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MODERNIZING CHRISTIANITY

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In *The Esoteric Character of the Gospels*, H. P. B. repeats a prophecy, "belief in the Bible *literally* and in a *carnalized* Christ will not last a quarter of a century longer." H. P. B. was optimistic; such beliefs have persisted much longer than a quarter of a century from the time of the writing of this, and "fundamentalism" is still the fixed belief of millions of Christians.

But the winds of change are blowing down the dusty corridors of religious thought and whirling in and out of half-forgotten storage rooms, disturbing the cobwebs and trash of centuries. The current liberalizing trend in Roman Catholicism is indicative of this. It received its first impetus from the late Pope John and the three sessions of the Vatican Council have brought out into the open issues which were simply not questioned before. The avowed purpose of the Council's meeting was to bring the Church up to date, and while no one will consider that this has been accomplished, the discussions have indicated clearly that there is a strong reform movement within the Church and that many Cardinals are in favour of more sweeping changes.

At the time of H. P. B. it would have been unthinkable that the subject of freedom of religious thought would have been given a hearing at any Vatican Council, but at the last session held in September 1964 this was one of the important and

controversial subjects. The more liberal-minded Cardinals, Cardinal Cushing of Boston, Cardinal Leger of Montreal and others asked that the Roman Church proclaim its belief in the right of all men to religious freedom. Cardinal Koenig of Vienna, in supporting this stated that without such a declaration the Church could not honestly denounce the denial of freedom in totalitarian states. "We must give to others what we claim for ourselves," declared Cardinal Cushing; but the declaration was not made.

It would be over-optimistic to expect that in Catholicism, freedom of religious thought would mean anything more than freedom to think within clearly defined limits. For example, the question of infallibility arose during an interview with Archbishop Roberts, J. C. on the B. B. C. recently. The Archbishop was asked whether there was any possibility of the Church abandoning its claim to infallibility. "No," was the reply, "if anyone is going to change it is the Protestants." He explained that "... if our Lord insists that He is God, then there must be someone to interpret His words. And so it is an authoritarian Church, but it is not merely an authoritative man." Apparently the position is that a group of men, designated as Cardinals, acquire by virtue of their rank, a supra-human wisdom in religious matters and their interpretations of "God's words" are always infallible. No wonder that an outspoken Catholic critic

of the highly publicized Ecumenical Council wrote, "I have often thought that religion was too serious a business to be left to the clergy."

It would be difficult to say whether even the more liberal minded Cardinals are acting as leaders in advancing religious opinion, or whether they are being urged forward from pressure within the body of Church members. A new book which voices the opinions of some prominent lay Catholics is *Objections to Roman Catholicism*, edited by Michael de la Bedoyere, himself a Catholic and former editor of *The Catholic Register*. The book was published in England where free-thinking, outspoken criticism of the churches is much more common than here; it is causing quite a storm. Catholic views on hell are ridiculed and the superstition of some of the rituals is attacked. The religious education of children is objected to on the ground that fostering the idea of guilt and punishment in a young child may cause irreparable damage.

But it is not only the Catholic Church and its teaching which is being subject to penetrating questioning; there is a questioning move going on within Protestantism also. *Honest to God* by the Protestant Bishop of Woolwich has caused much head-shaking, and the utterances of broad-minded clergy and laymen within the Protestant faith indicate a new approach to some of the basic questions of religion. Traditional Christian teachings are being questioned by students at Universities. A recently televised session of the Students' Christian Movement produced some interesting comments indicative of the students' attitude. The clergy was told that while most students had absorbed some church teachings suitable to childhood and adolescence, the Church had failed to give mature, sophisticated consideration to the queries of older students. The questions were raised, had the Church really anything to offer to young people? is the Christian faith competent to give adequate and reasonable answers to youth's religious problems? One young woman said that the church is such

a barren thing. The clergymen present endeavoured to reply, but their answers were not very satisfying, although there was an obvious and sincere desire to give meaningful replies. There seemed to be a genuine religious interest among those young people—one young man remarked that the students constituted a church within a church. One or two theosophical clues might have turned the discussion into new and more rewarding channels.

In Canada, both the Anglican Church and the United Church are moving to meet the problem of religion in modern society. The United Church has recently revised its Sunday School curriculum along broader lines. United Church clergymen are apparently allowed considerable latitude and individual judgment in their teachings. At a funeral service for a former Theosophical member the United Church clergyman in referring to the interest of the deceased in comparative religion said that he (the clergyman) was not one of those who believed that the Christian religion was the only way by which a man might find the end he sought, and that he did not doubt that other religions were equally valid paths to the goal. The Anglican Church in Canada recently commissioned the popular writer and T.V. Commentator, Pierre Berton, to write a book on the problems of the church today. Berton, who left the church years ago, was surprised to receive the assignment in view of his well-known views on religion, but apparently the Anglican Church wanted to have a clear-cut, objective and detached view on the problem. The book was published by the Church as it was written and it certainly has succeeded in its object of provoking discussion and arousing questionings.

Today a much more tolerant attitude is general within the larger Protestant churches than there was in H.P.B.'s time; some of this doubtless due to the complete indifference of modern men and women to issues which in earlier years were the sources of fierce religious antagonisms, but much of it is due to the rejection of narrow and rigid beliefs of

former days. There is a wider knowledge of the faiths of other men and a deeper respect for the tenets of non-Christian faiths. Many Christians today, while hesitating to disavow entirely the beliefs of centuries, acknowledge that religious freedom is a fundamental human right and refuse to condemn to eternal punishment those who reject the Christian approach. The world has moved, slowly to be sure, but it has moved; even as late as fifty years ago the peoples of the earth were divided into Christians and heathens, and while some Christians might be in danger of hell-fire, all heathens were certain of it.

One of the problems arising out of the modernizing trend in Christianity is that while it is easy to criticize and brush aside old beliefs, it is not as easy to provide a rational, soul-satisfying faith to take their place. The brooms of the rebels sweep away much trash, but when the room is cleared, it is left empty, a vacuum abhorred by nature. H. P. B. saw the danger of this when she wrote that ". . . theological Christianity must die out, *never to resurrect again* in its present form. This in itself" she said, "would be the happiest solution of all, were there no danger from the natural reaction which is sure to follow; crass materialism will be the consequence and the result of centuries of blind faith, unless the loss of old ideals is replaced with other ideals, unassailable, because *universal* and built on the rock of eternal truths instead of the shifting sands of human fancy."

A recent noted Protestant rebel is Dr. Alan Stuart who is (or rather was) a vicar in the Church of England. He resigned because he was no longer able to accept the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection and other Church dogmas. The Archbishop of Canterbury asked him how much of the Creed he believed; Dr. Stuart replied, "None of it." He said that in this age of science, no one who is intellectually honest can hold to such "pagan" beliefs. But a mystical interpretation of the words would enable any student of Theosophy to join with sincerity in the

recital of the Apostle's Creed. "Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried" and so on are words which in their inner sense convey significant truths.

Unfortunately, the mystical side of Christianity is a subject which is little known even by the clergy, and when a cleric rebels against literalness in Biblical interpretation he often ends up by rejecting the whole symbolic story of the life of Jesus. Early in the growth of the Christian faith the Church Father, Origen, stated that there were three levels of interpretation of the Gospels, 1st, *somatikos*, the physically literal which can satisfy only the unthinking mass of men; 2nd, *psychikos*, the psychic which advances to the secondary stage of symbolism and finally, *pneumatikos*, the truly spiritual or mystical in which alone may be found the true significance of the outer story. Unfortunately the Churches seem to be able to offer only the *somatikos*, and this level of interpretation, while it may suit the illiterate, has nothing for those who seek to understand the inner significance of the outer symbolism. The clergy would become true "Shepherds of Souls" if they could guide their followers into the mysteries of the *pneumatikos*, the esoteric philosophy of Christianity.

For esoteric Christianity is one facet of the diamond of the Gnosis, the central Wisdom of which religions are expressions. The mystics of one faith have ties of communication and understanding with the mystics of all religions. The closer one comes to the central Truth the less important become the outer forms of expression; it is only on the outer periphery that the rigidity of theology, ritual, dogmas and creeds confuse and divide those who would worship the one God. The modernizing trend in both Catholicism and Protestantism is a movement away from the limitations which men have imposed upon the universal spirit of Christ. It is a modest beginning but if it gathers strength "theological Christianity will die out". Its centuries-old traditions may

be preserved, but will be transformed and transfigured by the light of the Ancient Wisdom. The modernizing trend may be one step on the return journey to a universal

faith which all men can accept. Once the seed of independent enquiry has germinated and taken root in minds which are truth-seeking, the process is irreversible.

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

*To The 89th International Convention Of
The Theosophical Society
N. SRI RAM, President*

The motto of the Theosophical Society is "There is no religion higher than Truth". But then, what is Truth? Surely it is obvious that the word has manifold meanings; Truth includes different levels of experience and existence. But essentially it is the truth of the One Life, which is ever in action, in innumerable modes and aspects. It is the Life which is in us and Life in every other form. When life is understood thus, in terms of every conscious and unconscious movement which constitutes its action, then the understanding of life, starting with ourselves, must include both ourselves, the changes that take place within ourselves, as well as what exists and takes place in the external world, these two sides of it being obviously related. Therefore, to bring about a radical, sweeping change in the world, in society, there has to be first such a change in ourselves. That change, if it is to bring about a better world, and more harmony, must be in the direction of an orientation to truth understood in no superficial sense, and a turning away from fancies and ideas that take their rise from factors within ourselves of which we are hardly aware, and forces acting from without to which we lend ourselves blindly in a state of unawareness.

Surely this is the needed awakening that must precede the redemption of ourselves and our fellow-beings. It is really awakening from a state in which, though we are physically awake, we are inwardly asleep or dreaming. There are many things wrong in the world, here in India as much as else-

where. There are of course good people, intelligent people, who are doing their best to abolish those things which are evil and bad and rectify matters in one field or another. And it is the duty of all of us as Theosophists to help them in any way possible or join with them in their endeavors. But at the same time, we have to ask ourselves: Is there not something we can do, from which all else that is needed will follow, something by which a whole host of false ideas, fears and practices can be rooted out simultaneously? Such a change can take place only in that centre which is the individual, that is, in you and me. When we face the light, which is the light of Truth, all shadows must vanish, the shadows being caused by the cutting off of the light.

Whether it is war, despotism of State, cruelty to man and animals, corruption, decadence or anything else, before that whole brood of darkness can disappear, if not completely at least in large measure, there has to be the will or desire to get rid of them, and it is this will which will usher in the new era, the new cycle, which so many people in the world talk about and long for either consciously or unconsciously. It is to bring about this fundamental change that the Theosophical Society was launched into existence and still exists. The understanding we seek, when it is right understanding, will ring out all that is false in ourselves and ring in the true. If in the Society we seek to base all our efforts on Universal Brotherhood, it is because either intuitively or

through reasoning and enquiry we believe in that central truth as to the nature of Life of which Brotherhood is a pragmatic expression, a truth both profound, as involving in its realization the depths that are in ourselves, and at the same time practical, as determining our attitude, conduct and action in relation to our fellow-beings.

Given a knowledge of the One Life, knowledge that is intimate and true, all other knowledge will be seen to either follow as its expression or as related to it in one way or another. All Science, Philosophy and Religion are but aspects of a unity that synthesizes the diverse understandings they represent. In religion we speak of things intangible, Soul and Spirit, as realities of a transcendental nature, but in so far as our concepts are valid, they must also be realizations of a truth deep within ourselves. It is when the light within us is caused to shine, that life assumes its proper colors, and brings to pass that beauty which it must be the hope and dream and effort of every true Theosophist to realize.

Our whole approach to this Wisdom, this Truth, which we call Theosophy, has perhaps to be different from what it has been for many of us, if it is to become a living, flowing reality with beauty and significance. The approach—I use this word advisedly, as it suggests movement, openness and understanding—has to be such that it in no way fetters the mind and heart, or diminishes that freedom in which alone there can be the revelation of what is truest within ourselves, a release of those sensibilities and capacity which are needed to embrace the truth of all things in Nature and life. It has to be an approach to Truth or Life in which there is a constant newness, the feeling of intimacy that lies in direct knowing and experiencing, in which, because it is experiencing and not mere formal recording, there is ever a fresh depth and progress.

The wisdom which is released through living will be life itself in its purity. The extraordinary value of Theosophy, seen in its true nature, lies in the fact that whatever the conditions of a particular time or the

mentality of people at that time, it touches them where they are. It has as much meaning today for our lives and thinking as it had for the generations of yore. It seems to me that Theosophy can become dated only if it is a set of ideas that have been once propounded and are now carried on, even though they have no relevance to our present life and problems; *not* if it is equated with the nature of life itself, when it becomes an inexhaustible truth, expressed in certain terms in the past, full of suggestiveness and beauty even now to those who go behind the words, but at the same time a truth that must be discovered anew and understood by each individual and each generation in terms of its own experiencing.

If we make Theosophy into something we have learned, stored, put by, a verbal statement of facts, laws and beliefs, then it is bound to become stale after a time. It then represents a past which has been too long our companion, not the advancing present which spells fresh life, learning, moving forward. If Theosophy or *Brahma Vidya* is, as was said of old, primarily the knowledge of that by which all else is known, the nature of knowing that is ourselves, using the word 'knowing' to include every subtle intimation and response, then it must be as ageless as that nature, and whatever has been uttered as an expression of truth arising from it must be as valid now as it ever was. In so far as Theosophy stands for a knowledge of what is to be learnt by ourselves within ourselves, and along with this learning a clarification of ourselves, for the seeing and the relating of all things to ourselves in a new and different manner because of that clarity, then it must be always new and fresh. It was said once by a medieval knight: "The world is my oyster, which I with my sword will open." We might understand this declaration otherwise: The sword is the penetrating ray of intelligence, and the oyster is the mystery of life, of individuality, the mystery of Nature, of the other man, the other woman, of oneself. In the enterprise of knowing this world and expanding into it, there must ever be fresh-

ness, stimulation and joy. In short, Theosophy must mean to us not any formal knowing; it must be that form of knowing which is also life in its proper flow and freedom.

Dr. Henry A. Smith, National President of the United States Section, writes that "many of the old problems still prevail". He refers particularly to the confusion that exists in some places between Theosophy in its pure form, and other movements that either seek to express it in their particular colors and idiom or base their activities on certain of the Theosophical truths. This is a kind of confusion which can and should be avoided.

Dr. Smith also says: "In our Society we are moving forward from doctrines to concepts, from authority to freedom of thought, and to a greater individual experience of truth." Not only in the United States but also in various other countries there is this trend towards more open-mindedness, individual enquiry and understanding, a trend which is very much to be welcomed and encouraged.

Mr. V. Wallace Slater, General Secretary of The English Section records an increasing response from the general public and particularly from young people who he finds are attracted by the fact that "Theosophy gives meaning and purpose to living, untrammelled by partisan or religious dogma or intolerance".

Signor Roberto Hack, General Secretary of the Italian Section, speaks of the "atmosphere of thorough bewilderment" which existed last year, from which the Section is now emerging. The Section magazine, *Alba Spirituale*, is being used to give the needed help to the members by offering material reflecting the thought of the Founders of the Society.

The Theosophical Society has now completed 89 years. Although the membership is comparatively small, the influence of the teachings propagated through the Society has spread far and wide. We see evidence of it even in places where the word 'Theosophy' has never been heard. But then, it may be asked: What about the future? There are

those who, as they speculate as to the future, wonder whether the Society has not outlived its usefulness; there are others who think its future is absolutely assured, basing that view on some prediction or premise; there are many members whose hopes turn round H.P.B.'s statement that in the last quarter of this century, as in that of previous centuries, there will be a fresh impetus given to the world from those Sources which H. P. B. herself represented. It is assumed that the Society would be the medium through which the new life will flow, an assumption not made by H. P. B. herself, though she indicated that possibility, by pointing out the necessary condition for it.

It seems to me that the wisest and most practical line for us to take is to concentrate on what we can do *now* in a selfless spirit, with no expectations, using our best intelligence to help our fellow-members and the world at large, and acting in all ways—in the transaction of business, in deciding practical questions, in Lodge activities, and in how we understand and propagate Theosophy—in such a manner that whatever is the best that can happen, will happen. While we do our best in the present we can forget the future, taking in our stride whatever comes. The future is made in the present.

ESP DISCUSSED AT TORONTO LODGE AND ON LOCAL RADIO

A large audience greeted Dora Van Gelder of New York when she addressed Toronto Lodge on Sunday, January 10. The subject of her talk was "Extra-Sensory Perception—A Power Latent in Man."

The following evening, Miss Van Gelder participated in a 50-minute radio panel discussion on the same subject. It was featured on the Don Sims Show on CBL, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation owned Toronto station. The other guest was Allen Spraggatt, Church Editor of the *Toronto Daily Star*. Mr. Spraggatt is very knowledgeable on the subject of ESP and related interesting examples of phenomena which were unexplainable by science.

“NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH”

ERNEST WOOD

It has been too long since an article by Professor Wood has appeared in this magazine. We are therefore very happy to accept his invitation to publish these reminiscences (written August 7, 1964) which originally appeared in The American Theosophist, December, 1964. —Editors.

I much regret to find in the July 1964 issue of *The American Theosophist*, in an article by Dr. Hugh Shearman criticizing Mr. E. L. Gardner's booklet "*There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth*," a comment denying Mr. Gardner's statement that it was Mr. Leadbeater, not Mrs. Besant, who discovered Krishnamurti. I wish to inform Dr. Shearman and the readers of his article that it was Mr. Leadbeater who made the discovery. Mr. Leadbeater was the source of the proclamation of the coming of the World Teacher, but Mrs. Besant made the proclamation later with full confidence in him. In this matter Mr. Gardner was perfectly correct.

Having been present on the occasion of the "discovery" of Krishnamurti, I am in a position to give a direct eye-witness account of the matter. I am not trusting entirely to memory, as I still have with me a large collection of notes, among which is my article "Ten Thousand Hours with Mr. Leadbeater," written and published in a theosophical sectional magazine while he was still alive. There is also the very abbreviated account of the incident which was presented in my old out-of-print book unfortunately entitled (by the publishers in London), *Is This Theosophy?* I have, in fact, a large collection of notes and cuttings on this and kindred subjects, weighing no less than 30 pounds—a mine of information which may possibly be sorted and edited by someone after my death.

Let me now proceed, then, to the defense of my old friend, Mr. E. L. Gardner, and what he has written in his pamphlet "*There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth*," every

bit of which I think I can endorse—remark- ing incidentally that he is quite possibly the oldest living Theosophist, aged 94, and has all along, since 1907, been very active in the movement in England.

Mr. Leadbeater came to Adyar from Italy early in 1909. Already at Adyar, I soon came to know him well and helped him to clear up his arrears of correspondence—some hundreds of letters from all over the world, mostly asking for occult assistance, which he freely gave, refusing outright the offers of considerable money gifts in this connection, which were occasionally made. We used to work together at his desk or table—as the case might be—up to as much as fourteen hours a day, perhaps an average of ten or twelve. In the evening, after 5:00 p.m., we used to knock off for an hour or so and go to swim in the Bay of Bengal. After a while, a group of boys began to come and watch us, and a little later they joined us in the water, at the invitation of one of our group of four, which included Mr. J. van Manen, from Holland, who was an old friend of Mr. Leadbeater's, and a young South Indian Brahmin graduate of Madras University named Subrahmanyam Aiyar, who had a room near mine in the Indian Quadrangle at Adyar.

One evening, Mr. Leadbeater, on our return to his room after our swim, told me that one of the boys had a remarkable aura. I asked which one, and he said it was the boy named Krishnamurti. I was surprised, for I already knew the boys, as they had been coming to me and to Subrahmanyam in the evenings for help in connection with their school home work, and it was evident

that Krishnamurti was not one of the bright students. Then Mr. Leadbeater told me that Krishnamurti would become a spiritual teacher and a great speaker. I asked, "How great? As great as Mrs. Besant?" He replied, "Much greater." And shortly after that he said that Krishnamurti would be the vehicle for the Lord Maitreya, the coming Teacher, who had inspired Jesus. He was directed to help in training the boy for that purpose, which would be fulfilled, he told me, "unless something goes wrong." This I want to emphasize, in justice to Mr. Leadbeater. He wrote to Mrs. Besant, who was then abroad, telling her of his "discovery." The following is an extract from his letter to her, dated September 2, 1909:

"Naraniah's children are very well behaved, and would cause us no trouble; van Manen and I have taught some of them to swim, and have also helped the elder with English composition and reading . . . it seems to me that if we are to have the karma of assisting even indirectly at the bringing up of one whom the Master has used in the past and is waiting to use again, we may as well at least give him the chance to grow up decently."

Later, the plan did go wrong in his eyes.

We may now return to the development of Krishnamurti's education. Krishnamurti's father came to Mr. Leadbeater one day in great distress. I was present. He said that the boy had been treated very roughly at school. It was true that he was a very dreamy boy and therefore not good at his lessons, but this cruelty was really unbearable. Mr. Leadbeater's advice was simple: "Take him away from the school."

This was not practical, the father replied, since the schools were registered by the Government, and if a boy did not pass through this Government system he could not afterwards take up any of the traditional occupations of the literary classes—government service, the law, medicine, engineering, teaching, etc.

Mr. Leadbeater, obviously much troubled, then said, "But anyhow you cannot allow

that cruelty to go on. And it is all the worse in the case of such a sensitive boy."

Regarding Krishnamurti as one who was destined to become a great spiritual teacher, Mr. Leadbeater then added that if the father liked he would write to Mrs. Besant and ask her interest in the boy's career. She might probably arrange for him to be educated in England later on—the desire of the heart of many Indian fathers for English education brought in its train considerable economic and social advantages in those days. In the meantime, he and his friends would see that Krishnamurti did not lack private tuition, pending Mrs. Besant's return.

The father accepted this solution of his difficulty, and the result was that Krishnamurti and his younger brother, Nityananda, became constant members of our party. Several people volunteered to give them private tuition, two subjects falling to my lot.

The following is an extract touching on this subject, from a letter from Mr. Leadbeater to Mrs. Besant dated October 14, 1909.

"Naraniah has had a providential difference of opinion with his schoolmaster, who seems to have been utterly inefficient, so the two boys in whom He is most interested are at present at home, and I am utilizing the opportunity to have them taught as much English as possible, taking them myself when I can spare the time, and getting Clarke, Wood, Subramania and others to assist . . . When you are here I shall be bolder, and can do more of what He wishes."

In Mrs. Besant's reply to Mr. Leadbeater's letters, and with reference to this trouble, she approved of the arrangement that had been made and, on her return to Adyar from abroad, she accepted legal guardianship of the two boys.

Some months later Mrs. Besant went to pay visits at several places in the north of India, including a long stay in Benares, where she had a bungalow of her own near the Central Hindu College, in the management of which she was one of the most prominent figures. She took the two boys

with her, to give them experience. There were then frequent gatherings and meetings in Mrs. Besant's bungalow, in which Krishnamurti was caused to play a prominent, though characteristically simple and gentle part. It was at those meetings that various movements which culminated in "The Order of the Star in the East" were born.

While Mrs. Besant was still in Benares, I had occasion to make a trip into Telugu country for about a week. I arrived back in Adyar in the early evening and immediately went over to Mr. Leadbeater's room, as usual—a new apartment, upstairs, to which he had comparatively recently moved. He was typing away on his little Blickensderfer. He looked up with a greeting, continued typing for a few minutes, and then finished with a flourish and an air of great satisfaction. He gathered his papers together while rising from his roll-top desk, and came over to the square table in the center of the room where he usually sat to work. He put the typewritten manuscript into my hands and told me it was Krishnamurti's first book, and that he was surprised at such early publicity.

Krishnamurti had made a great impression upon some members of the staff and some senior students of the Central Hindu College, particularly the then principal, Mr. G. S. Arundale. Some of them had been at meetings in the evenings in Mrs. Besant's bungalow, and at these he had been answering questions for them, and giving them something from the notes which he had made of his morning memories. The notes had now been put together, and here was the result, a little book. Would I take it home with me and tell him—Mr. Leadbeater—in the morning what I thought of it?

The Introduction began: "These are not my words; they are the words of the Master who taught me." Next day I delivered my opinion—a delightful little book, but extremely simple. Would the instructions contained in it be sufficient to bring one to the "Path proper," to the "First Initiation," which Mrs. Besant had described in her

books? Yes, said Mr. Leadbeater, more than that; if completely carried out, these instructions would lead one to Adeptship itself.

I remarked that there were one or two curious things about the manuscript. It was very much in Mr. Leadbeater's own style, and there were some sentences which were exactly the same as in a book of his which we had already prepared for the press. He told me that he wished indeed that he might have been able to write such a book himself. As to the sentences I mentioned, he said he had usually been present when Krishnamurti was being taught in his astral body by the Master; he remembered these points and had made use of them in meetings of Theosophists, and so I had noted them down and had incorporated them into the material of his book, *The Inner Life*. As to style, he said, it was but natural that he himself should have adopted something of his own Master's style after himself being taught by him for so many years.

I prepared the little book for the press and it was duly published, after Mrs. Besant's return from Benares, under the title which she gave to it: *At the Feet of the Master*. It created a sensation, and practically a new cult within the Theosophical Society, in view of its containing the actual instructions of one of the Masters, and being the output of a child who was to become in effect the very incarnation of the Master of Masters Himself.

Mr. Leadbeater did not publicly proclaim these facts. Though he was the first to see and say that Krishnamurti would be the vehicle for the coming of Christ, with the reservation already mentioned ("unless something goes wrong," which I on the spot put down in writing), he left all the proclaiming to Mrs. Besant. As I have indicated, he informed Mrs. Besant by letters of his findings and afterwards did as she wanted. He was in fact anxious to avoid publicity and quite anxious when formal groups were established to assist in the preparation. It was not his own desire that there should be any

proclamation until Krishnamurti had finished his education. However, Mrs. Besant did proclaim it.

I hope that it is now clear that it was Mr. Leadbeater who "found" Krishnamurti and announced his destiny, and that Mrs. Besant later "proclaimed" the event and promoted the project with conviction and enthusiasm.

She told me afterward that she had an arrangement with Mr. Leadbeater. She accepted his clairvoyance as if it were her own and he loyally supported her decisions as to what to do. Later, especially when in Europe in 1925, she made pronouncements of great import. She said that the coming of the Lord was near at hand and that he had chosen twelve apostles, seven of whom she named. This time, she said, the apostles were to be prepared for him in advance and would also help to prepare the way for his coming. This news reached Mr. Leadbeater in Sydney while I was sitting with him. He was visibly distressed, as he did not believe in it, and said to me, "Oh, I do hope she will not wreck the Society!" He knew that she was taking statements from others as well as himself. Still, Mr. Leadbeater kept to his contract loyally and did not let this out in public, except on one occasion, when he was caught by surprise in a question meeting. It was only after Mrs. Besant was so ill as to be unable to carry out her daily work as President—which I used largely to carry out under her direction, as I was then Recording Secretary of the Society, and used to go to her almost daily for this business—that Mr. Leadbeater became at all active in what may, for brevity's sake, be called theosophical politics. The announcement of the twelve apostles was only one of several statements which he told me were wrong and were due to her impulsive eagerness. I need not give details here.

So, on item 1 of the "refutations" of Mr. Gardner, I wish to add my testimony that he was perfectly correct. I may add that his "unconscious kriyashakti" theory is undoubtedly correct also. I have found and physically confirmed its operation in many clairvoyants who were coloring what they

saw, or in some cases what they thought they saw, being affected by their own desires, though sincerely unaware of the process in themselves. Some people have such strong "visualization" that sometimes, even when they do actually obtain something quite correctly by clairvoyance or by intuition, they are likely to embellish it from their own subconscious mind and cannot distinguish it from actual seeing or hearing. It was on this ground that Mr. Gardner wrote that the Lord Maitreya and the Masters "with whom Mr. Leadbeater was on such familiar terms" (note this qualification made by Mr. Gardner) were his own thought creations—though with no intention to deceive, he believed. This second item of Dr. Shearman's criticism of Mr. Gardner's booklet is only an expression of opinion—deeply considered in a "forty years' perspective." I can testify that the lives of Alcyone—with the exception of one in which Mrs. Besant collaborated—were the work of Mr. Leadbeater alone, mostly written down by me while he was looking and talking and answering my incidental questions. I too came to the conclusion that Mr. Leadbeater then, and on many other occasions, was largely "seeing his own thought-forms," and this not merely on theory, but on material evidences—again too much to mention even briefly here.

The third item taken up by Dr. Shearman relates to Mrs. Besant's shutting off of her psychic powers in 1912. This does not bear on the present question, as there was no hard and fast date in this matter.

The fourth item of Dr. Shearman's criticism relates to *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, later published, and especially to Letter No. 10. That letter was inconsistent with Mr. Leadbeater's master-image. My personal contribution on this point is that Mrs. Besant certainly had a copy of the Mahatma Letters—at least all those concerning teachings and therefore including Letter No. 10. This I know because, in 1909, she lent them to me to read, with the proviso that I must not take them out of her room. I did not see a set among Mr. Lead-

(Continued on page 23)

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to report that Mr. James S. Straw, a member of Toronto Lodge since 1946, passed away on January 23 after a lengthy illness and a prolonged stay in hospital.

Word was received only recently of the death on Oct. 12 last of Mr. Peter Sinclair, a most active and prominent member of Montreal Lodge, and formerly on the Executive of the Canadian Society. The report from Montreal Lodge states that "His family requested a Theosophical funeral service which was conducted by the President, Mr. Fred Griffiths. All active members turned out for this service. For three and one half years he led our *Secret Doctrine* class. His understanding of the *Doctrine* was remarkable and he explained the occult teachings in a very clear and understandable manner. He had been a member for nearly forty years. He was a Master Mason."

Montreal Lodge also reported the death of Mrs. E. Holland who joined the Society in October, 1926. Mrs. Holland had been on the inactive roll for several years.

* * *

Plans are actively under way for a second Inter-American Theosophical Congress to be held this year in Buenos Aires—tentative date, Sept. 25. (details of the work of the first Congress, held in Mexico City in Nov., 1963, were reported by the Canadian representative, Mrs. H. Barthelmes, in our issue of Jan.-Feb. 1964). The President, Mr. N. Sri Ram, will be at this year's Congress. The definite date and the complete program will be announced as soon as received.

* * *

At its meeting in January, the Canadian Executive adopted a proposal to offer to Canadian University Libraries complete sets of all the works of Madame Blavatsky, including *The Collected Writings*, Vol. 10 of which has just been issued. A few remain-

ing sets of *The Canadian Theosophist* will also be offered to those University Libraries which may wish to have them.

* * *

Another appeal has been received from the Theosophical Group of Friends of Tibet for assistance in carrying on the work of helping thousands of displaced children from Tibet who are now in India, Sikkim, Butan and Nepal. Since the last appeal in 1963 much has been done, but this is only the beginning of what must be a long continuing effort; funds and supplies are urgently needed. Financial donations may be sent directly to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Dharamsala, Punjab, India, or to the Secretary of the Tibetan Homes Foundation, Mrs. R. D. Taring, "Gadenling", Happy Valley, Mussoorie, U. P., India. Parcels of gifts of supplies, knitting wool, garments of all kinds, stationery, educational games and other gifts, should be addressed to Mr. K. S. Gupta, Central Relief Committee, 11A. Rouse Ave. Lane, New Delhi, and marked for Mrs. Taring of the Tibetan Homes at Mussoorie, or for the nursery at Dharamsala. This is a very worthy cause and all donations will be welcomed.

* * *

Montreal Lodge held its Annual Meeting on January 26 and its officers were re-elected for 1965; President, Mr. Fred Griffiths, Vice-President, Mrs. Roth, Treasurer, Mrs. B. Scott, and Secretary, Mrs. M. Howard. At this meeting, the General Secretary was nominated for this position for the year 1965-66.

* * *

I have much pleasure in welcoming into the fellowship of the Society three members who joined through Toronto Lodge, Mrs. Edythe L. Fennell, Mr. E. P. Harding, and Mr. Stephen L. Peer. And I am also happy to welcome as a member of the Society in Canada, Mrs. Sylvia Barclay, who was demitted from The Theosophical Society in England.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

The Editors,
The Canadian Theosophist

As a reader of *The Canadian Theosophist* I have been following the discussion between Dr. Shearman and some Brethren who have welcomed the issue of the booklet *There is No Religion Higher than Truth* by Brother Gardner. I consider it to be my duty to point out some inaccuracies in Dr. Shearman's statements.

(1) On more than one occasion he has stated that the collection of letters published by C. Jinarajadasa as *The Early Teachings of the Masters* is based on the collection of such letters in the possession of C. W. Leadbeater. This is not exact. In the preface to his book C. Jinarajadasa writes that it was compiled from a copy-book belonging to C. W. Leadbeater and from three copy-books belonging to Miss Francesca Arundale. And—most important—Jinarajadasa adds that Miss Arundale's copybooks were much more complete than Leadbeater's. As far as we know we have then no proof that Leadbeater did know the famous Letter 10. This proof could only be obtained by comparing the two manuscripts, which should be found in the Adyar archives.

(2) In his letter to the Editors published in *The Canadian Theosophist* for Nov.—Dec. 1964, Dr. Shearman states that Letter 134 was first published in *The Path* by W. Q. Judge in 1893 (?—actually 1895). This is true, but not in the way suggested by Dr. Shearman. W. Q. Judge published an *extract* of the original letter by H.P.B. to Sinnett. The *complete* letter is that which we read now in *The Mahatma Letters*. In denying the authenticity of this letter (following the illustrious examples of Olcott and Annie Besant) Dr. Shearman simply states that H.P.B. was a liar. And this is no novelty, in the T.S. as well as outside. But in *The Theosophist* for January, 1909, there is printed a letter by H.P.B., dated November 25, 1881, in which she discusses the stir created among the Allahabad Theosophists by the Letter above mentioned. And she

FM Stations in Canada have been requested to play Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" on White Lotus Day, May 8, in commemoration of Madame Blavatsky. H.P.B. was a brilliant pianist and the Sonata was one of her favourite compositions.

—D.W.B.

ends saying that "it is only bigots or *atheists* who could object to what was said by the Mahatma."

Actually Dr. Shearman suggests W. Q. Judge's forgery; but here again we have the strange fact of H.P.B. (with the Mahatmas) and W.Q.J. standing or falling together, both bound to the same destiny, both loyal to the same ideals, both accused of the same misdoings. And as at first H.P.B. was a "fraud", then the turn of Mr. Judge came, and now it is the Mahatma Letters that are "forged", "unreliable", and so on. The motives and the aims of all this have always been clear.

(3) Dr. Shearman quotes very often a phrase by H.P.B. saying that "it is hardly one out of a hundred occult letters that is ever written by the hand of the Master" — etc. But to be fair one should quote the *whole* text in which that phrase appears, and in so doing it acquires a different and fuller meaning:

We have been asked by a correspondent why he should not "be free to suspect some of the so-called 'precipitated' letters as being forgeries", giving as his reason for it that while some of them bear the stamp of (to him) undeniable genuineness, others seem from their content and style, to be imitations. This is equivalent to saying that he has such an unerring spiritual insight as to be able to detect the false from the true, though he has never met a Master, nor been given any key by which to test his alleged communications. The inevitable consequence of applying his untrained judgment in such cases would be to make him as likely as not to declare false what was genuine, and genuine what was false. Thus what *criterion* has anyone to decide between one 'precipitated' letter, or another such letter? Who except their authors, or those whom they employ as their *amanuenses* (the *chelas* and disciples), can tell? for it is hardly one out of a hundred 'occult' letters that is ever written by the hand of the Master, in whose name

and on whose behalf they are sent . . . (etc.) (1)

Dr. Shearman has elsewhere (2) defined the Mahatma Letters as "Dead Letters". The only sense these words may have is one already considered by H.P.B.: explaining why she could not go back to India, in a letter addressed "To my Brothers of Aryavarta" (3) she says:

. . . the invitation came too late; neither would my doctor permit it, nor can I, if I would be true to my life-pledge and vows, now live at the Headquarters from which the Masters and Their spirit are virtually banished. The presence of Their portraits will not help; They are a dead letter.
—Roberto Fantechi

- (1) *Lucifer*, October, 1888.
- (2) See *The Theosophical Journal*, Nov.-Dec., 1964.
- (3) See *Theosophy*, May, 1947.

☆ ☆ ☆

The Editors, The Canadian Theosophist

I must cush a snook with the implications in Mr. Carter's article on psychism, (C.T. Jan.-Feb. '65) or at least what seem to be the implications, that experimentation with said psychic is quite in order for newcomers.

According to H.P.B. and one of her chief authorities, it isn't in order for *anybody*. In addition to her own words, *The Voice of the Silence* says:

"The name of Hall the second is the Hall of Learning. In it thy soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled . . . If thou wouldst cross the second safely, stop not the fragrance of its stupefying blossoms to inhale. If freed thou wouldst be from the Karmic chains, seek not thy Guru in those Mayavic regions . . . And having learnt thine own *Agyana* (ignorance) flee from the Hall of Learning. This Hall is dangerous in its perfidious beauty, is needed but for thy probation. Beware, Lanoo, lest dazzled by illusive radiance thy Soul should linger and be caught in

its deceptive light . . . The senses it bewitches, blinds the mind, and leaves the unwary an abandoned wreck." This is the "lower Iddhi," the realm of clairvoyance and psychism in general.

It has always been taught—and too often proven—that for any proper development of psychic faculties a certain preliminary is necessary, and that is mastery of the spiritual first. A school of thought which seems to have arisen with James Pryse, holds that the psychic must be worked *up through* in order to reach the spiritual. In the above sense, it doesn't have to be worked up through; you have to find out that you *can't* find out anything reliable or safe there, then get the hell out. That is to say, if you happen to have those propensities naturally. If you don't have them, don't try to get them, and consider yourself lucky.

The geography is misconstrued; the spiritual is everywhere, not above or below; and its mastery consists of the prosaic elimination from your nature of pride, ambition, lust, anger, and greed. Prosaic; but for every one who really succeeds in it, thousands lose their lives or sanity. That is the hazard of chelaship undertaken too soon. I don't have to rely on the *Voice* or H.P.B.'s other statements; I have watched this going on for 53 years.

Some people misconstrue the Third Object as meaning *personal* experimentation with the psychic. Considering H.P.B.'s warnings, it means study and observation. A learned Judge, being asked whether he had ever tried Finnegan's whiskey, said "No, but I have tried a lot of people who did try it." I am not personally entirely unacquainted myself with Finnegan's whiskey, but everything I know about it corroborates the Judge. A lot of authorities keep learning and learning by studying automobile accidents; but these same authorities don't learn by getting into them; they learn by standing on the sidewalk and letting other people do the experiments and be shoveled into the ambulance.

To the Movement in general, the real issue is that neglect of H.P.B.'s warnings is

exactly what led to the great neo-theosophical catastrophe which rendered our work virtually useless at the time when mankind needs it most. Leadbeater's visions were not inventions; he saw them, all right, but failed to realize that they were of the "lower Iddhi," combined products of his subconscious, of his early church fantasies, his wishful thinking, and finally, of telepathic projections by dugpas. No clairvoyant can be safe against any of these things unless trained personally by an Adept, and he will not get the chance for that until and unless he qualifies on the above points. (And unless he lives through the ordeal.)

Some insecure people who are always trying to prove something about themselves, find the "danger" of this stuff a lure and sneer at wiser ones. I never found a need to prove anything by hunting up danger; it always came along by itself, and I have had enough of it to satisfy me without trying for "psychic development." Anyway, a few things I *have* learned, and some of them are what scare me and what don't. And among those which scare me is any possibility of responsibility for interesting people in the "psychic," and also a failure to speak up when the occasion arises, no matter who is hurt.

I have no objection to anyone going to hell in his own way, since it is usually evident that that is the only manner in which he can learn. But the unlearned and the unwary are entitled to know which way is north and which is south before they start travelling. I have had—and have—too many cases under observation to doubt which is which myself.

Of course these people who follow the psychic line scorn the wary characters as having only second-hand knowledge and unqualified to comment. But assuming that one *does* have some personal knowledge and experience of these matters, he is not going to ask anyone to believe anything on his own say-so; unless he is a pretender or very unsophisticated in human nature.

My own study, observation, and exper-

ience, whatever that may be, have convinced me not only of the truth of H.P.B.'s warnings, but that short of an Adept, *no* clairvoyance is to be trusted, without corroboration and substantiation on the objective physical plane. One of the best of them might be right 99 times in succession and the hundredth observation be wrong—perhaps fatally so. And how does one know when an Adept is speaking? If he *is* speaking — and expecting to be believed — he isn't an Adept.

—Victor Endersby

Mr. Endersby writes that Point 6 of his last letter (C.T. Jan.-Feb. '65) should have concluded with "These are only two striking examples among innumerable others."
—Eds.

☆ ☆ ☆

An article entitled "Dead Letters" by Hugh Shearman appeared in the Nov.-Dec. 1964 Theosophical Journal. It covered in a slightly expanded form Dr. Shearman's views expressed in his letter to The Canadian Theosophist (Nov.-Dec. 1964).

We reprint the following replies which were published in the Jan.-Feb. Journal.

As a member of the Theosophical movement for some forty-five years I am profoundly disturbed at the tenor of Dr. Shearman's article in the November - December *Theosophical Journal*, and in the general tenor of this issue in its consistent though subtle denigration of the Founders of that movement. Your Society, which claims to be the original Society, was founded by H. P. Blavatsky, Col. H. S. Olcott and W. Q. Judge. The teachings we call Theosophy came from those three persons and their writings, from A. P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*, largely vouched for by the Masters, and from private letters to Sinnett and others known as *The Mahatma Letters*. Collectively this magnificent range of teaching from the immemorial Wisdom forms Theosophy, and anything substantially different should be promulgated by some other name. I know of nothing written within the movement since

that date which is comparable in reach and range with *The Secret Doctrine*, and nothing which even claims to proceed from personal, direct, spiritual experience of those truths on their own plane. Annie Besant, whom I knew well, brought some of them, the easier ones, down to the plane of the intellect, and taught them in magnificent English prose. C. W. Leadbeater taught on the psychic plane lower still, to which it would seem his inner vision was limited.

Recently, however, there have been signs of awakening, a move to study the original teaching, and with the intuition as distinct from the "scientific" mind, and some of the hundreds, maybe thousands, who left your Society in disgust at its entanglements in other interests, Masonic, Christian, Messianic and the like, myself included, have been watching anxiously to see if something of the original spiritual life-impulse remains to be worth stimulating.

Now comes a new, and it seems to an outsider concerted attack on the Founders of the movement and the validity of the teaching, in favour presumably of psychic vision and the easy path of watered-down and comfortable principles, many of which the Masters and their agents would, I believe, deny. Of course *Isis Unveiled* is immature; its author said so. Of course there are mistakes in the 1300 pages of *The Secret Doctrine*, and in the transcription of the Mahatma Letters. Is all that mighty range of occult teaching to be put in the dust-bin because its author is dead? Is the teaching of Jesus, of Krishna, of the Buddha to be likewise scrapped in favour of A.B. and C.W.L. who happened to die more recently?

As H.P.B. said in *The Key to Theosophy*, "To the mentally lazy or obtuse, Theosophy must remain a riddle; for in the world mental as in the world spiritual each man must progress by his own efforts". If, therefore, Theosophy as given out by the Founders is too hard for members of the present Society let them seek the warmth of something easier.

—Christmas Humphreys

The article with the misleading and mischievous title *Dead Letters* in the November-December issue of this *Journal* is so ill-informed it is difficult to credit that Dr. Shearman wrote it!

As it is, however, being dealt with at length by a Trustee I need mention only one point of which I have personal knowledge — the Letter number 10 in the 1923 edition. I knew Sinnett well and during an evening spent with him (a year or so before his death) he asked me if I would like to see the Letters. Eagerly I agreed and then spent a thrilling hour looking through them with him.

Some of the Letters were addressed to Hume. These Sinnett saw, as Hume saw those that came to Sinnett. Before returning the No. 10 (a very significant and important communication) Sinnett copied it word for word—and that is the copy used for the book. As its contents are in keeping and harmony with all other references to the same subjects—in other Letters, as also in *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*—there is not the slightest reason for suspecting this Letter to contain anything other than the Master K.H.'s views. I know, too, of Sinnett's meticulous care of detail both in writing and speech.

—E. L. Gardner

BOOK REVIEW

Philosophy, Theosophy, Parapsychology. Some essays on diverse subjects by J. J. Poortman. Published 1965 by A. W. Sythoff, Leyden, Holland. 132 pp. Price 12.50 f. (Approx. Canadian equivalent: \$3.75).

Until the publication of this book, Dr. Poortman's work was represented in the English language only by a few isolated articles. The eminent Professor of Metaphysics "in the spirit of Theosophy" at Leyden University has deserved a wider reading public, to say the least.

As the title suggests, this is a selection of papers on a variety of subjects all falling within the scope of Theosophical enquiry.

They were written over a long period and range from warm, personal feelings, ("The Home") to abstract metaphysics.

The papers on philosophy bear the stamp of confident authority and serve to remind us how much this subject has been neglected in modern Theosophical study. Professor Poortman also writes interestingly and with originality on parapsychological themes. "The Feeling of Being Stared At", for instance, describes an ESP experiment in a relaxed style which should be a model to others writing in this field.

It is unfortunate, however, that when dealing with Theosophy the author gives the impression of limited acquaintance: unwarranted importance is given to the views of leaders in the early years of this century, those who chose to ignore the stimulating challenge of the founders; some proposals in an essay on "Objects and Object of the Theosophical Society" would serve but to weaken the fundamental purpose of the Movement by promoting practices best dealt with by other organizations; finally, when we read on P. 40 that ". . . *The Secret Doctrine* has so little system", the only charitable assumption is that Professor Poortman has been badly served by his translators. So little system!

Within the Theosophical Movement a healthy exchange of ideas has been limited because of poor communications between groups; that language should also be a barrier is a double pity. Professor Poortman's work should long have been available for international discussion.

—T.G.D.

TAPES

Lodges, members-at-large and adherents are invited to make use of the Tape Library which Mr. Cedric Weaver has collected. The recordings include public lectures given at Toronto Lodge and some obtained from other Sections. Catalogue on request from Mr. Cedric Weaver, 30 Orchard Park Drive, West Hill, Ontario.

THE SCIENTIFIC CHARACTER OF BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

WILLEM B. ROOS

In this paper I propose to show that the framework of Buddhist Philosophy is typically that of modern science and that, furthermore, the two are compatible. The astounding achievements of modern science are well known, and as a result the faith in the possibilities of science and engineering is now so great that our government has seen it fit to appropriate fantastically huge sums of money for equally fantastic engineering projects, such as landing men on the moon. On the other hand, the potentialities and achievements of Buddhist Philosophy are practically unknown in the West and are, therefore, not taken into account. The reason for this obscurity, so to say, is easily understood. Modern science is active in a field where its achievements translate into material enjoyments or protection of some kind, and even the humblest of citizens cannot fail to be aware of them. In this respect Buddhist Philosophy is at a great disadvantage. Its field is spiritual rather than material, and its achievements are not within the range of vision of the average human being, except where this philosophy has influenced the moral and religious field.

However, there are many parallels between Buddhist Philosophy and science, and it may be useful to enumerate here a few:

1. Both have a highly technical aspect, accessible to specialists only, and a popular aspect appreciated by the common man.
2. Both reject miracles and both claim that everything in the Universe is subject to natural causes only, and, therefore, also subject to human analysis.
3. Both have developed a terminology of their own and both made use of two "dead" languages in establishing their

vocabulary — science using Greek and Latin, while Buddhist Philosophy uses Sanskrit and Pali.

4. Both place great emphasis upon using correct methods for obtaining knowledge.
5. Both require that their exponents possess certain qualifications and these are acknowledged by granting specific degrees and titles.

One of the definitions of SCIENCE is:

"Knowledge gained and verified by exact observation and correct thinking, especially as methodically formulated and arranged in a rational system."

(Funk & Wagnalls, New Standard Dictionary, 1946)

and another is:

"... an exact and systematic statement of knowledge concerning some subject or group of subjects ..."

(ibid)

Both definitions are applicable to Buddhist Philosophy as can be seen from a study of its literature. It may be objected that an important section of Buddhist Philosophy deals with facts that are not verifiable by physical observation. However, it is claimed that these facts can be verified by certain non-physical observations and that these are not less exact, for that matter, than those made with the physical senses. Furthermore, the same is true of the physical sciences. The elementary particles of physics cannot be observed directly and their existence can only be inferred from the effects which they produce. Yet, a more or less consistent "Particle Physics" has been built up, which is capable of answering a few of the many related questions that scientists wish to ask. In Buddhist Philosophy the situation is, in reality, much more favorable, because its psychology is

capable of answering most, if not all, of the related questions that investigators could ask. Of course, the one who asks psychological questions must be thoroughly familiar with the *skandhas* or otherwise there will not be an answer, at least not a correct or meaningful one. And to become familiar with the *skandhas* is not an easy matter. One of the reasons is that the classification into five *skandhas* is an exclusive feature of Buddhism, so that, in this matter, no help can be obtained from Brahmanical literature.

The scientific character of Buddhist philosophy manifests through its underlying principles as well as through its methods. First and foremost there is the CAUSALITY principle, which states that there is no effect without a corresponding cause. The Universe is governed by eternal LAWS which cannot be broken by even the most powerful of beings known to exist, such as Buddhas, Siddhas, and Devas. This Causality principle applies to all realms of *prakṛti* (Nature), without exception, and this means that moral, mental, and spiritual realms are also subject to this Law of Cause & Effect.

Closely related to the Causality principle is the thesis that for every *action* there is a corresponding *reaction*, and that these two are *equal* in magnitude but *opposite* in direction. In science this is known as Newton's 3rd law and it applies wherever forces are acting. In Buddhist philosophy the concept of force (*śakti*) is logically extended to include moral, mental, and spiritual forces as well. If FORCE is defined as that which produces a CHANGE, as stated by Newton in his 2nd law, then it is legitimate to use this term, as the Buddhists do, in a completely general sense, and extend our knowledge of psychic, mental, and spiritual forces by analogy with their physical counterparts. This was done by Buddhist sages and the results were remarkable in both the theoretical understanding of the hidden side of Nature, as well as the practical application to daily

life. By applying the ACTION & REACTION thesis to the subtler realms of Nature the Doctrine of Karma was established on a firm basis. Karma is the Sanskrit word for *action* but its most common meaning in philosophy is that of *moral retribution*. If one does an act of evil, the reaction on oneself will be harmful, and if one does good, the reaction will be beneficial. By strict analogy with physical forces, the reaction of the exercise of a mental force must necessarily be in the mind (*citta*) and will eventually affect subsequent mental activities. This is where the retribution comes in, and where the ACTION-REACTION principle leads to the recognition that JUSTICE is inherent in the whole of INFINITE SPACE. It will be noticed that Buddhist philosophy has no need of a "Supreme Being" to administer justice, but that each man becomes the dispenser of his own weal and woe. While the *reaction* of an act is simultaneous with the latter, it is not, as a rule, the ultimate karmic effect.

On the contrary, the *reaction* is like the winding up of a spring, i.e., the storing of energy, and the dissipation of this energy, at some time in the future, causes the retribution to take place. How? it may be asked, a question as legitimate as that of the student in nuclear physics who wants to know how mass is transformed into energy. The answers to either question require an expert knowledge that is not yet available, in the case of nuclear transformations, and is very difficult to obtain in the case of suspended karma. In the Buddhist sutras and sastras the stored mental energy is generally indicated by the term *vasana* (e.g., in the *Lankavatara Sutra* and in the *Abhidharma Kosa*), which is about as helpful to the investigator in Buddhist philosophy as is the term *exchange force* to those who do research in nuclear energy transformations, though neither term has a counterpart or model in the physical world.

One of the basic rules in science is that every statement must be supported by facts

and that blind belief has no place in scientific investigation. In other words, revelation is not acceptable as a support of a scientific doctrine or hypothesis. We find that the Buddha also disapproved of the blind acceptance by people of statements by others, himself included. Santaraksita, in the *Tatvasamgraha* (1)—quotes the Buddha as follows:

“O *Bhiksus*, my words should be accepted by the wise, not out of regard for me, but after due investigation, just as gold is accepted as true only after heating, cutting and rubbing”.

And the short *Kalama Sutra* deals with the same theme, the Buddha urging the *Kalamas* to *know* for themselves and not to rely on what others say and believe. (2)

The Buddhist system of Morals is also based upon a scientific background. Its moral code did not emanate from a deity as an arbitrary set of rules, but is derived from a thorough knowledge of the workings of Karma, and is the fruit of long investigations made by generations of sages. This code consists of two parts, of which the first is binding for all Buddhists, while the second part consists of special rules for the *bhiksus*. Adherence to this code promotes one's well-being in all departments of Nature, just as the eating at the right time of the correct amount of wholesome food promotes one's bodily health.

Man's moral behaviour is very systematically analyzed and explained by means of the *SKANDHAS*, of which there are five, as already stated. One could translate the word *skandha* by “group”, “aggregate,” “class,” etc., but it is better to leave it untranslated in order to avoid confusion with other classifications. The five *skandhas*, then, are so many groups or collections of certain *dharmas* (elements), which cover everything under the sun that pertains to “limited existence.” This classification is scientific in the sense that:

1. It is systematic and complete.
2. It is the most efficient grouping of the material needed in Buddhist psychology.

3. It is abstract, in the same manner that mathematics and logic are abstract, which makes it infallible as a discipline.

The moral code, to be scientific, must agree also with the laws of human and cosmic evolution, that is to say, it should not be contrary, in any of its branches, to the ultimate goal of MAN and of the UNIVERSE, as taught in Buddhist philosophy. The ultimate goal could be stated with the single word:

PERFECTION

of the individual beings as well as of the collective mass of entities, which constitutes the Infinite Universe. The perfect individual is a buddha, an “enlightened one,” and those who are treading the *short path* to buddhahood are known as *bodhisattvas*. Of course, *perfection* is always *relative* to a given period of manifestation (*kalpa*). Evolution occurs in cycles and cosmic periods of manifestation (*vivarta*— and *vivrttavastha kalpas*) are succeeded by periods of dissolution (*samvarta*— and *samvrttavastha kalpas*) (3). But the *evolution* of MATTER goes, *pari passu*, with the *involution* of SPIRIT (i.e. consciousness) and *vice versa*, so that the dissolution of the Manifested Universe coincides with its highest goal of spiritual perfection. This is the *parinirvana* (or *parinispanna*) of the collective host of beings and corresponds to the *mahapralaya* of the Hindus, who have very similar teachings on the subject of cosmic evolution and involution. This ancient idea of periodic cosmic dissolutions or disintegrations recalls the findings of modern astronomy about supernovae, which are stars that explode so violently that the intensity of their radiations is equivalent to many millions of suns and may even exceed, at their peaks, the total radiation of their galaxy! (4) The day our sun becomes a supernova would be the immediate and complete destruction of its planetary system. This would not be a universal dissolution, of course, but only a minor one. There are indications, however, that explosions on a galactic scale are also

occurring, as shown by recent photographs of the galaxy Messier 82 in Ursa Major (5). We see, then, that the teachings about the *kalpas* is quite in line with our present-day cosmological observations, though most of the details should not be taken literally, inasmuch as the complete truth about these matters was never given to the uninitiated public. This is why the details of the Buddhist version are different from those of the Hindu descriptions of these cosmological events. Therefore, what the Buddha relates in the *Mahavastu* (6) and in the *Digha Nikaya* (7) about the dissolution and re-evolution of the universe must be taken as a very much simplified, semi-allegorical account, that is intended to bring out the spiritual and psychic changes in the universe that accompany its re-emergence into objectivity, while the Hindu *Puranas* emphasize more the cosmological aspects of these immense periods (8).

On the subject of the nature of perception, the famous Buddhist logician *Dinnaga* (about 400 AD), a disciple of *Vasubandhu*, traces the cause of sense perception to the action of many subtle atoms (*phra rab rdul dag*), anticipating modern science on this matter by many centuries (9).

Buddhist philosophers took good care to substantiate their statements with copious quotations from and references to the writings of their illustrious predecessors, and I am told by Dr. Alex Wayman (University of Wisconsin), who is engaged in translating the *Lamrim-chen-mo* by the famous *Tson-kha-pa*, that even such a high authority, as is the latter, constantly quotes from the very extensive Buddhist literature. The recent translation by Dr. H. V. Guenther of *sGam-po-pa's Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, offers a very good example of the scholarly presentation of a philosophical subject. The enormous learning of its author can be gauged by the eight pages of Tibetan book titles given at the end of the book. And this is even more impressive if one considers that most of these quotations are probably quoted from memory.

Another type of writing is of the polemic kind, in which the opinions of opponents are critically examined and refuted one by one. The above mentioned *Tattvasamgraha* by *Santaraksita* is a good example of such kind of treatises.

The eighth chapter of the *Lankavatara Sutra* deals exclusively with the evils of meat-eating and some of the points raised by the Buddha are only now in the process of discovery by modern research.

As a final example of the scientific approach used by Buddhist philosophers the following definition of *cetana* given by *Sthiramati*, another famous disciple of *Vasubandhu*, would explain some of the phenomena of extra-sensory perception (ESP) which is baffling many present-day investigators.

Mentation (*cetana*) is thought activity of the *manas* (mind); at which occasion there occurs, as it were, a vibration (*praspana*) of the thinking mind (*cetas*) with regard to the object of thought, just as the quivering of iron from being under the control of a loadstone (magnet) . . . (10)

It was always my opinion that thoughts were some form of vibration, as no other *modus operandi* could satisfactorily explain all its characteristics. And the discovery of *Sthiramati's* definition of *cetana* as a *praspana* of the *cetas* caused me no little satisfaction, I must confess.

NOTES:

1. Chapter XXVI, sloka 3588, p.1558 of the translation by G. Jha.
2. Another version is found in Vol. I of the Book of the Gradual Sayings, pp. 171/4 (*Anguttara-nikaya* vol. I, III-65).
3. *Abhidharma Kosa*, ch.III, by *Vasubandhu*.
4. E.g. the one of Dec. 1921 in NGC 3184, and one in I.C.4182.
5. Science News Letter, Oct. 5, 1963; Science, April 24, 1964.
6. Vol. I, "Genesis of the World"— p. 285 ff.

7. Part III, No. XXVII Agganna Suttanta, p. 81 ff.
8. E.g. Visnu Purana, part I, sections 2 through 5, pt VI, 3, 4.
9. In his dMig-pa brtag-pa (*alambana pariksa*, which is lost).
10. Trimsikavijnaptibhasyam:
 cetana cittabhisamskaro manasascesta/
 yasyam satyamalambanam prati cetasah
 praspana iva bhavati ayaskantavasaday-
 ah praspanavat/
(This paper was presented to the Berkeley Buddhist Study Center of the Buddhist Church of America on August 21, 1964; and on October 23, 1964 to the Central California Philosophical Association; and on November 13, 1964 to a student meeting at the American River Junior College).

WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE

APRIL 13, 1851 — MARCH 21, 1896

“It was from Mr. Judge I got the best advice and inspiration. There should be no misunderstanding about this, however, for he never gave definite directions. His whole purpose, in my experience, was to inculcate self-reliance. General principles he would lay down; their application never . . . Helpful and encouraging he was always and there are few, even among those who opposed him, but will acknowledge his assistance.” —Albert E. S. Smythe.

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SECRET DOCTRINE QUESTION AND ANSWER SECTION

CONDUCTED BY GEOFFREY A. BARBORKA

Readers of The Canadian Theosophist are invited to participate in this feature by sending their questions c/o The Editors to be forwarded to Mr. Barborka.

Question. In *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 249, speaking of primeval races it is said: "The evolution of these races, . . . went *pari passu* and on parallel lines with the evolution, formation, and development of three geological strata, from which the human complexion was as much derived as it was determined by the climates of these zones."

Can you explain how the colour of complexion might be derived from geological strata?

Answer. This question can hardly be answered with complete satisfaction because of these reasons: (1) the scientific factors with regard to the geological strata have not as yet been definitely assigned to particular eras. (2) The strata under consideration might very possibly be under water—in which case it would be difficult to correlate to specific races. (3) While the colour of the soil might be equated to the colour of a race, it might be a different color *outwardly* (i.e. of the skin) because of the complexity of the chemistry involved. (4) The co-ordinating factor which may be supplied by the Esoteric Philosophy in connection with the assignment of the three primeval races referred to and the geological strata has not been given. It is true that the question did not inquire into these four aspects, so that the omission of these factors in the answer does not indicate that they have been overlooked. Therefore, attention will be directed to the specific question as to the 'how' of the problem.

It was not so long ago that researchers in the field of the physiology of the human

body came up with the pronouncements that the pigmentation of the skin (or melanism) is brought about by means of the action of the intermediate portion of the pituitary gland which is responsible for the secretion of a hormone, to which the name of the Melanocyte-stimulating-hormone is given—or abbreviated to the MSH. It is asserted that the melanocytes govern the pigmentation.

Inasmuch as the pineal gland was still a functioning organ during the era which is being referred to in the question (i.e., during Third Race and early Fourth Race periods), one may safely answer that both the pineal and pituitary glands were more active "in those early days" than they are today. Therefore they were more responsive to the vibrational effects of sunlight upon the "coloured" geological strata — Red-Yellow, Black and Brown-White — referred to in the next sentence of the paragraph from which the citation above was made. Because of the greater responsiveness the melanocytes were accordingly stimulated into greater activity corresponding to the appropriate geological stratum. Here is a passage which states the position of the Esoteric Philosophy:

"It knows but of three entirely distinct primeval races whose evolution, formation and development went *pari passu* and on parallel lines with the evolution, formation, and development of three geological strata; namely, the *Black*, the *Red-Yellow*, and the *Brown-White Races*." (*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. V, p. 213)

The Secret Doctrine continues in this manner:

“The Aryan races, for instance, now varying from dark brown, almost black, red-brown-yellow, down to the whitest creamy color, are yet all of one and the same stock—the Fifth Root-Race . . . The light yellow is the colour of the first *solid* human race, which appeared after the middle of the Third Root-Race . . . bringing on the final changes. For, it is only at that period that the last transformation took place, which brought forth man as he is now, only on a magnified scale. This Race gave birth to the Fourth Race; ‘Siva’ gradually transforming that portion of Humanity which became ‘black with sin’ into *red-yellow* (the red Indians and the Mongolians being the descendants of these) and finally into Brown-white races — which now, together with the yellow Races, form the great bulk of Humanity.” (II, 249-250)

There is yet another aspect to be considered in connection with this question. It has to do with the colour of the “inner man”. — something which was not mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine* citation. It shows that there is more to this subject than “meets the eye.” It amounts to this: the Occultists possess a faculty enabling them to distinguish the colours of the “inner man,” and by this means are able to categorize human beings by colours. This is best explained by adding another citation:

“The Occultist follows the ethnological affinities and their divergencies in the various nationalities, races and sub-races, in a more easy way; and he is guided in this as surely as the student who examines a geographical map. As the latter can easily trace by their differently coloured outlines the boundaries of the many countries and their possessions; their geographical superficies and their separations by seas, rivers and mountains; so the Occultist can by following the (to him) well distinguishable and defined *auric shades and gradations of colour in the inner-man* unerringly pronounce to which of the several distinct human families, as also, to what particular

respective group, and even small sub-group of the latter belongs such or another people, tribe, or man. This will appear hazy and incomprehensible to the many who know nothing of ethnic varieties of nerve-aura and disbelieve in any ‘inner-man’ theory, scientific but to the few. The whole question hangs upon the reality or unreality of the existence of this inner-man whom clairvoyance has discovered, and whose odyle or nerve emanations von Reichenbach proves . . . Besides this easily discernible psychological and *astral* differentiation, there are the documentary records in their unbroken series of chronological tables, and the history of the gradual branching off of races and sub-races from the three *geological*, primeval Races, the work of the Initiates of all the archaic and ancient temples up to date, collected in our *Book of Numbers*, and other volumes.” (*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, V, 212-4)

“THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH”

(Continued from page 10)

beater’s papers and books, but I believe he was familiar with them, as he had worked closely in London with Mr. Sinnett, to whom most of the original letters belonged. No. 10 was, however, only a copy made at Simla in 1882, as the original belonged to Mr. A. O. Hume. But Mr. Leadbeater *never did* regard that Letter No. 10 as reliable, and after the Letters were published, he quite often spoke of the book in my hearing as “that abominable book.”

So, on all counts, I can say that there are no grounds for condemning Mr. Gardner’s views. They are an expression of very ripe, thoughtful and honest study, which he is surely entitled to put before his colleagues in a Society which is concerned with “No religion higher than Truth.” Mr. Gardner, too, is now entitled to “a valiant defense of those who are unjustly attacked,” and I am glad to do it, mostly from my own direct knowledge, although sorry to have to do it.

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