It was founded in 1846 and Charles Dickens was its first Editor. Within the last few weeks the *Chronicle* has been sold to Lord Rothermere and has been absorbed into the *Daily Mail*.

Most of us at one time or another have envied some and been sorry for others. How wonderful, we think, to be able to spend £5,000 on a party and pay a secretary to do the work.

How terrible, we say on another occasion, to be born blind, like that poor chap, never to see the excitement of a football match or the beauty of a rose. The strange thing is, however, that if you come to know such people, things are seldom as you expected them.

As often as not, the millionaires are restless, anxious, unhappy people, haunted by fears of ulcers, of losing their money, or of being liked only for their wealth.

The blind seem to find a way to a serenity that no money could buy and one of their worries is that people will insist upon expressing pity for them.

On the other hand, I have met rich men who can enjoy the simple pleasures of life, like you and me; and it would be untrue to say that all blind men are happy. Obviously, then, this is not such a straightforward matter as we are inclined to think.

The lucky and the unlucky do not fall into those neat divisions where we are apt to place them by applying our own standard of values.

Happiness is something that we carry within us, not necessarily dependent upon prosperity, or even upon good health. But how does this happen and why are things arranged like that?

Soul Factory

If you believe that every person at birth is a brand new product from a kind of celestial soul factory, who plays his little part for 70 years or so and is then swept up in the dustpan of oblivion, I can see no answer to such questions. It does seem to make the world a very unfair place.

For even if you discard the material factors one thinks should make for happiness, it would be no less unfair that some people should be born with a gift for being happy while others are debarred from it.

To be born a great artist or a great orator is at least as much a favoured condition of birth as to be born into wealthy surroundings.

If you think that we come from nowhere and finish here, you are admitting, it seems to me, that our lives are accidental; that we are the only illogical, unordered factors in a plainly ordered universe.

Key To Riddle

Each must work out his beliefs for himself and it is a mistake to accept things on external authority.

But it need not be a hopeless quest, even for the humblest. For we have been assured by the wisest man who ever lived, that those who seek shall find.

Speaking only for myself, I found long ago that the only satisfying key to the riddle seemed to be to regard this world as a preparatory school in which the immortal "I" in every man sought experiences of his own choice in his long journey to perfection.

Perhaps we come back here many times; perhaps we're here only once, obtaining further experience elsewhere.

In either case, one earthly life is only an incident in our "education."

I have always imagined that what happens may be something like this.

When we "die" (i.e., come to the end of an earthly term) we review our life; rather as one might look at a film of a summer holiday. We see our successes and our failures, together with those whom we have loved and those we may have treated badly.

We find ourselves wishing we could have another chance where we had failed and wanting to strengthen a weakness in our character here, develop some particular side of it there.

We should like to make amends for misdeeds, to repay debts of kindness, to atone where we might have been unjust or unkind and to maintain, if possible, some personal association.

Our Choice

From those desires the pattern of our next incarnation, wherever it may be, begins to evolve.

And so it is that when that incarnation comes, our life follows a general course that was freely chosen by us and can be altered for good or ill when we come to live it, but is likely to conform to a pre-arranged pattern.

The psychologists tell us that there is a subconscious part of ourselves that lies deeper than the memories we can call to mind and deeper than our ordinary daily consciousness.

Somewhere in those realms of mind the true "I" that is each of us resides.

It could very well be that this part of our being is subconsciously aware of the path we have chosen and, therefore, can accept the apparent injustice of being born blind, or otherwise handicapped with an equanimity that surprises the rest of us who have not chosen those particular difficulties to contend with.

This is the doctrine of reincarnation, fundamental to Hinduism and Buddhism, taught by Plato to the Greeks, and by the Ancient Druids of Gaul. There is evidence that it was accepted by the early Christian Church. But it was declared heretical by the Second Council of Constantinople in A.D. 553.

It would be incompatible with ecclesiastical Christianity because, by making the individual responsible for his own salvation, it eliminates the function of an ecclesiastical intermediary in remitting his sins.

On the contrary, bad deeds must be atoned for by good deeds, if you accept reincarnation. It is not so much a question of getting someone to tell us that God has forgiven us as showing by our lives that we have forgiven ourselves.

It is the law of cause and effect, worked out for himself by every man.

I am not asking anyone to believe this, for I could not deprecate too strongly the practice of handing people their religion on a plate and telling them they ought to accept it because you think it is true.

It does not bring true conviction and it encourages apathy in these matters.

Worth Study

I should have thought that spiritual enlightenment came from meditation, from reading, from the exchange of ideas and, not least perhaps, from the individual "wanting to know."

But a doctrine acceptable to the Buddha, to Plato and Pythagoras, to Swedenborg, Goethe, Tagore and many more of the world's inspired philosophers must certainly be worthy of study; especially if it seems to make sense of apparent injustice and fit in with an ordered scheme of things.

The principle is simple and logical in the extreme. The application of it is as complicated and varied as the diversity of all living things.

That again seems to be one of the hallmarks of Truth.

BUDDHISM IN RUSSIA

Following items appeared in magazine, *Cultural News From India*, published once in two months by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Pataudi House, New Delhi, India, for July, 1960, Vol. I, No. 4.

Dhammapada In Russian

"M. Vladimir Toporov, the Soviet scientist, has translated into Russian for the first time the remarkable monument of early Buddhism, the 'Dhammapada,' a collection of sayings of the Buddha in Pali.

M. Vladimir Toporov actually translated the edition of the Dhammapada published by India's Vice-President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, in 1954, in Britain.

The Soviet scientist believes that it is

the best version of the Dhammapada ever published."

Buddha Jayanti In Russia

"Buddha Jayanti was celebrated in Moscow for the first time in the Soviet Union.

A reception held at the Moscow Embassy of Ceylon on the occasion was opened by the Ambassador of Burma, U Chjin. He was followed by Prof. Yuri Rerikh, the eminent Soviet scholar of Buddhism and the Tibetan language.

The reception was addressed by the Ambassadors of Ceylon, India, Japan and Thailand who spoke of their countries' Buddhist traditions.

The Ambassador of Ceylon, Dr. Gunapala Malalasekera, noted that abhorrence of war and violence was the main tenet of Buddha's teaching."

Note: "Buddha Jayanti" is the 2500th Anniversary Celebration of the birth, Enlightenment and death of the Lord Buddha.

We understand from the Ottawa Public Library that the High Commissioner for India supplies *Cultural News From India* to the library, and that others interested could also obtain copies from the High Commissioner by applying for it at his address: 200 Maclaren Street, Ottawa 4, Canada.

RELIGION AND RELIGIONS

True religion is an individual matter. It is the sum total of a man's beliefs at any one time and place. As soon as belief can be proved a fact, it belongs to the field of science. The word religions, in the plural, refers to man-made religions founded on interpretations of the reported teachings of those great Ones who have graduated, or are approaching graduation, from the human family to the world of Supermen. At the pre-camp talks in the Oak Grove at Ojai in 1928, speaking to the workers preparing the camp, J. Krishnamurti said:

“World Teachers do not come into the world to found religions. They come to free men from their religions.” And in *The Mahatma Letters*, page 57, we read: “I will point out the greatest, the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power. It is religion under whatever form and in whatsoever nation.”

In my very humble opinion, the above quotations refer to that stage in human evolution where man has recognized and understands the difference between *Religion* and religions, between mere belief and a fact, and therefore needs the restrictions imposed upon the masses who otherwise, in their ignorance, would be without any guidance from evil thinking and evil action.

The evils in man-made religions are largely due to the vested interests of the “Sacerdotal caste”, the priesthood, who fail to recognize or to teach the necessity for an open mind in all matters of belief. It is an obvious fact that most adherents of a religion have absolutely closed minds in the matter of their beliefs, and so have shut themselves off for this incarnation from any further understanding of Truth. This is particularly noticeable in many cults of various kinds and in Occult and Mystical organizations, where much is taught and accepted as fact before one has reached that very advanced stage where each individual can prove the Truth in his own experience of it.

—G. H. HALL

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