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## THEOSOPHY - A WAY TO FREEDOM

BY MOLLIE GRIFFITH

If there is one thing dear to the human heart it is freedom, and we who live in a free country owe a tremendous debt to all those throughout the pages of history, who have worked and often died, that others might be free.

Theosophy, too, is a way to Freedom, and the light which it brought us was paid for by an agony of body and mind, to which death must often have seemed preferable. And so, as always in this connection our thoughts turn immediately to H.P.B. to whom we owe our deepest loyalty and undying gratitude for the work she did in breaking down the gross materialism of her age so that this light might penetrate the minds of men, freeing them from superstition and fear.

Now it is not necessary in a Theosophical paper to stress the suffering endured by H.P.B. or her courage, selflessness and generosity of spirit, for we all know these things, but I would like to quote two passages about her, one from the pen of Charles Johnston and the other from a more prosaic source, *Pears Cyclopedia*. Charles Johnston wrote:

"An immortal spirit, she had the courage to live as an immortal spirit and to subject material nature and the base forces of life to the powers of her immortality. She perpetually took her stand on the realities of spiritual nature, and consistently refused to admit the dominant tyranny of the material world.

Nothing in her was more remarkable, nothing more truly stamped her as one of the elect, than the great humility of her character, ready to deny and ignore all its own splendid endowments in order to bring into light the qualities of others. Such was Madame Blavatsky in her life".

And again, in *Pears Cyclopedia* (61st Edition) under "Prominent People" we read:

"Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna—a noted Theosophist of Russian birth, who founded the Theosophical Society, the influence of which has gradually changed the religious and scientific thought of the age".

Surely this is a fine testimony from a non-Theosophical source!

Now the teachings of Theosophy do not give us Freedom. They show us how Freedom can be obtained and point to the conditions without which the attempt would be impossible.

Instead of our future for all eternity depending on how we live for three score years and ten—or less—we know now that we have all the time necessary to fulfill our destiny as Man.

Instead of our lives depending on chance and our future on some Being outside of ourselves, we now know that justice tempered with compassion rules the world and that our progress depends on understanding and complying with the laws of life

and looking within for guidance.

Instead of being afraid of examining any idea, new or old, we now know there is nothing to fear for as our motto says "There is no religion higher than Truth", and the search for Truth is one of the objects of this Society.

Instead of depending on another to bear our burdens and pay our debts, we now realize that having reached the status of Man, we have to pay them ourselves, for so only can we grow.

Instead of feeling that we are separate beings travelling a lonely road, we now know that wherever we look, or at whomsoever we look, we are seeing an expression of the One Life, of which we are a part, and if there is one sin spoken of in Theosophy, it is the sin of separateness.

And lastly, instead of depending forever on someone else to teach us Truth, we now know that we have within us the potentiality of contacting Truth itself.

These are a very few of the many ideas taught in Theosophy against the background of which we have to gain our freedom and no one who has thought about it at all, will underestimate the task.

Now this fight which we all must wage is not against dictators or unfair conditions in the outside world, it is a fight waged within our own being, a fight that every man must face eventually whether undertaken deliberately or by being forced to do so by Life itself, and it is in relation to this fight that Theosophy points the way. In truth it is the subject of all real teachings such as those contained in the Bhagavad-Gita and many other works, but in Theosophy these great ideas are explained clearly and in detail to suit the age to which they were sent.

In Western Canada many of us work in our gardens and there is one weed called Bind Weed that all gardeners dread. It starts in the most inaccessible spots, travels under ground, putting up innumerable shoots, which if they are left for any length of time, twine themselves around other

plants and flowers, which they strangle in the process. You decide to get rid of this weed, and after hours of work, hot, tired and marked with the scars of battle, you cast on your bonfire yards of these underground shoots, only to return a week later to find as many plants again waving their heads above the ground, with a persistence you almost have to admire.

This, to me, is a perfect symbol of the giant weed selfishness which the Master K.H. says accounts for one third of the problem of evil, and which blocks our road to freedom. And it is not the more ordinary type of selfishness that plagues us so much, but that more subtle type which, when conquered in one form, reappears in another where it is harder to recognize.

Now one of the ideals held up to us in our teachings is that of selflessness, which I imagine to be a state where unselfishness has become a habit, but that is a far cry for most of us. We stand at the central point of evolution, where we can reflect our higher or Divine Selves, or we can ally and identify ourselves with our lower personal selves, and this is where our battle lies, and sometimes we wonder how we shall ever gain the final victory.

Looking around the world and studying those who have been the benefactors of humanity and who could be called selfless, we find that the cause they have worked for, has meant more to them than their own personal success or even happiness, and I think that anyone who does this, whether in the field of art, literature, philosophy, religion, humanitarianism or any of the great fields of human endeavor, does take a long step towards this goal of selflessness.

Now we who are fortunate enough, or shall I say whose good Karma it is to be attached to the Theosophical Society, have the opportunity to work for a cause that is second to none, for its object is to draw attention once more to these spiritual values, without which no real progress is possible.

Some people might ask us "Why do you

Theosophists spend so much time reading and studying? Would it not be better to get out in the world and help in a practical way to stem the tide of human misery?" And I think that our answer would be that this is exactly what we are trying to do, though in a way not easily understood without some knowledge of our philosophy. We feel that everything we see is the result of thought, and that therefore unless our thoughts are based on Truth, or as much of truth as we can absorb, our actions will be out of harmony with the laws of life, and misery is sure to ensue.

Most of us do try to help and support the type of work described as "practical" realizing how important it is, but the special contribution of Theosophical students, as I said before, is to try and absorb the ideas themselves (this being the object of their studies) and bring to the attention of their fellowmen those laws of life which they believe to be founded on Truth, so that the CAUSES of unhappiness may be gradually removed. This of course, is the object of all great teachers and is a very important object of our Society, but there are others which tie in with it, and one of these is, that all of us, however inadequate we may feel ourselves to be for the task, hope to fit ourselves some day or in some life to become channels for the Divine Spirit that dwells in every human heart. Now I am sure that there are many others who know far more than I do as to how this should be done, but speaking personally, it seems to me that two things stand in our way and perhaps will stand in our way for some time yet. One is what we could perhaps call our adverse Karma, and the other the dominant hold upon us of our personalities, a strength that is never realized until we seriously try to free ourselves from their grip.

So to win our freedom in order that we may be of far more use in this work which means so much to us, we have first to meet and accept our debts to life, and secondly try to clear away these obstructions and

weaknesses within our own nature which impede the light of the spirit, another name for Truth itself. This is not the work of a few days or years, but it is perhaps the most important work we try to do.

Now we have been told that in or about the year 1975, another spiritual impulse will be launched by the Great White Lodge, and it has always been the aim of this present Theosophical Society to be of use when this time comes. Some of us may not be here, but others will, so surely it must be important to attain to some degree that "unveiled spiritual perception" which can recognize Truth in whatever form it may be presented, for freedom from the bondage of form has to be fought for over and over again, and is only maintained at great cost.

It has been said that man is the only free agent in Nature, and we can understand this, for the kingdoms below Man are guided by Nature herself, and the kingdoms above Man co-operate consciously or unconsciously with the Divine Will. Self-conscious Man, who has the freedom of choice can reach upwards to the stars or downwards to the gross material planes, though this latter choice is usually temporary and not permanent.

So it might be asked why, if man is free already, does he struggle along the age-old Path to a future state where he must ally his own will with a higher one? Will he not thereby lose his freedom?

The answer perhaps lies in the story of "The Prodigal Son" for we too, left the higher planes, our real home, to wage our battle with the lower forces of life, and when once more we return there, we shall no longer be unconscious God-sparks, but voluntary co-operators with the Gods themselves. I should like to end this with the words of Dr. Jerome Anderson in his fine book *Karma* where, writing on Free Will, he says:

"After eons of evolutionary progress, when the soul awakens to the knowledge

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# THEOSOPHIC LIVING

BY RONALD GARRATT

We have long considered the question of how one should apply the fundamental principles of Theosophy to one's everyday life. Laura Gaunt's learned and masterly treatise upon the theme, "THE THEOSOPHIC MAN" in the November issue of *The Canadian Theosophist* dwells upon what we would judge to be the technically philosophic aspects of life's vital problems. We were intrigued with Miss Gaunt's reference to the paths of renunciation and liberation (quotes from *The Voice of the Silence*). These are the fundamentals of the whole Theosophic concept. We live on and on in the hope of finally reaching, via the passages of myriads of incarnations the very heights of liberation. We were intrigued, too, with Miss Gaunt's references to another of the varied foundation stones of "The Wisdom of The Ages" - the macrocosm with its thousands of millions of heavenly bodies, and the multitudinous microcosms, say, here on Mother Earth. We feel sure we can describe Mother Earth as one of the tiny atoms of the macrocosmic world, and humankind as one of the giants of the microcosmic world on and in which we live.

We became interested in Theosophy while in India some 64 years ago, and under the profoundly learned direction of the late Albert Ernest Stafford Smythe we became members of the Canadian Theosophical Society in Toronto late in 1908 (that would be some 54 years ago), so we believe we can, perhaps, speak with some authority upon Theosophic influences as they affected us, and which, likely affected thousands of people all over the world.

We took up the study of Theosophy to help us understand Christianity and our own Church of England faith better. Now, after more than 60 years of Theosophic interest in all manner of philosophic schools

of thought we feel that Theosophists as such have the right and privilege of making Theosophic concepts help us to better understand and better express our own Christianity. It seems to us that there are many, many Theosophists who believe that Theosophy is a religion in itself and that *The Mahatma Letters*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Bhagavad Gita*, and other theosophic works should be considered as being the only embodiment of truth in our little planet.

The Ancient Wisdom is to us one of the most inspired concepts in the universe and in our thinking, forms the basis of all religious and philosophic thought here on earth. But, like the Bible of the Christians, the Bhagavad Gita of the Hindus, the Koran of the Mohammedans, the Ancient Wisdom requires constant, concentrated study, and in our opinion only a few great souls, such as the Master K.H. (Koot Hoomi) or, the Master M (Morya ? ) or the Master Jesus know the veritable truth of this vast symposium of Theosophic wisdom. For the rest of us? Well, we listen to the words of wisdom from the lips of these and the other mighty ones of the Great Masters' Lodge. Some of us are and have a right to be Buddhists, some of us are and dearly love to be followers of the Master Jesus, Jesus the Saviour; others are Mohammedans, Confucianists, others still Parsees, Zoroastrians, etc. Every one of us has a right and it is a great privilege to be a member of one or other of the great religions. There are others again who are atheists, agnostics etc. That, too, is the choice or destiny of many residents of Mother Earth. Some are this or that because their ancestors belonged, and surely this, too, is their privilege. Above all things else, no matter what our religious or philosophic interests, we are all seeking the truth, not all, by any means expressing the truth.

As a matter fact truth is viewed darkly through many glasses, some coloured by our own respective mental or spiritual makeup, and most of us, no matter how great or noble or powerful we may appear to ourselves, have varied emotional, mental or spiritual defects. The truth within each of us is modified by our spiritual state and our mental well being. New Guinea savages look upon God and life in one way — civilized people look on life in quite another. Truth is relative in all our planes of experience, at least until we reach the Godhead when our span of incarnations has reached its destined end. This being the case no one can truthfully say "I know the truth" while undergoing development throughout the series of incarnations. This is our view, and we believe that the Master Jesus, the Master Koot Hoomi and the Master Morya would agree this would be the sane, intelligent appraisal of the overall picture.

It is the great axiom of Theosophy that it seeks the truth, therefore cannot assume to definitely know the all-over truth of life. Many Theosophists consider the Ancient Wisdom as one of the major aids in understanding their own religions with deeper awareness, more abounding sympathy and more accurate appraisal. These wide minded Christians accept their own religious faith, not as a hidebound mentor, but as a deeply inspiring spiritual guide, for, they recall the amazing new realms of science and wisdom which have characterized the overall advance of man's thinking during the past 100 years. The Ancient Wisdom's teaching of fissionable atoms brought to light some 85 years ago by the Great Masters' Lodge through the good offices of Madame Blavatsky has by now become common knowledge, and the vastnesses of space and the Heavens, also publicized by Madame Blavatsky are today very generally recognized. As we suggested earlier, the veities of eternal truth are not grasped by all of the three thousand million souls here on Earth. Some witness truth more clearly,

some less vividly, less understandingly, and many others scarcely recognize it at all. All of us are born amid variously modelled planes of existence, and generally, within the ken of one or other of the world's great religions our thinking is largely influenced by the specific spheres of influence wherein we have been born.

So, we believe that the study of Theosophy should not prevent us being Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and Mohammedans but should enable us to better understand and appreciate our faith. We say, "faith" advisedly, for we believe that in all of us there is a definite, albeit intangible, faith welded into our being through the vicissitudes, the experiences of countless incarnations. This would be, say, the building up within us of the breath of God, growing, expanding, and finally ennobling everything within us. This, perhaps, is the way great souls have come into the world, geniuses who have sought God's treasures in one area or another - music, writing, painting, dancing, teaching, the ministry in any religion, science and philosophy, and genuine statesmanship.

We feel sure that the Christian of the coming generations will necessarily believe in reincarnation and karma as the foundation stone of all life and philosophy, that God's great plan encompasses a wide area of experience and endeavor, that on uncountable occasions archangels have come down from the Holy of Holies into the miasma of earthly existence to show Humanity the paths leading to God's realms, and that Zoroaster, Buddha, Krishna, Mohammed, Moses, Jesus form the great company of God's apostles of the known historic world.

These Christians of the coming generations will likely believe that Christ came down to the Humanity of Mother Earth not to seek adulation but to teach the "word" of God to Humanity and enable the men, women and children of all ages and all races to once again travel the path upward. But, nevertheless, it is easy to understand

that the millions and millions of people affected by the message of Jesus of Nazareth hold the Saviour in deep, abiding reverence. This would be true of the influence of all the saviours down the aeons of time.

We believe in prayer, and we believe that the Christian of the coming generations will likewise believe in prayer. The great GOD, omniscient, and we believe, omnipresent, mighty, supreme, unknowable to any of us except the Masters of the Great White Lodge is beyond all human conception, but below that unknowable, omniscient One there must be millions, many millions of mighty beings each of whom is God within his particular realm. Without further ado we may surely consider the source of all life here on Earth as the temple wherein resides the great God of our universe (The Solar System), and below that one again there are likely Gods governing planetary movements in conjunction with the Great God of our Solar System. How many millions of "suns", (stars) there are is something likely no one knows. But tracing the lines of leadership down to areas, Man may appreciate it is conceivable that there are lesser great beings, and that the "Ancient of Days" is one of these. We may not know who God is here on Planet Earth but as truth unfolds we may be sure we shall know, and the essence of prayer could be our probable relationship to that ONE. There may be many members of the Canadian and other Theosophical societies who do not accept this belief, but we feel sure there must be many others who feel that the intricate relationships of the Macrocosm and the myriads of microcosms in the universe are being guided by a giant master builder, source of all that is, has been and likely ever will be here on Earth.

With this extended realization of the inter-relationship between ourselves as Christian Theosophists and God in whom we definitely believe we begin to have some idea of the immensity of the universe we live in, the significance of the varied

relationships between God and ourselves, with all the involved implications and what manner of life each one of us should lead. And, we would naturally believe that as there would necessarily be good sound Christian Theosophists, there would be too, in this world of ours, equally good, sound Buddhists, Hindus, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians, Israelites and millions of others embracing religious faiths, all influenced by Theosophic concepts.

This should lead to a deeper fraternity of religious interests, and to a wider understanding of the concept of universal brotherhood. Within this wide minded sphere of religious philosophy there should be hundreds and hundreds of millions of theosophic minded Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, etc., all striving to live an intelligent, sympathetic co-existent path toward the Godhead and the ineffable joys of existence within the realms of the A U M.

This would be the first gate leading to the realms of the inward spiritual grace of the new life of deeper sympathy, greater understanding, and higher appreciation of TRUTH, the fundamental concept that all life from the tiniest amoeba to the greatest archangel is the expression of the eternal will to live, to survive and to reach on and on, upward to the illimitable vastnesses of God's realms.

We all realize that every one of us is limited by individual strengths and weaknesses in this gigantic battle for highest self expression. But we would feel that the general Theosophic concept of life would be to think and express truth to the best of our ability, and to live out that concept of truth in all our dealings with our fellow beings. And, our fellow beings necessarily include the highest and the lowest. We have heard much of the concept "Brotherhood of Man". A very fine concept except that it does not get us very far. If we are to travel far in our search for "The Holy Grail" we must go far beyond the concept "Brotherhood of Man". We must realize the deeper,

wider, greater concept, Fatherhood, Motherhood, Brotherhood, Sisterhood of ALL LIFE. For, we believe that the gigantic plan of A U M is not just the brotherhood of man, but the co-existence of all living beings, no matter how high, how low.

This then, we believe, would form the chief guiding principle of the Christian of the ensuing thousands of years - true brotherhood, true sympathy, true understanding of the relationships of all forms of living beings.

We would, then, as we see it, think of our dogs, cats, horses, cattle, elephants etc. not as mere chattels to be used, worked or loved as cart horses or Manchester terriers or dressed up poodles, but as fellow passengers on the ship of life travelling far distances in the search of the better life. We would feel that we would not be using or loving "animals" just for our personal use or pleasure but as stewards, say, of the Ancient of Days, helping our younger cousins to live, work and love gainfully. In so doing we would be helping along God's vast plan.

So far, so good. From there on we would discover other delights and challenges, and then, living Theosophically would become a thing of joy forever. Somehow, some time we would avoid the pitfalls of false pride of social position. The inner awareness of all over brotherhood would weave in and around about us like a web of refined, spiritual understanding, kindly urge, blessed wisdom. This indeed is the future we envision for Theosophy and Christianity and the other great religious faiths. And, perhaps out of all this would come something of what Christians envision as the millenium, when life all over our planet, and perhaps all over many another planet would move on to the higher planes of existence. All this would impel us toward that deeper awareness wherein Theosophy would continuously throughout the ages teach us new and ever widening concepts of truth and wisdom. Science would advance in all

spheres, business relationships would proceed on bases of better inter-relationships, decency in all areas of life would prevail, and we would be definitely honest with ourselves and those about us. Recognizing the all over oneness of existence we would realize that everywhere there would be areas of expression for every form of life. Theosophic Christians, Buddhist, Hindus, Mohammedans, Israelites etc. would discover deeper awareness in all spheres of activity, and along with that deeper awareness a wiser approach to all problems, no matter how great, how little. We would realize that none of us is perfect, but that all of us are travelling slowly but surely toward the valleys of ineffable joy and achievement. The world today is advancing rapidly toward greater heights of expression, and human frailty is still dragging at our individual self expressions, and most of us are still babes in the wood in all areas of self expression, filled with hatreds, greed, prejudice, misunderstandings, miasmas in our attitudes toward one another in our general thinking of life, but with millions, we feel sure, Theosophic concepts and honest, realistic search for truth will more and more form the basis of man's thinking. This, at least is what Theosophy has long taught the writer, and Theosophic thinking, honesty with ourselves, and wisdom will help us far, far along the road toward the Godhead.

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## THE DUTY OF A THEOSOPHIST

What may be the duty of a Theosophist to himself? To control and conquer, through the Higher Self, the lower self; to purify himself inwardly and morally; to fear no one, and naught, save the tribunal of his own conscience; never to do a thing by halves—i.e., if he thinks it the right thing to do, let him do it openly and boldly; and if wrong, never touch it at all.

*The Key to Theosophy*

# THE DOCTRINE OF REINCARNATION

BY H. STYFF, PH. D.

The Renaissance, the cultural flowering that marked the beginning of the new age after the end of the Middle Ages, is usually translated "born again". However the conception may be clearer to us if we exchange "again" for "once more". Is it not the thought, that culture conceived as a more or less personal entity, or at least as a spiritual phenomenon, had existed during Antiquity, gone under or died during the long night of the Middle Ages and then again seen light of day as a child is born to this earthly existence?

When the Greek philosopher Heraclitus said "the sun is renewed every morning", some idea of rebirth occurred to him. After Helios had gone down into the kingdom of death in the west, it or he, received new life in the morning of a new day. It was simply the idea of periodicity. Life and death do alternate - the same as light and darkness. In like manner our historians infer the rise and fall of civilizations. Physical manifestations occur in cycles - as do the spiritual. The common law of periodicity says that light and darkness alternate and thus we can measure seasons of time. "No life without death" has the companion phrase "No death without life." From this Plato concluded that physical death is followed by new life. But what do we know about it?

As an excuse for the demands of the inborn joy of living—for pleasures and indulgences, especially in youth - one says, "We live but once." And thus one may sow one's wild oats - until a ruin remains to show what was once the hope for the future, of grasping the unfathomable. The bouquet of the wine is gone before the cup is empty and only the dregs remain. Who knows when a new opportunity for pleasure or grief over the emptiness of life will come?

Let us reverse the words and ask, "Do we really live but once?" Man is a complete but small world (microcosm) where we can distinguish different time-periods. The child, the youth, the mature man and the oldster certainly are not different individuals, but they think, act and feel, that is, react, differently, each in his own manner. The transition from child to youth or maiden is equally radical and trying to the child as if he were born into a new world, where everything is different from his former state. And the same holds true when one gradually descends the slope at the end of the pilgrimage. The wise Solomon looked back at the emptiness of honors and riches, while he could see that the sun was constantly rising and setting, hastening to return to its source. The hours of the day carry with them different moods for a human soul. Begin the day with a smile, attack courageously new problems, burdens, and the heat of the day will nevertheless dissipate many a good intention and it would be hard to believe that the fatigued and bitter person at day's end is the same person as in the morning. Thus man is a world in a small way, a replica of the great world (macrocosm) which the Cabalists imagined in the form of a heavenly man whose different limbs were made up of the ten Sephiroth or spiritual powers.

The knowledge of the law of correspondences - as above, so below - even the hint by the obscure Heraclitus, has created international symbolism, by which the gods are anthropomorphized and man is apotheosized. The dying Egyptian became Osiris and the legend about Samson is a sun-myth. And how could it be otherwise than that the transformation from caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly would not be applied to man?



Actually, the thought of an existence after the end of our physical life is not foreign to Christianity any more than to other religions. When one speaks of rebirth, reincarnation, the difference is only this, that the thought does not stop at one future existence but continues and imagines a whole series of states of being. On principle it could be asked what does man after mature consideration choose - a life of monotonous eternal bliss or damnation, as the case may be - or, the possibility of eternal evolvement toward ever greater perfection, towards a good at which the visionaries of the scriptures did not trust themselves to even hint. For the philosopher the thing is simpler. If we have, on provable facts and phenomena during this life, become convinced as to the reality of a pre-existence, then post-existence becomes only a self-evident counterpart or conclusion. And, however we think of evolution, as a circle or a rising spiral, our thought cannot reach towards the idea of an absolute annihilation. Even when the moth flies into the candle flame and burns up, one can say that it has entered the light. It is only the physical envelope that remained outside. In the same manner the water-drop mingles with the sea to rise into the cloud and again fall down on earth, or in the sea, in a constantly circulating course.

There is a whole string of terms for the transmigration of souls - rebirth: Sanskrit, *punarjanman* and the most usual *samsara*; Greek, *anagennesis* (Philo); *metempsychosis*, *metensomatosis* (Celsus). *palingenesis* (Philo), Latin, *regeneratio*, *reincarnatio*, *transmigratio*. Besides purely classical borrowed words, the modern languages have - in English rebirth, German *Wiedergeburt* and *Seelenwanderung*. These terms do not mean exactly the same and besides are often interchanged. C. G. Jung distinguishes between metempsychosis - when the life extends through several bodies, not positive if the personality continues, or is merely continued Karma - and, reincarnation or personal continuity (the Ego).

He says that rebirth is a purely psychic reality. While transmigration (metempsychosis) is thought to imply being born again (reincarnation, palingenesis) as when the ego having once reached the human stage does not return in animal form, which is the accepted opinion among modern theosophists. Evans-Wentz points out that the idea of man being reborn as an animal, is merely a popular superstition without support in the holy scriptures. But symbolical interpretation exists. In Plato's myth of Er, Orpheus' wish to be born as a swan means that he would be reincarnated as a great poet or musician.

The doctrine of reincarnation is to be found among the greatest number of the earth's inhabitants - even where one would least expect it. In the writings of Lieh (450 B.C.) the doctrine is hinted at, "A wise man says: Death and Life are a going away and returning. When I die here, who knows if I am not born there?" (Folke - *Philosophers in Old China*). In the Indian *Upanishads* (commentaries on the *Vedas*) appears for the first time the doctrine of reincarnation clearly and definitely (Lindberg). The *Bhagavad-Gitâ* often mentions reincarnation (8:16), "He who comes to me (Krishna), will not again know rebirth." In the drama *Sakuntala* there is a reference to "some act in my previous existence." For the Buddhist rebirth is a self-evident fact. It is debatable whether the Egyptians believed in the transmigration of souls or not. The statement of Herodotus is not generally accepted, but Murray (*The Splendor That Was Egypt*) points to several examples giving hints, in *The Book of the Dead*.

Among the Greeks, the Orphean and Pythagorean rites were intended to purify and free the soul - then considered a fallen god - from the punishment of inhabiting successive bodies. Pindar has several statements in the same direction. Empedocles speaks of an evolution from plant to animal, and then to man. Plato accepts com-

pletely the oriental reincarnation doctrine (Urwick). Definite statements are found principally in *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus* and the *Republic*. "There is an old belief that the souls of the dead ascend again from the dead. They wander about and suffer punishment until through physical desires they are again enclosed in a body." (*Phaedo*) "The Law of Fate said that the soul who can follow the gods and is allowed to see some of the truth, shall be free from all blame. The rest must be born again as animal or man" (*Phaedo*).

Plotinus follows Plato. According to him one earth-life is not enough for the development of the soul. For this reason divine justice exacts several lives (*Enneads* 3:2, 13). In the Old Testament we find a few statements that hint at the doctrine of rebirth, as in Isaiah 26:19, "The dead shall return." And so also in the Wisdom of Solomon 8:19-20 (Apocrypha); Job 14:7-14 is incorrectly translated in the Swedish Bible, the text is evidently corrupted as the meaning is not clear and the train of thought contradictory. The New Testament has several places about reincarnation. Deussen points out that the Indian transmigration belief is found in John 9:2, because when the disciples asked Jesus if the man born blind had sinned, reincarnation is implied. Loisy on the other hand presumes that it is only a question of pre-existence. Inge agrees with Deussen's train of thought. Eysinga holds that the episode goes back to *Saddharma-Pundarika-Sutra*, where it says that this affliction is the consequence of the evil done in an earlier life. Other places are: "He is Elias, the one who was to come (Matthew 11:14 and Mark 9:11). See also Matthew 19:28, Titus 3:5.

Tertullian says in *Deanima*, that John the Baptist was Elias returned and points to, among other spots, Luke 7:27 and John 1:21. The doctrine of reincarnation was abolished by a synodal decree during a church council at Constantinople in 553

A.D. The Rabbis of the Middle Ages believed that Adam's soul appeared as King David and will return as Messias or as Enoch, Noah, Elias and other biblical great men and Japheth's soul returns in Simeon, Tarah's in Job etc. See Matthew 17:10, Mark 8:27 (Nyblaeus). Basilides, the Gnostic, interpreted Deuteronomy 5:9 and Romans 7:9 as a support for his theory of rebirth (Faye). Caesar tells about the Gauls and their belief that after death the soul entered other bodies; this made them courageous fighters. As to the Norsemen we can refer to the Edda. At the end of the second song about Helge Hundingsbane it says, "There is a belief from ancient days that man is born again, but that is now called old wives' tales." Helge and Sigrun are supposed to have been born again. He was then called Helge Haddingjaskate and her name was Kara Halvdan's daughter as it is said in Karoljod, and she was a Valkyrie. This was evidently written during the Christian era, but older women still spoke about it.

In modern times several philosophers and poets have spoken in favor of the doctrine of reincarnation. Inge (*Mysteries in Religion*) has a long list of these, out of which we can mention: Origen, Giordano Bruno, Swedenborg, Goethe, Schopenhauer and Maeterlinck.

*What is it that reincarnates?* Buddha does not define what it is that passes from life to life; but that depends on the way the Buddhistic idea of soul is formulated. The individuality is rather tied to action (MacDonnell—*India's Past*). Such as the action is will be the rebirth (Schweitzer, in *Philosophy of Life* - 54). Buddhism does not acknowledge a transmigrating ego, but only a complex of soul-potencies in successive lives. (*Legacy of India*, p. 117). On the other hand, the Buddhist Catechism says that the individuality is reborn. Glasenapp separated the ideas of Buddhism and Hinduism, but adds that in practice they become

(Continued on Page 46)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The ballot slips for the election of seven members of the General Executive for the year 1962-63 have been mailed to all members in good standing accompanied by a letter giving particulars of the three candidates whose names appear on the ballot slips for the first time.

The nine-nominees are Miss M. Hindsley, Mrs. C. P. Lakin, Messrs. Charles E. Bunting, T. G. Davy, George I. Kinman, John H. Oberlerchener, Cedric Weaver, Emory P. Wood, and Dr. W. E. Wilks.

The present General Secretary has been nominated for that position and as no other nomination was received, he will be re-elected for the coming year.

If any member has not received his or her voting slip by the time this issue of the magazine is received, the General Secretary should be notified immediately.

A letter has been received from Mr. James S. Perkins, Vice President of the Society, appealing for increased support for *The Theosophist*, "the official journal of the Theosophical Society and the President's only direct link with the members throughout the world."

*The Theosophist* depends solely on subscriptions for its income as no advertisements are accepted. The cost of producing the magazine has increased in recent years and the increased cost can be met only by increasing the number of subscribers. The present circulation is less than 2000 and it is estimated that if there were at least 200 more over-seas subscribers, the additional revenue would be sufficient to cover the cost. The annual subscription rate in Canada and the United States is \$4.00 which can be remitted by Postal Order or Bank Draft to The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras 20, India.

*The Theosophist* is a monthly publication of seventy-two pages and is now in its 83rd volume, having been originally estab-

lished by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott. Each issue contains the President's Notes or an article by him, together with articles from other contributors on various Theosophical topics. There is a good book review section and each issue lists the Theosophical Societies throughout the world, with the names and addresses of the General Secretaries. An interesting section is "Theosophists at Work around the World."

I trust that Mr. Perkins' appeal for more subscribers to help sustain this publication will meet with a favourable response from our readers.

I am glad to report that recently there has been an increase in payment of arrears of membership dues, and the re-instatement of some members who were more than two years in arrears.

At the Executive Meeting held on April 1 it was reported that nineteen new members had joined the Society since the beginning of our fiscal year, and that there had been sixteen new subscribers to the magazine.

I have very much pleasure in welcoming into the fellowship of the Society Miss Adeline W. Campbell who recently joined the Montreal Lodge.

An old friend of Toronto Lodge, Mrs. Ada Kershaw, passed away in March. For many years Ted and Ada Kershaw looked after the building at 52 Isabella St., but they were more than employees; they had absorbed the spirit of Theosophy and became so intimately linked with the Society's activities that they seemed to be part of the institution itself and they were always ready and willing to render services beyond the scope of their duties. Mr. Kershaw died several years ago and since then Mrs. Kershaw lived with her daughter, Gwen, to whom our deep sympathy is extended.

D.W.B.

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## MONTREAL LODGE

The Annual Meeting of the Montreal Lodge was held in January when the following officers were elected for the ensuing year:

President, Mr. Fred Griffiths; Vice President, Mrs. Mayford Roth; Treasurer, Mrs. Beatrice Scott; Secretary, Mrs. E. Goossens; Corres. Secretary, Mrs. Mary Howard; Auditor, Mr. Peter Sinclair; Librarian, Mrs. H. Sora.

Two new members have joined the Lodge recently and we are looking forward to a lecture visit by Miss Laura Gaunt of Toronto in May.

Mary Howard  
 Corres. Sec.

## OLCOTT HARIJAN FREE SCHOOLS

The Olcott Harijan Free Schools were founded in 1894 by Col. H. S. Olcott, President of the Theosophical Society. They were probably the first non-missionary schools for those who used to be called the "Untouchables" and who, even now, without that stigma, are the poorest and most backward classes in India.

These schools are still leaders in educating and assisting these unfortunate people. Here are some of the problems they are working on:

*Food:* At least half the children come to school hungry every morning. Children have fainted in class from hunger. Gifts of wheat, rice, etc., were solicited from social service groups under the C.A.R.E. plan. A camp kitchen was built; a cook was engaged; student volunteers were enlisted and, since June, the schools have offered a glass of milk on arrival and a free, plain, but substantial, midday meal, daily, to every one of the 900 children.

*Clothes:* Many children wear clothes little better than rags. Old clothing has been repaired in the schools and distributed. Gifts of new clothes—astonishingly cheap in India—have also been made.

*Medical:* Many children needed medical care. A doctor volunteered her services and free medical attention is now given.

*Cleanliness:* A group of college students built a trough for washing, and children who lack facilities at home are now taught hygiene and sanitation by actually washing and cleaning under teacher guidance, with soap, towels, comb and mirror provided by the school.

Students have been encouraged and organized to work for the schools. They have painted the buildings, repaired furniture, put on gymnastic displays and collected funds for their school, thus building the qualities of self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect which they need.

Mrs. Catharine A. Galbraith, wife of the American Ambassador to India said: "It was a privilege and a pleasure to see the good work that is being done and the nourishment that is provided for the body and the bright minds."

This work has been made possible by donations from friends all over the world. The work can only continue as long as donations continue. Can you or your organization, help this work which is giving a better chance in life to nearly 900 poor children?

Money sent to the schools grow in value in two ways because money can buy more food, medicine, etc., in India than most places, and for certain projects the government gives equal amounts to match donations received by the schools.

Gifts sent to the Olcott Harijan Free Schools, Adyar, Madras 20, India, will help support and improve this work.

Felix Layton,  
Principal

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*The Editor,*

*The Canadian Theosophist.*

Dear Editor,

I have read with interest Dr. Wilks' article in your Jan. - Feb. issue, as also his remarks in the *Science Group Journal*, where we have had some controversial correspondence. I am grateful to him because he has helped me to a clearer view of the whole matter, and made me realize that, in actual fact, the President and others like myself, are not really as far apart from Dr. Wilks as might appear. But (speaking for myself) there was a connecting link out in the chain.

Let me put it this way: Theosophy, as

any good dictionary tells us, is basically an inner experience, a state of mind, and, we may add, a way of life and an outlook on events. This rests on, and is to some extent expressed in, a certain systematised and coherent philosophy which expresses much the same truths as are contained in Aldous Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy* but go very much further and fill in much more detail. But Theosophy as such is much greater than the expressed philosophy, because the latter is an intellectual structure, and as such, represents only one, foundational level, of theosophical experience. From it the serious student needs to work beyond the intellect into the deeper or higher levels which are the true theosophical experience. It is in this sense that I feel that Theosophy cannot be defined: it is so much greater than the stated philosophy that, while it contains the philosophy, it cannot be contained by that philosophy.

At the same time, I recognize the vagueness of saying it is 'undefinable'. And I propose to substitute the word 'confine' for 'define'. In this way the student can get his teeth into something clear. But, just as a person at ground level has a limited horizon, as he rises above the ground, that horizon expands until, presumably, a traveler in outer space has no limits apart from his own, to how far he can see.

The danger of saying that Theosophy is something of a creed lies in the fact that our minds tend to suffer from a form of entropy. They rise to a certain conceptual ceiling and are apt to stay there. Yet in all spiritual philosophy it is recognized that images, symbols, myths and the rest are not the truth, but ways to the truth which lies beyond them. So my purpose has been to try and stimulate our members not to rest in their ideas, but to play with them, study them anew, see them afresh — and so to make them live. There is no need to urge them to 'go back to Blavatsky': they need to go back beyond Blavatsky to Those Whose scribe she was. For she repeatedly tells us of her inaccur-

acy and fallibility, and out of loyalty to her we should at least give heed to what she says — even if it disturbs our entropic wish for a comfortable, closed system of thought.

Actually, and I can speak here with some experience, no Section or authority anywhere in the Society has ever tried to relegate HPB to a place secondary to those Dr. Wilks decries as 'neotheosophists' and perverters of the Faith. It is true that there have been times when her books have, by mismanagement, been out of print. But when I was in Adyar a year or two back a new edition of *The Secret Doctrine* was on the stocks, and negotiations were going on for a reprint by the TPH of *The Mahatma Letters*. On the other hand, certain of the 'neotheosophical' books were, I was told, not going to be reissued! So the TS is not as 'off-beat' as Dr. Wilks thinks.

It seems odd, however, that, whereas HPB's terminology was chaotic, and she often contradicted herself (Was it herself?) it is her imprecision (dare I say her indefiniteness?) which makes her books so very modern. On the other hand, the precise, categorical later books were often very definite indeed—and in a good many cases not at variance with anything HPB taught — and they are those which today do not sell to the modern enquirer. A queer paradox, this. But, if I may end on a personal note: if I am asked by an enquirer what he should read on Theosophy, I always suggest the most up-to-date books; and these very certainly include HPB's, and usually exclude those of the most precise and dogmatic period in the history of the TS!

So it seems that if we can see Theosophy as the great thing it is, we can say, both that it has (though it is not) a clear-cut philosophy, and also that, as the student understands this philosophy more and more deeply, it expands more and more, and, in that sense, is beyond both being confined and being limited by being defined.

Your sincerely

Laurence J. Bendit

*The Editor,*  
*The Canadian Theosophist*

Dear Sir:

Mr. Hoeller's letter in the March-April *Canadian Theosophist* insists that HPB had no definite teachings to promulgate. On the contrary, she came forward with some very definite teachings, such as, for instance, the teaching that there are seven principles in man. In this connection, the learned Brahmin lawyer, Subba-Row, waged a famous literary battle with her in which he sought to disagree and uphold the idea that there were only five principles. Thereupon, she replied with a long and brilliant article, in which she ignominiously defeated Subba-Row with proof that there were seven principles and not five; that the teachings about the principles being seven were fundamental and hitherto, carefully hidden.

Further examples of many definite teachings can be found in many of her writings. To say, therefore, that she brought no definite doctrines is very incorrect. However, her attitude towards definite teachings differed markedly from the attitude exhibited by some religions: she said that one who disbelieved was as right in his way as she was in hers. In other words, you had perfect freedom of thought and no hell-fire for disbelief: you just hadn't reached the stage where such truth was suitable.

It would be more correct, therefore, to say that she unearthed, by means of her unique genius, many of the age old truths, which had been totally obscured by centuries of priestcraft, ritualism and dead letter interpretation. As her pupils, it should be one of our duties to preserve these truths in their purity for the future generations.

Of course, there is also room for all types and conditions of speculation, but as Dr. Wilks in his excellent article affirmed, there must be a distinction drawn between the pure teachings of Theosophy as brought by the founders, on one hand, and the speculations of pupils who are attempting to understand what she gave us, on the other.

Yes, by all means we should be fearless investigators but we should be careful to arm ourselves not only with a thorough knowledge of her works but also with the moral training she made imperative.

Fraternally,

E. R. Harrison, LLB

☆ ☆ ☆

*The Editor,*

*The Canadian Theosophist.*

Dear Sir:

Although active professionally and a contributing member of the Society in Canada for many years, I have played no part in lodge affairs for over a decade past. The reason is not solely due to being "a Neo-Theosophist", and I am one. But largely as a result of a very sad conclusion, one that I came to while attending the Toronto Lodge, that a natural course of events would have to take place, and the society fade in importance and strength before it will be realized what a blunder was made in Canada as far back as 40 years ago.

The letter of Stephen A. Hoeller in your March-April issue brings all this home again. He writes, and I quote. "Assuredly the prolonged and unfortunate domination of the Society by the forces of Neo-Theosophy was a most regrettable state of affairs". Our friend Hoeller is badly informed.

Surely he must know that before the Besant-Leadbeater era, a period I very much enjoyed, there was Olcott, and he was dealt with likewise. Hence the famous Maha Chohan's letter of 1881 which rebuked the straight Theosophists of that day who had attacked Olcott for teaching Buddhism, not Theosophy, to the people of Ceylon.

It is my belief that if we took the Mahatma Letters, and examined them as I have done many times, we will find there abundant evidence that the Society was brought into being to influence the contemporary thinking of the active minority among Western publicists. And in many directions. Since Blavatsky we have had electric light, radio, aviation, pain killing drugs, and quite a re-

treat in religious orders with an orthodoxy. And it could be that the purposes of the Society are now 90% completed.

I do not think the successes of the American and British Sections can be attributed to other than their wise decision a quarter of a century ago not to enter into contentions. And the decline of the Canadian Section for this reason.

May I say that I joined the Theosophical Society in 1921. And when I left England in 1923 the Mahatma Letters were to be published. At that time a stiff antagonism was being shown in my Lodge to them. They might not be genuine. Could be not according to the "doctrines" of H.P.B. etc.

We will not return to better days until we give Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater full credit for what they did. For giving our cause a powerful lift in that vital era which followed 1921.

Yours truly,

Frederick E. Tyler, F.T.C.

*The Editor,*

*The Canadian Theosophist*

Sir:

Re: *Is Theosophy a Definite Philosophy*

It is a curious fact that some members of the Theosophical Society consider that stating that Theosophy is a definite philosophy is tantamount to saying that one must *ipsofacto* believe it. This is nonsense, of course. The Vedanta and the Adwaita, are definite philosophies; the Cartesian and the philosophy of Spinoza, the Spencerian and the Bergsonian philosophies - each and every one has its definite contribution to philosophic thought, but no one suggests that they have to be blindly accepted and believed.

The need for stressing that Theosophy, as declared in our day, is a definite philosophy, is, as the article in question was written to make clear, that at this time there is great danger of Theosophy becoming absorbed and lost in the popular variants which have so largely usurped its place as a subject of study. This is especially true

in the Adyar T.S.

To those who maintain that the Theosophical Society was founded simply to forward its declared "Objects" I would ask, Do you know of, or believe that there are any members who joined the T.S. because of its Objects and not because of an interest in Theosophy? The study of Theosophy and the use of its truths to help orientate our lives, is self-evidently the undeclared but the real purpose of the Society.

It was, and is, absolutely imperative that Theosophy shall not become a system of beliefs, of dogmas - a religion in short. Consequently the T.S. must be a strictly neutral body with no beliefs of its own, its aim, investigation in search of truth with Theosophy, as the Society's name implies, its chief target for investigation.

Theosophy was originally presented as theories to be investigated, not beliefs to be accepted, as the Maha Chohan's letter plainly states.

Of course, Mr. Slater is right. All blanket generalizations fall short of being strictly true. I am glad he was so fortunate as to find Secret Doctrine studies going on in a number of lodges in England. Our T.S. friends of the Four London Lodges who in the thirties united together to form the Phoenix Lodge for the express purpose of getting away from Neo-Theosophy and furthering H.P.B.'s Theosophy, with whom the Orpheus Lodge joined forces over a period of several years in an intensive effort to restore the original teaching, certainly found that *The Secret Doctrine* was a work which was almost unknown to many members of the T.S. at that time. And Lady Emily Lutyens Book, *Candles in the Sun*, describing life in the Society over many years, never even mentions *The Secret Doctrine* or *The Mahatma Letters*.

Mr. J. N. Poulin's suggestion that we should concentrate upon the Three Fundamentals of *The Secret Doctrine* is timely. Could we discover their many implications - deductions, we should say nowadays, and their practical application to human living,

new life and vitality would, we believe, enter the Movement.

To Dr. Bendit I would say that we know that many dictionaries still define Theosophy, as of old, as the personal knowledge of God. We are concerned with the Modern Theosophical Movement and the redeclaration of the Arcane Wisdom, which took place in it under the name of Theosophy. I am glad that now we agree that Theosophy has a clear cut philosophy. If now we can agree upon names, and keep Theosophy for the Esoteric Philosophy of the Brothers, and Neo-Theosophy for the later popular variants of the same, then we shall always know what is being referred to at any time.

W. E. Wilks,

Orpheus Lodge of the T.S. in Canada

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## BOOK REVIEW

*The Eternal Mystery*, by George H. Hall of Ojai, California in collaboration with Olive Brod, M.A., published by the author, 1961, 95 pages, board \$2.00, paperback \$1.60.

The author modestly states in his introduction that of what he has written he cannot say "I know"; his words express only his present understanding of what he has read or heard, or has discovered for himself. He does not claim to speak of mystical ideas in a novel way, but "each one says it differently and therein lies its value."

In the chapter, "The Importance of the Open Mind" he refers to the mind prisons which men constantly create and live in, political, religious, personal relationships and others, but "all prisons deny freedom . . . prisons built by the most beautiful and idealistic beliefs are prisons just the same. . . . One of the greatest services one person can render to another is to help him discover that he is thus imprisoned."

"Balance" is the word preferred by the author in writing of Karma and this is the same idea expressed in *Aphorisms on Karma*. "Karma is an undeviating and un-



erring tendency in the Universe to restore equilibrium, and it operates incessantly."

In "the Unknowable" the author recognizes that the final Mystery is beyond mental concepts and that direct experiences of Reality lies in a quality of consciousness above the thought processes. The experience of Reality cannot be communicated to others through words.

A companionable book for those concerned in mystical thought and one which is an offering of the essence of the author's experience over many years of study and meditation.

D.W.B.

### AN ALLEGORY

Walking within the garden of his heart, the pupil suddenly came upon the Master, and was glad, for he had but just finished a task in His service which he hastened to lay at His feet.

"See, Master," he said, "this is done: now give me other teaching to do."

The Master looked upon him sadly yet indulgently, as one might upon a child which cannot understand.

"There are already many to teach intellectual conceptions of the Truth," he replied, "Thinkest thou to serve best by adding thyself to their number?"

The pupil was perplexed.

"Ought we not to proclaim the Truth from the very housetops, until the whole world shall have heard?" he asked.

"And then - "

"Then the whole world will surely accept it."

"Nay," replied the Master, "the Truth is not of the intellect, but of the heart. See!"

The pupil looked, and saw the Truth as though it were a White Light flooding the whole earth; yet none reaching the green and living plants which so sorely needed its rays, because of dense layers of clouds intervening.

"The clouds are the human intellect", said the Master. "Look again."

Intently gazing, the pupil saw here and there faint rifts in the clouds, through which

the Light struggled in broken, feeble beams. Each rift was caused by a little vortex of vibrations, and looking down through the openings thus made, the pupil perceived that each vortex had its origin in a human heart.

"Only by adding to and enlarging the rifts will the Light ever reach the earth," said the Master. "Is it best, then, to pour out more Light upon the clouds, or to establish a vortex of heart force? The latter thou must accomplish unseen and unnoticed, and even unthanked. The former will bring thee praise and notice among men. Both are necessary: both are Our work; but—the rifts are so few! Art strong enough to forego the praise and make of thyself a heart center of pure impersonal force?"

The pupil sighed, for it was a sore question.

—Hieronymum

(First printed by William Q. Judge in *The Path*, October, 1893.)

### THEOSOPHY — A WAY TO FREEDOM

(Continued from Page 27)

of its Divine Source, it makes the further discovery that the Divine Will is also its own will—and the greater his progress, the more divine the state he has won, the greater his freedom of will. For at each step the true nature of his energies will become more apparent, the egotistical sense of separateness and self-importance will disappear and the essential unity of his will with that of the Divine Will will dawn upon the soul, and no longer desiring a selfish happiness, but rather the good of all creatures, his will will become that of Divinity, and even in this sense will be "absorbed in the Universal". For this is all that absorption, or Nirvana means, to recognize the unity of all, and to work in perfect harmony with the Will of the Divine. Then Nature "makes obeisance", Man becomes a divine "Creator" and takes a self-conscious part in the construction and government of the world".

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

BY ESME WYNNE-TYSON

We are continually hearing today of the need for the unification of the Churches, but little is said about the basis upon which they are to unite. The most obvious answer would be, of course, "Christianity", but even a cursory study of the New Testament and the works of the Fathers of the Early Church makes it obvious that no Church on the face of the earth is actually teaching the original Gospel of Jesus Christ today. For instance, for the first three hundred years of our era, the Church was pacifist, believing, or Origen put it in his *Contra Celsum* that the Founder of its Faith "did not consider it compatible with his inspired legislation to allow the taking of human life in any form at all" and this as we see, from Celsus's argument at the end of this book was the reason for the resentment and persecution the Christians suffered from a State usually noted for its religious tolerance. Marriage, too, in those early days was a concession to human weakness, not a sacrament; and chastity was the Christian Ideal. In addition, Irenaeus, Justin and Origen all testify to the spiritual healing practised in their times. What Church today includes these three vital ingredients of the original Christian Gospel?

One of the most scholarly churchmen of this century, the late W. R. Inge, put the position perfectly clear as regards the Roman Catholic Church when he wrote in *Christian Ethics and Modern Problems*:

The Roman Church is a most formidable corporation . . . But as an institution it represents a complete apostasy from the Gospel of Christ. In almost every particular it has restored that kind of religion to destroy which He suffered Himself to be nailed to the Cross."

Earlier in the same chapter he explains the nature of that religion in the words: "Catholicism, which on one side is a pagan-

ising of Christianity, is on another side a Judaising of it." And the most fatal element of the latter is the substitution of the God of the Old Testament for the all-beneficent Father of the New. As Inge put it:

The fundamental falsehood of Catholicism, began long before the Renaissance. The monopolist claim of the Western Church, which adds so much to its survival value, implies a monstrous conception of the character of God. It points straight back to the tribal deities of the old Semites, and to those parts of the Old Testament which are most alien to the spirit of the Gospel.

But this criticism of Catholicism applies also to the Protestant Churches. As a single instance of the Judaising influence, we may take the insistence on the observance of the Sabbath Day. In Protestant countries this is much nearer to the Jewish idea of the Sabbath than to the purely pagan observance of the Lord Mithras' Day established by Constantine and still practised in Roman Catholic countries. But the Early Christian Church believed and taught that Jesus had forbidden the observance of special Holy Days. As Origen puts it, in *Contra Celsum*: "To the perfect Christian all his days are the Lord's". Tertullian in his *Answer to Jews*, states that "to Christians Sabbaths are unknown", while Irenaeus tells us in *Against Heresies* that Jesus cancelled observance of the Sabbath.

But a far more serious Judaising of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which primarily taught that the way of salvation was the emulation of Jesus Christ by the putting on of his Mind, lies in the primitive and immoral teaching—so repugnant to Gandhiji and other ethically-minded thinkers—of vicarious atonement. This doctrine not only makes a monster of God, but has placed a stumbling-block in the way of spiritual evo-

lution by teaching that salvation can be experienced as the result of a good man, or deity, dying for the sins of the world on a cross, instead of through the self-purification and gnosis, described to Nicodemus by the Master as "the baptism of the water and of the Spirit"—the holy Spirit of Wisdom, symbolized in the Gospel of Mark, as it was in the earliest of the Mystery Religions, by a dove.

With this primitive Jewish belief in human sacrifice, on the one hand, and the pagan Eucharist which is all too obviously the omophagic rite of 'the feast upon the sacrifice' common to the cults of Dionysus, Mithas and similar sun-gods, on the other, there exists no common ground on which the Churches *can* unite, but only a collection of apostasies.

There remains, however, one possibility of establishing a basis for spiritual unification at a higher level than pagan rites and theological theories, and that is by means of a revival of the Philosophy of Religion, which, whether taught by Plato, Plotinus or Hegel, was always the rationalization of the one, universal Wisdom-Religion taught by the Gnostics, of whom Jesus was one, throughout the ages. As an instance, from the earliest times, the Mystery Religions featured a demi-God or Goddess descending either into the underworld, like Proserpine and Orpheus, or to a cave, like Attis or Mithras, their emergence and ascension to higher realms being a cause for rejoicing. This was rationalized by the Platonists and Neoplatonists, as well as by the Essenes as the descent of consciousness to matter or the alien natural world which demanded the swiftest possible transcendence of matter and the physical life and a return to the intellectual realms - the soul's true home.

The Neoplatonic, Mithraic Emperor Julianus makes this quite clear when in his *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods*, he describes Attis' defection; the Goddess-Mother's disapproval when he descends to the cave and begets in matter; the sad necessity for castration, or mental purification; fol-

lowed by the Hilaria when matter is abandoned for Spirit.

In *Origen and Greek Patristic Theology*, the Rev. W. Fairweather writes:

Neoplatonism . . . at the commencement of the Fourth Century became the prevailing philosophy in Christian as well as in pagan circles.

Had this meeting ground been openly recognized and preserved, religion might gradually have been purified of its baser superstitions and primitive practices, until only the pure Gnosis, or philosophy, remained. Had this natural evolution been encouraged to take place, religion would have made as much sense in 1961 as it did in the third century when it was rationalized by the luminous teachings found in the *Enneads* of Plotinus. As Dean Inge wrote in his book, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*: "It is to Plotinus more than to any other thinker that we owe a definite doctrine of spiritual existence."

But a jealous and power-loving Church was not prepared to share its glory with the hated and defeated pagan rival. When the Catholic Church was assured of its power, it did everything to denigrate, and separate itself from, the teachings of the pagans, even though this meant the departure from the Christian Truth itself, as it so frequently did - since the premises of Neoplatonic philosophy were almost identical with those of the Essenes from whose sacred writings, as we now know from the discovery of the Scrolls in the Caves of Qumran, Jesus must have learnt much of his wisdom. This link being unsuspected by the fanatical theologians who busied themselves in building the most fantastic doctrines on the Pauline rather than the Jesuine foundation, it is not surprising that scholars like the Emperor Julianus considered them either mad or fraudulent, and insisted as Gibbons put it in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that the Eastern bishops "neither understood nor believed the religion for which they so fiercely contended."

But the greatest human enemy to the spiritual evolution of Western mankind was undoubtedly the barbarian Emperor Justinian, so misleadingly called the Great, unless to deny and suppress the Truth is a sign of greatness. He had a passion, we are told, for theology, and a corresponding bitter hatred of philosophy and of those gnostics and heretics who endeavoured to maintain the Truth, despite the efforts of the theologians to pervert and obscure it. He it was who caused the synod to be held in order to anathematize Origen and fourteen propositions drawn from his writings, which included the unitarian view of God always found in the Wisdom-teachings, and the reasonable doctrine of the continuity of life as distinct from the absurd theory that a new soul is born with each physical body, which although it has a beginning, never has an end - an idea that conflicts both with science and reason.

In the article on Justinian in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* 1950, we read: "As no preceding sovereign had been so much interested in Church affairs, so none seems to have shown so much activity as a persecutor both of pagans and of heretics." It was he who finally extinguished the fire of Vesta, the Wisdom Goddess, so that she and her virgins could no longer remind the world of the ideal of chastity.

But his most fatal act was the closing of the Athenian Schools of Philosophy that had preserved the Wisdom-teachings since the days of Plato.

This deluded, meddlesome man seems to have attacked and banished Wisdom wherever it was found, enthroning in its place the reasonless, often insane, doctrines of the Catholic theologians. Small wonder that the Dark Ages swiftly followed upon his reign, for there remained no philosophy of religion to make sense of the increasingly involved and obscure theology of Churchianity.

As in every case of total persecution, the persecuted were driven underground, and Neoplatonism, the age-old Wisdom-philos-

ophy, was preserved by Gnostics, Kabbalists and mystics in many parts of the world. Johannes Scotus Erigena (c.815 - c.877), who was appointed head of the Court School of France by Charles the Bald, was one of the first to break the darkness. In his work, *De Devina Praedestinatione*, he reinstated philosophy by pointing out that it and religion are fundamentally one; and like the Platonists and Neoplatonists, he insisted that "evil is a mere negation of good - if God knew evil He would cause it because His knowledge and His will are identical." He reintroduced the theme of emanations and taught that the goal of life is "resumption into the Divine Being when the individual soul is raised to a full knowledge of God, and when knowing and being are one." Ibn Gabriol (c.1021 - c.1076), a Jewish Neoplatonist, reintroduced Greek philosophy into the West at the end of the Dark Ages.

About 300 years later, the Greek scholars who had fled to Italy when Constantinople was threatened by the Turks, founded, under the patronage of Cosimo de Medici, a Platonic Academy in Florence. It was, of course, from Italy that François I of France brought Neoplatonism to his highly receptive Court and so ushered in the Renaissance. From Italy, too, John Colet, who founded and endowed St. Paul's School, brought the New Learning to England, learning that produced the idealism of the European philosophers from Spinoza to Hegel, the latter's *Philosophy of Religion* being probably the most lucid exposition of Neoplatonism since the publication of *The Enneads*.

Like Johannes Scotus Erigena, Hegel stressed the inter-relatedness of Philosophy and Religion. He wrote:

Philosophy is not a wisdom of the world; it is not knowledge which concerns external mass, or empirical existence and life, but is knowledge of that which is eternal, of what God is, and what flows out of His nature . . . Philosophy therefore only unfolds itself when

it unfolds religion, and is unfolding itself in unfolding religion . . . thus religion and philosophy come to be one. Philosophy is itself, in fact, worship; it is religion, for in the same way it renounces subjective notions and opinions in order to occupy itself with God.

But in his day, as in ours, Philosophy had given place to materialistic science, and religion was unintelligible.

"The more the knowledge of finite things has increased," he writes, ". . . so much more has the sphere of the knowledge of God become contracted. There was a time when all knowledge was knowledge of God. Our own time, on the contrary, has the distinction of knowing about all and everything . . . but nothing at all of God."

Indifference to the subject of God in the early 19th century, as in the 20th, was considered the mark of the man of culture and intellect; yet, as Hegel points out, without this knowledge, there can be no religion, certainly no following of the teachings of Jesus Christ. So that by banishing philosophy, religion had defeated its own professed ends:

"It no longer gives our age any concern that it knows nothing of God; on the contrary, it is regarded as a mark of the highest intelligence to hold that such knowledge is not even possible. What is laid down by the Christian religion as the supreme, absolute commandment, 'ye shall know God', is regarded as a piece of folly . . . How, then, are we any longer to respect the commandment, and grasp its meaning, when it says to us, 'Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect' since we know nothing of the Perfect one?"

Justinian's determination to annihilate the rivals of Catholicism had successfully ensured that Western man was either irreligious or basely superstitious.

The despal and abandonment of Philosophy, or Wisdom, inevitably resulted in the despal of mind which is man's only means of contact with something higher than the external world.

"Thought", writes Hegel, ". . . is a rising up from the limited to the absolutely Universal, and religion is only through thought and in thought. God is not the highest emotion but the highest thought . . . The opinion that thought is injurious to religion, and that the more thought is abandoned the more secure the position of religion is, is the maddest error of our times."

But that error has been persistently represented to Christendom as the highest virtue, ever since the theologians, realizing that they had no reasonable arguments with which to reassure the Faithful, insisted that it was not necessary to understand, but only to believe.

We have an instance of this in the case of Mrs. Annie Besant who, at the end of the last century, during the period when she was married to an orthodox clergyman, took her doubts and questionings to the famous Doctor Pusey, fervently desiring to understand the Faith that she and her husband professed, and was told:

It is not your duty to ascertain the truth, it is your duty to accept and believe the truth as laid down by the Church. At your peril you reject it.

When we remember that this ecclesiastical brain-washing, or mind-negation, has been the policy of the Orthodox Church since the reign of Justinian, we cannot wonder at the atheism and moral idiocy of the present day.

Like the Mystery Religions, known as "The Perfections", and the Essenic teachings that preceded it, Christianity was originally intended to be a means of perfecting mankind through spiritual evolution based on Gnosis. But once it was forbidden to enquire into or to know the nature of God, there ceased to be an evolutionary goal to which men could evolve. This did not in the least trouble the Churchmen whose only concern and demand was that mankind should conform to the rulings and teachings of the Church. They failed to see that once people became educated out of their

superstitions - which has now happened to a great part of the world - they would have nothing to justify their allegiance to the Church.

Like all Neoplatonists, Hegel enthrones Mind as God, and teaches that thought is man's highest activity:

Man is exalted above all else in the whole creation. He is something which knows, perceives, thinks. He is thus the image of God in a sense quite other than that in which the same is true of the world. What is experienced in religion is God, He who is thought, and it is only in thought that God is worshipped.

The Founder of the Christian Faith told his followers, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free". But we come to a knowledge of Truth only through Wisdom or Philosophy.

"The aim of philosophy is to know the truth, to know God, for He is the absolute truth, inasmuch as nothing else is worth troubling about save God and the unfolding of God's nature."

It would seem then, that the only way for the Churches to find a basis for unification would be to return to the Philosophy which made sense of religion. But this demands a humility and teachableness notably lacking in organizations that proclaim these as major virtues. It also demands a willingness to lose life in order to find it, for undoubtedly much that the Churches call life, or substance would have to be abandoned by them when the light of Philosophy, or pure reason was turned on their theology. But without this spirit of humility and sacrifice - this true and so needed repentance - there can be no genuine unification but only an assembly of conflicting errors.

Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, by W. R. Inge (Hodder & Stoughton).

Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, by G. W. F. Hegel. Speirs & Sanderson Translation (Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner & Co. Ltd.)

## THE DOCTRINE OF REINCARNATION

(Continued from Page 34)

the same; it is the Ego that is reincarnated (Warren Allan: *The Timeless Moment*). According to the Theosophists it is the center of the life-consciousness, the Monad (Purucker).

The time duration between incarnations has been variously estimated. Empedocles gives it as 30,000, Plato in *Phaedo* 10,000, Herodotus 3,000, while other authors go down to only a few hundred years as the interval between existences.

The strongest argument for the doctrine of reincarnation is, according to Inge, that our present life is obviously too short when it comes to circumscribing our eternal destiny (*Mystery in Religion*). In a word, the reincarnation theory sums up all the laws of life. The horizon of our existence widens, because it makes us aware of the world's life on a grand scale. Eternity opens both behind and before us. The life-processes move in cycles, the present is not only something new, but at the same time a result and repetition of what has been. And the future may give like tasks but in different circumstances. The universe does not appear as chaos any more; we see order according to law, where justice rules, even where the underlying cause can only be guessed. As the sinner finds new opportunities to redeem past errors, so the earnestly striving one may look forward to a development of even higher attainments. This kind of justice can afford to spread out the atonement so that the burden shall not be too heavy on the guilty shoulders. In this way both justice and grace are combined. The Christian can see the loving hand and not only the punishing one. And lastly, there is hope of forgiveness without fear of eternal damnation. Some have said that the Indian doctrine of rebirth puts before man a hopeless perspective. But is it not rather a hopeless prospect that we should, after a short lifetime, weighed down with original sin, be consigned to eternal punishment?

The Phoenix myth, about the bird that

died in flames, out of which arose a new Phoenix, speaks rather of reincarnation than of the belief in immortality, even though there is a hint there as to the closeness of the two beliefs. The church dogma concerning the resurrection of the flesh and the New Testament's palingenesis could speak for this teaching, as also pre-destination understood as the result of actions in previous lives.

There is something strange about the reincarnation doctrine, says Magre (*Choses Cachees*). When it is described to certain persons who know nothing about it - it is at once accepted as something proved. But in others it inspires a strange dread. They prefer to push it away never again to speak about it and even deny that any one could possibly believe it.

(We are indebted to Mr. Iverson L. Harris for the translation of this article from the Swedish.)

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## THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN

According to *The Secret Doctrine*, the human period up to the year 1887 was 18,618,728 years. Until quite recently this enormous span of time was considered with incredulity, if not contempt, by Western scholars. New discoveries of human remains of extraordinary antiquity, however, along with modern methods of accurate dating, demand that the occult estimate be considered with increased respect.

When *The Secret Doctrine* was published in 1888, orthodox Christianity still accepted the chronological calculations of Bishop Ussher, who in the 17th Century had estimated that the Creation took place in 4,004 B.C. (An encyclopedia dated 1779 seriously discussed whether the precise date of the first day of creation was March 21 or September 21 of that year).

At that time also, although scientists varied in their reckonings from a few score thousand to several hundred-thousand years, they nevertheless categorically denied the possibility of Man's existence any earlier. In 1890, the English geologist Sir John

Evans, in an address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, said ". . . the chances . . . against the species Homo Sapien having existed in Miocene time (are) almost incalculable." This remained the general scientific opinion for almost the first half of the 20th Century.

Significantly as it now seems, that same year William Q. Judge wrote in *Echoes from the Orient*:

But the Theosophic Adepts insist that there are still in the earth bony remains of man, which carry his first appearance in a dense body many millions of years farther back than have yet been admitted, and these remains will be discovered by us before much time shall have rolled away.

Fresh discoveries have been frequent in the past few years, the latest being reported by the Associated Press on March 22, 1962. The news release stated in part: "Discovery of the remains of a strange creature—14,000,000 years old, and showing characteristics heading toward those of modern man—was announced today by a British scientist."

Science marches on—towards Theosophy.

T.G.D.

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## 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 Lotus*

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