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THEOSOPHY AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE

The issue of capital punishment in Canada is once again before the public. At this time it might be of interest to our readers to study a Theosophical viewpoint of the subject presented by William Q. Judge, one of the founders of the T.S. This article originally appeared in The Path, September, 1895.

From ignorance of the truth about man's real nature and faculties and their action and condition after bodily death, a number of evils flow. The effect of such want of knowledge is much wider than the concerns of one or several persons. Government and the administration of human justice under man-made laws will improve in proportion as there exist a greater amount of information on this all-important subject. When a wide and deep knowledge and belief in respect to the occult side of nature and of man shall have become the property of the people then may we expect a great change in the matter of capital punishment.

The killing of a human being by the authority of the state is morally wrong and also an injury to all the people; no criminal should be executed no matter what the offence. If the administration of the law is so faulty as to permit the release of the hardened criminal before the term of his sentence has expired, that has nothing to do with the question of killing him.

Under Christianity this killing is contrary to the law supposed to have emanated from the Supreme Lawgiver. The commandment is: "Thou shalt not kill!" No exception is made for states or govern-

ments; it does not even except the animal kingdom. Under this law therefore it is not right to kill a dog, to say nothing of human beings. But the commandment has always been and still is ignored. The Theology of man is always able to argue away any regulation whatever; and the Christian nations once rioted in executions. At one time for stealing a loaf of bread or a few nails a man might be hanged. This, however, has been so altered that death at the hands of the law is imposed for murder only, — omitting some unimportant exceptions.

We can safely divide the criminals who have been or will be killed under our laws into two classes: *i.e.* those persons who are hardened, vicious, murderous in nature; and those who are not so, but who, in a moment of passion, fear, or anger, have slain another. The last may be again divided into those who are sorry for what they did, and those who are not. But even though those of the second class are not by intention enemies of Society, as are the others, they too before their execution may have their anger, resentment, desire for revenge and other feelings besides remorse, all aroused against Society which

persecutes them and against those who directly take part in their trial and execution. The nature, passions, state of mind and bitterness of the criminal have, hence, to be taken into account in considering the question. For the condition which he is in when cut off from mundane life has much to do with the whole subject.

All the modes of execution are violent, whether by the knife, the sword, the bullet, by poison, rope, or electricity. And for the Theosophist the term *violent* as applied to death must mean more than it does to those who do not hold theosophical views. For the latter, a violent death is distinguished from an easy natural one solely by the violence used against the victim. But for us such a death is the violent separation of the man from his body, and is a serious matter, of interest to the whole state. It creates in fact a paradox, for such persons are not dead; they remain with us as unseen criminals, able to do harm to the living and to cause damage to the whole of Society.

What happens? All the onlooker sees is that the sudden cutting off is accomplished; but what of the reality? A natural death is like the falling of a leaf near the winter time. The time is fully ripe, all the powers of the leaf having separated; those acting no longer, its stem has but a slight hold on the branch and the slightest wind takes it away. So with us; we begin to separate our different inner powers and parts one from the other because their full term has ended, and when the final tremor comes the various inner component parts of the man fall away from each other and let the soul go free. But the poor criminal has not come to the natural end of his life. His astral body is not ready to separate from his physical body, nor is the vital, nervous energy ready to leave. The entire inner man is closely knit together, and he is the reality. I have said these parts are not ready to separate—they are in fact not able to separate because they are bound together by law and a force over which only great Nature has control.

When then the mere physical body is so treated that a sudden, premature

separation from the real man is effected, he is merely dazed for a time, after which he wakes up in the atmosphere of the earth, fully a sentient living being save for the body. He sees the people, he sees and feels again the pursuit of him by the law. His passions are alive. He has become a raging fire, a mass of hate; the victim of his fellows and of his own crime. Few of us are able, even under favorable circumstances, to admit ourselves as wholly wrong and to say that punishment inflicted on us by man is right and just, and the criminal has only hate and desire for revenge.

If now we remember that his state of mind was made worse by his trial and execution, we can see that he has become a menace to the living. Even if he be not so bad and full of revenge as said, he is himself the repository of his own deeds; he carries with him into the astral realm surrounding us the pictures of his crimes, and these are ever living creatures, as it were. In any case he is dangerous. Floating as he does in the very realm in which our mind and senses operate, he is forever coming in contact with the mind and senses of the living. More people than we suspect are nervous and sensitive. If these sensitives are touched by this invisible criminal they have injected into them at once the pictures of his crime and punishment, the vibrations from his hate, malice and revenge. Like creates like, and thus these vibrations create their like. Many a person has been impelled by some unknown force to commit crime; and that force came from such an inhabitant of our sphere.

And even with those not called "sensitive" these floating criminals have an effect, arousing evil thoughts where any basis for such exist in those individuals. We cannot argue away the immense force of hate, revenge, fear, vanity, all combined. Take the case of Guiteau, who shot President Garfield. He went through many days of trial. His hate, anger and vanity were aroused to the highest pitch every day and until the last, and he died full of curses for everyone who had anything to do with

his troubles. Can we be so foolish as to say that all the force he thus generated was at once dissipated? Of course it was not. In time it will be transformed into other forces, but during the long time before that takes place the living Guiteau will float through our mind and senses carrying with him and dragging over us the awful pictures drawn and frightful passions engendered.

The Theosophist who believes in the multiple nature of man and in the com-

plexity of his inner nature, and knows that that is governed by law and not by mere chance or by the fancy of those who prate of the need for protecting society when they do not know the right way to do it, relying only on the punitive and retaliatory Mosaic law—will oppose capital punishment. He sees it is unjust to the living, a danger to the state, and that it allows no chance whatever for any reformation of the criminal.

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To The 97th Annual Convention Of The Theosophical Society

N. SRI RAM, *President*

It is now little more than 97 years since the Theosophical Society came into existence, and it will not be long before its centenary is celebrated at Adyar and all over the Theosophical world. The American Section is already taking steps to hold a special Congress in New York, the city of its birth, during the week round the 17th of November 1975, and the Congress will attract many members from other Sections. A hundred years in the history of an organization is usually considered an important cycle. A cycle cannot mean merely the lapse of time, which by itself cannot produce anything radically new or significant. If it is a cycle in any pregnant sense, the end of it must mark both a culmination and a beginning. In Nature the evolutionary forces, after the completion of a major cycle, move on to a higher level of functioning. This is how the important changes come about, even though there are within a larger cycle also cycles of degradation and death. In the case of a Society which stands for a Wisdom that no human mind can wholly comprise or exhaust, a new cycle must mean not mere expansion at the same level with the same

quality of comprehension and action but a new era marked by a superior level of functioning. What this can mean, when the nature of the change is clearly spelt out, it is for us to consider.

H. P. Blavatsky, in one of her conversations in London, said that our aim as members should be not merely to work for the Theosophical Society as such, but to work for mankind through the Society. In other words, we should not in our activities lose sight of the real aims of the Society, the broader horizons which they represent.

There are some who think the coming cycle will be new because of a fresh influx of life. We should realize that no event of importance can take place without the setting in motion of the appropriate forces. Mere expectation does not generate the necessary force to bring about the desired end. We must do our part here and now, if we are Theosophists in earnest. It is only such action on our part which will enable a fairer future, fairer than the past, to shape itself, not an attitude that shoves off from us the responsibility for our progress. Even without any expectation, if we believe in the Wisdom which is Theosophy, its ex-

traordinary character, we should go on with all possible zeal and faith, and not need to have them whetted by hopes held out before us.

It is not a little significant that the development and diffusion of Theosophical thought, beginning with the impetus given by the Founders and the reproclamation of the ageless Wisdom in its modern form by H. P. Blavatsky has been largely coincident with the extraordinary changes that have marked this century, including the revolutionary advances of Science. There are indications in many places in Theosophical literature and in the events of the early history of the Society to show that the movement was launched precisely in view of the changes to come. Now we find that as the Society is reaching the end of its 100 year cycle, conditions in the world are also coming to a climax, which if it is not to spell destruction, must at least mark the beginning of a process of radical reconstruction resulting in a completely altered world picture. There has to be for the world at large, and for all its people a transition from the old to a completely new order. Obviously this transition, howsoever it might be effected, and by whatever steps, has to be from the wars and violence that have marked this century to a beneficent peace, from the present state of fragmentation, each fragment at cross purposes with the others and playing its own game, to a state of social and world unity, from the mentality of domination and tyranny which shows itself in different forms in our relationships to freedom for each distinctive group and respect for the individuals in it. If this is the nature of the ordained progression for humanity, ordained by the logic of facts, what should be the corresponding development in a Society which exists solely for that truth which will help mankind on the only true way of progress, not progress in terms of materialistic ends, which ever end in disillusionment and unhappiness? It seems logical to think, and consistent with what we know of man's constitution from Theosophical teachings, that the further

development of man must be based on that nature in him, overshadowed though it has been by contrary developments, which lies beyond his external conditioning, in which alone the unity, peace and freedom so desirable exist as a reality. The "soul-wisdom" spoken of in H. P. Blavatsky's *Voice of the Silence* can only be a flowering from this nature, a flowering full of life and beauty. It cannot arise from mere and more information, whether about the cosmos or man, however interesting this might be, and however useful, provided there is the basis of wisdom with which to use and apply it.

What the world needs today is not more industries and more wealth, although of course we must abolish the dire poverty which afflicts large sections of its peoples; not more of the so-called good things of life, as all those good things will never by themselves bring lasting satisfaction; not more of Science, although Science has its own importance and value both as a discipline and for the welfare of the world; and certainly not the kind of democracy that rages today with its endless wrangles and contentions for power. Nor does man need any kind of sensationalism which is really a killer of Wisdom; nor Spiritism in any form although the so-called "Spirits" might exist and there may be the possibility of communication with them, with all its dangers, deceptions and sensationalism; nor Occult Arts which pervert and disguise true Occultism. What is needed is that Wisdom which can fill one's heart, soul and being, and enable one to face all situations in life and all problems with equipoise and discernment, and with results conducive to the greatest good of all concerned. Life, for the individual as well as for humanity, must evolve into a type of order, in which there is as much beauty as in any work of art and is yet a product of Nature; and this can take place only on the basis of that nature in man which lies beyond the distortions caused by various forms of conditioning, that nature in which abide unity, peace and freedom.

Miss Joy Mills, the National President, surveys the activities of the American Section in considerable detail in her Report, and they follow the general pattern of the previous years...The continued growth of the Society's programs and activities, including the publication of the Quest Books, is largely due, it is pointed out, to the help given by the Kern Foundation. The Theosophical Publishing House at Wheaton has also had a busy year. It has brought out, among other books, the second volume of the new edition of *Isis Unveiled*....The most important event of the year is always the Annual Convention of the Section followed by the Summer School. These were held at "Olcott" in July this year with Srimati Rukmini Devi as the guest speaker.

Miss Ianthe Hoskins, the General Secretary, writes that the work of the English Section has proceeded on the same lines as in previous years. The lectures at the National Headquarters in London have attracted full audiences with a substantial proportion of young people, which, as a sign of their interest in Theosophical thought, is greatly to be welcomed. One of the features of the work in England is the holding of Study Week-ends in Tekels Park, all the people who come living together for the time in the Park premises. There has been a substantial increase in the activities of the Theosophical Publishing House in London.

Mrs. Radha Burnier, the General Secretary of the Indian Section writes of the efforts made in the past year to organize Study and Training Camps as part of an Expansion Program. All these Camps were very well attended, and in some of them a large number of sympathetic non-members also participated...India being a country of many languages, the

Federations as well as the Section are faced with the big problem of translating important Theosophical works into these different languages.

An important event in the Madras Federation was the celebration by the Adyar Lodge of its 75th Anniversary. Being situated at the International Headquarters the Lodge has had amongst its members various notable Theosophists, including Dr. Annie Besant, and its membership has been international in character.

Miss Ruth Beringer, the General Secretary of the Australian Section reports that for the first time after about 60 years the Annual Convention of the Section was held in Tasmania. The Vice-President, Mr. James S. Perkins, and Mrs. Perkins were present there as guest speakers, participating in a week-long program....Miss Beringer also mentions the fact that several of their Lodges are in the process of shifting to new premises, the Melbourne and Sydney Lodges, the two biggest, having sold the properties which they had been owning and occupying over a long time. She mentions that though the membership has grown, particularly in some of the larger cities, it is still the few, often the same members, who carry the main burden of the work year after year.

The 75th Jubilee Convention of the New Zealand Section took place in Hamilton. Mr. and Mrs. Perkins were present as guest speakers, in addition to quite a large Australian contingent....Mr. Brian Dunningham, the General Secretary, reports that a number of young sincere students have been coming to the Lodges and showing deep interest in Theosophical studies.

To turn to another Section in the Far East, the activities of the Society in Viet-Nam, continue amazingly enough as if the terrible devastation and the horrors of the war there were not taking place at all. The war, as some may not quite realize, has gone on for 27 years with only a minor interruption for a brief period. The General Secretary, Nguyen Thi Hai, writes: "In spite of the destruction almost all our

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members are in peace, because they trust in the divine laws. They devote themselves to the work for the Masters and for Theosophy."

Senor Manuel Farinich, the General Secretary for Argentina, gives detailed information about the activities in his Section...Senor Farinich writes: "The year has been very active outwardly, and inwardly we are aspiring to convey the note of Brotherhood and to make Theosophy a pulsating reality."

Brother Luis Spairani, who is the President of the Inter-American Federation, has been lecturing all over that southern continent. Brother Armando Sales, General Secretary for Brazil, mentions the stimulus given to the work in that country by their visits and lectures.

One of the aims of the Inter-American Federation is to promote co-operation among adjacent Sections, Meetings have been held in Montevideo, Uruguay, for joint studies; lectures and propaganda among Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina.

The East African Section, the Lodges of which were spread not long ago over the four States, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zanzibar, continues to keep up a steady pace in spite of having to close down its activities in two of those states, due to Government policies affecting the Asiatic population. Work in Zanzibar had to come to an end some years ago, and recently the seven Lodges in Uganda have also had to cease functioning. Most of our members in that region form part of an Indian population which had gone over from India to East Africa during the days of British rule.

There are 16 Sections on the continent of Europe. It is not possible in this Address to survey the activities in every Section of the Society, but having read the reports from all of them and with such information as comes to me through correspondence, I might say that the work in practically all of them goes on steadily and on the whole well. The Report of the Theosophical Society in Europe, now under the chairmanship of Mrs. Madeleine Leslie-Smith,

refers to the various Summer Schools held this year. Some were organized by the Sections in which they were held, and some by the Council of the European Federation. All were well attended.

Both the Finnish and the Swedish General Secretaries mention the fact that there is increasing interest in Yoga, particularly among young people, but in what they regard as Yoga the emphasis, if not the sole emphasis, is on the exercises that go by that name and diet. The Finnish General Secretary, Miss Sirkka Kivilinna, says that members in her Section are helping to spiritualize the Yoga movement.

The Swedish Section has moved its headquarters in Stockholm from premises which it had occupied for 57 years, to a new place more easily accessible to the public and members and with better facilities for carrying on the work.

Very many of the Section Reports refer to the activity of youth groups and also to work of a practical nature accomplished through the Theosophical Order of Service, and also directly by Lodges and groups of Theosophists. Considerable help was given through efforts made in India to the Bangla Desh refugees.

There have been a number of staff changes at Adyar during the year: Mrs. Peggy de Vogel found it necessary, because of her health, to give up the office of Recording Secretary, and Dr. Jean Raymond was appointed to take her place. She is also for the time in charge of the Archives, succeeding Mr. Zoltan de Algya-Pap who had to go back to Holland and give up that work. There was a re-shuffle of personnel as a result of which Mrs. Bridget Paget is now Secretary to the President.

A circular letter has been sent by the Treasurer to the General Secretaries of active Sections of the Society and to active Lodges attached to Adyar, pointing out that whereas under the present Income Tax law in India even charitable Societies are assessable under certain conditions, under a recent amendment any donation made especially for the corpus of the Society is exempt from assessment. The A.B.C. Fund

represents such a corpus. Donations will also be especially welcome to the Century Fund, as the Society draws nearer to its Centenary. As members will recall, the Century Fund represents a united effort by Theosophists all over the world to meet the

increased expense required to place the Society's world headquarters at Adyar in as good a condition as possible before the Centennial celebration in December 1975. We are grateful to all who have helped financially in these and other ways.

“THOSE IMAGES THAT YET FRESH IMAGES BEGET”

THE NEOPLATONISTS

F. W. WILKES

Two paths reveal themselves to a student pilgrim of the Gnosis, which are in fact human reactions, the intellectual and the visceral, those with Reason and those with Faith. These two clashed violently throughout the early Christian era. Tertullian, the famous Carthaginian denier of Reason, made strenuous efforts to root out the rational analysis of intellectual Gnosticism from Christianity, and was excommunicated for his pains, though not before he had devised and established orthodox Christian dogma. Origen strove even harder to incorporate Neoplatonism and the Gnosis into that dogma, but eventually had his doctrines condemned in AD 543. Hence the student of the Gnostics and early Christianity finds himself being batted to and fro like a ping-pong ball between reason and degraded faith. At one moment he has laboriously ascended a pinnacle of philosophical argument. Then, while he is still breathless from the intellectual altitude, and from the overpowering glory of the view, he is dashed suddenly down into the depths of ludicrous and superstitious dread. Here a lion-headed monster waits to devour his soul, unless he has taken care to memorize a spell of considerable length. In Western religion, this gap was never bridged, and by AD 1277 the gap was unbridgeable. In that year the Doctors of Paris University returned to the Gnosis and Neoplatonism as

a rational basis for religion, and were condemned, while the Church proclaimed Faith as the only basis for belief and salvation. Both were right, and also neither. Yet a Middle Way existed.

Valentinus, the Gnostic philosopher of Alexandria, who taught in Rome until AD 140, was the pioneer of that Northwest passage that reunited faith and mind, the Neoplatonist school that endured until Boethius' time. As St. Severinus Boethius, this politician-philosopher left Neoplatonist works in the universal Latin language, that kept the passage open throughout the dark ages until 1277.

Probably the conscious discoverer was Ammonius Saccas, that mysterious ex-Christian of Alexandria, who turned unsatisfied from the sparse doctrines of the humble Nazarene to those of Plato, and taught his theosophy — the first teachings recognizable as such in the West — to a group of students whose names crop up continually in any worthy account of philosophy and religion. Origen was one of his students, Plotinus another, and possibly Plotinus' Syrian disciple Porphyry. We say “probably,” because Ammonius Saccas left no written doctrine or biography. The original “masters” of the Gnostics, such as Simon Magus, had obviously taught a vast and involved parable, and while later Gnostic sages such as Valentinus had attempted to unravel its tangled skein, they

had done so only partially. No-one ever succeeded totally, and today, thanks to Ammonius Saccas and his pupils, it is scarcely necessary.

Where Valentinus failed, this writer will not try. Hence, misunderstood parables were taught as basic doctrine, and fig trees were blasted on principle and at sight. But whatever Ammonius Saccas taught, it must have been dynamite. Christianity took its present form after the explosion, at the hands of the dazed Tertullian, and the convinced dynamiter, Origen. The nihilism of the Gnosis lost its hold upon the Roman intellectual world and retired into those dim corners where we still find archeological traces of it. Christianity, which still lacked theology and a developed doctrine, was thrown into a ferment, as we have seen, by Ammonius Saccas' influence.

Valentinus' Gnostic disciple Ptolemaeus, about AD 190-200, had to write a "Letter to Flora," a Christian Roman lady, in an attempt to hedge upon this matter, or to approach the newly-emerging Middle Way. The Antinomian Libertines who denounced all restraints on human action, were themselves denounced by Ptolemaeus as being in error. The stark original message of the Cosmos-hating Gnostics was being abandoned by preachers and philosophers. But the flaw in Gnostic doctrines, the gap in its picture of the Cosmos, stubbornly remained. The wicked Cosmocrator, the Devil of Christianity's patchwork theology, who nevertheless knows the remote Divinity, is bafflingly contrasted with the benevolent but ignorant Demiurge, who made the "evil" world, but lacks the Gnosis.

Ptolemaeus' efforts went in vain. As John Milton said, in his "Areopagitica" of 1644 —
". . . all the contagion that foreign books can infuse, will find a passage to the people far easier and shorter than an Indian voyage, though it could be sailed either by the North of Cathay Eastward, or of Canada Westward . . ."

This of course, was that theosophy which

supplies the answers, and reconciles faith and intellect within a Middle Way. Neoplatonism as a movement and a finished, acceptable doctrine, was anticipated by the Neopythagoreans and other "Eclectic" philosophers of the Late Roman Empire. The Arab philosopher Nicomachus of Gerash in AD 140 was a mathematical Neopythagorean, regarding the divine and perfect Ideas of Plato that underlie imperfect material things as being numbers. This was an important emphasis. Any system that converts things and ideas to numbers, encoding them, is obliged to anticipate certain modern ideas. This assists our understanding of Neoplatonism and increases its relevance.

From AD 232 to 242, Plotinus of Lycopolis studied under the mysterious Ammonius Saccas in Alexandria. His teacher, who had discarded Christianity for Platonism, left no writings. Nor did Plotinus himself, though his "lecture-notes" were published by his pupil Porphyry. Plotinus founds his argument upon certain observations about God, or rather the One, which, though sound common-sense, seem deceptively to lead into a blind alley. God is the transcendent One, unknowable, neither life, essence nor being as we can know it, but the source of them, and greater. There is no positive attribute of the One that we can describe, for if there were, the One would be limited by it. God is not "good", but is the source of Good, and has no thought, will or activity, since these require something external to the all-inclusive One. As H. P. Blavatsky suggests in *Isis Unveiled*, Ch. II, what was called the Will was in fact the Eternal and Universal Idea that creates and organizes matter. Even the idea of Oneness (unity) can only inadequately be ascribed to God. All we can try to say is: the One is, and even this is inadequate since the One is beyond being; as we would say, in the unknowable region of Atma-Buddhi.

Since the One has no will to create directly, and cannot limit itself to finite multiple objects, creation has to be effected by other means. This means is the doctrine

of Emanation, which, though implicit in Neopythagorean doctrine, was first and most clearly enunciated by the Gnostics, particularly by Valentinus. Some of the technical details are derived from early Stoic philosophy, such as "particulars" impressed by typosis on the soul, and the impression retained by *mneme*. Emanation requires a reflection, an image or a shadow to partake of the form of the object or substance that projects it — the modern concept of "information." "It is the nature of Light to illuminate Darkness," says Valentinus, either as a ray or as an image on a retina. Although no physical descent of the Light or of a divine figure has occurred, nevertheless, to the Gnostic, something divine has passed into the lower world and is involved in it.

Conversely, Darkness greedily seeks this Light, drags it down and disperses it. The Light is thenceforward obligated to retrieve these engulfed "sparks," some of which are individual souls. It is only through these "sparks" that creation can occur by means of the captured divine form, which is thereby even further engulfed in Darkness. Yet, despite the lamentation of the Gnostics, there is no divine "guilt" here, nor any incursion of the Darkness into the Realm of Light.

In Neoplatonism this inevitable dispersion and reflection of Light as images generates waves of successive beings.

" . . . Those images that yet
Fresh images beget,
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented
sea."

as W.B. Yeats sings in *Byzantium*, 1930. A photograph, a painting or an accurate engineering drawing can give us an idea of something or someone, so that it or they can be identified later. But this representation is not the thing or person itself. As Rene Magritte says, in a caption under a drawing of a pipe, "this is not a pipe." It is a system of markings on a surface. For Magritte's reason, the Cosmos is not God, but information about God. This

information is the Gnosis. But while God did not make the Cosmos out of nothing, neither did he divest himself of part of his essence, and cease to be the One. We do not lose part of ourselves when we look into the mirror, nor does an emanation from the One diminish it. Eternally: the One is.

The first Emanation from the One is Mind (Nous), which is Intuition, immediate apprehension both of itself and the One. All the Ideas exist in the Mind, not as a collection but as an indivisible intuition of the One. The Mind is the Demiurge, the Creative Logos, which is a doctrinal advance upon Platonism. It is in blessed possession of the state of Eternity, of which time and entropy are mere feeble imitations.

The second Emanation is Soul, which is dual, the Higher, out of contact with the material world; the Lower being the Soul of that world—that is, Nature, This dual Soul is the "input and output" of the divine influence upon the world, a kind of communications channel, like Channel 6 on our television dial, originating in the TV station, ending in thousands of television receivers. Because the Ideas do not and cannot themselves operate within the material world, emanations of the Ideas are reflected in the World Soul as Logos-Seeds — a Stoic doctrine — successively in the Higher and Lower. Below these is the material world, the lowest level of the Cosmos.

The third Emanation is into and through the Material World, out of the Light into the depths of ever-increasing Darkness. Total Darkness in this Neoplatonic sense is "matter in itself," *steresis*, which in French Existentialist parlance is called facticity. This formless matter is the direct opposite pole of the One, and in its horrible way is as inconceivable to the human mind as is the One in its ecstatic way. Jean-Paul Sartre, unaware of his masters' (Jaspers' and Heidegger's) derivation of this terrible truth, has written eloquent reams upon the danger of a life that sees matter as a thing in itself, and what he has written is worth a Theosophist's time. The very existence of

comprehensible matter thus involves its illumination by the third Emanation, which gives it form which is dimly derived from the remote One. The inconceivable steresis of nothing-but-matter, deprived of form, is, as Sartre notes, the principle of Evil, Evil is thus not a quality but a lack of quality — it is, in fact Non-Being as the One is Being (though the One is as far beyond mere Being as matter-in-itself is below it). There is no Dualism here. "Evil" is a kind of starvation, a disconnection from the Emanation from the One, a lack of information.

The human soul can never be purely evil. As an emanation from the Ideas it is a dim but pure goodness . . . though in fact Plotinus necessarily sees three souls, the Idea of the individual Soul in the Mind, the transmitted information or seed of the Soul in the World-Soul, and the incarnate fallen soul. This takes us to the next, logical step: the ascent of the Soul back towards the Light. This is a common goal of Neoplatonist and Gnostic, but Plotinus and his disciples condemn the Gnostics. The world is not an evil creation, but a dim and distorted reflection of a Beauty and Goodness beyond the capacity of unenlightened humankind to conceive or discern. While only the most intellectual of the Gnostics purified themselves by meditation, and that just for the purpose of escaping the watchful ferocity of the imprisoning Archons, the Neoplatonists sought detachment and serenity in order to improve the soul's vision of the Light, and to prepare it for an increasingly close reunion with first the Higher World Soul, the Mind and finally, the One. Obviously the Gnosis was not enough. The world-bound soul has an obligation to seek a truer knowledge of the One. This is the true motivation for meditation.

We noted earlier that the Neopythagorean Arab philosopher, Nicomachus of Gerash, had defined the Ideas in the Mind as numbers, and remarked upon the significance of the concept. It enables us to turn Plotinus'

ideas into extremely modern language. Evil is a lack of information that tends to deprive of the Good those material objects that are insufficiently illuminated. It is a distortion of the true Ideas, incurred in the transmission of information, and it is the attenuation of Light, growing dimmer, and thereby accumulating static "noise" like a spotty TV picture from a very distant station (*Enneads*, 2,IV; 3,VI, 7;6,III,7.) Matter is distortion and static in the sense that it only becomes part of creation by Emanation from the One. We are not entitled to condemn the visible, material universe, nor its creator and source, any more than we are entitled to condemn a TV station because our receiver is picking up a poor signal. We should install a better antenna, and a more sensitive receiver, or else move closer to the Station. It is too much, says Plotinus, in the measured terms of a communications engineer, for us to expect to receive an undistorted and powerful signal out here in the fringe area where the Universe's edges dim into Darkness (*Enn* 2, IX, 4).

Instead of Valentinus' guilty Gnostic apology, Plotinus gives us an expert opinion. If the Soul is contaminated by matter, then purify it. The source of distortion of Ideas and the black, uninformed spots of Evil, is the inferior receiver, the senses. One should instead derive one's information from philosophy and science, which strips sensual distortion and interference from the received signal. Even then the received signal is a very faint one, and we should move nearer to the transmitter, Mind. In union with Mind, receiving powerful waves, the Soul retains self-consciousness, but why utilize a receiver at all? Why not attend the live show? In union with the One, who transcends Beauty, one experiences an ecstasy devoid of duality. In Dodd's translation: "There shall a man see, as seeing may be in heaven, both God and himself — himself made radiant, filled with the intelligible light, or rather grown one with that light in

(Continued on page 21)

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The January 20 fire at 12 MacPherson Avenue, headquarters of the Toronto Lodge, is reported elsewhere in these pages. In its path was the office at the top of the building used by the T. S. in Canada.

In addition to the inevitable smoke and water damage, repairs required included the replacement of a large area of flooring, some ceiling and wall plastering, new wiring and lighting, and new shelving. The office furniture was also scorched and battered.

It was the general contents of the office, however, that suffered most. Hundreds of magazines and books — including a few irreplaceable items — acted as fuel to the flames. On the basis that their physical condition is relatively unimportant, as many as possible have been salvaged. Nevertheless, a large number were too badly charred and had to be discarded.

On visiting the scene a few hours after the blaze, my first thought was how lucky it was that the smoke had been noticed and the alarm sent in at what must have been the critical moment. With memories of wartime experiences of bad fires, there was no doubt in my mind that only a few minutes more out of control would have allowed this fire to completely destroy the Section office and all it contained—to say nothing of the rest of the north end of the building. We are very fortunate, therefore, and owe much to the efficiency of the Toronto Fire Department.

As a result of the fire we are short of the July-August, 1972 issue of *The Canadian Theosophist* for binding purposes. The Editors would appreciate receiving copies of that issue which readers can spare.

* * *

At the time of writing we are waiting to return to a repaired and freshly painted office. In the meanwhile, the work of the Section is going on as usual. (My wife and I

always edit the magazine at home, anyway.)

* * *

I was recently privileged to attend lectures given in Toronto by three members of the Club of Rome: Dr. Aurelio Peccei, the founder; Dr. Dennis Meadows, one of the authors of *The Limits to Growth*; and Dr. Alexander King. Members of the Club are drawn from universities, governments, industries and other sectors worldwide. To my knowledge they include at least one Theosophist.

It is gratifying that this voluntary organization of concerned and influential citizens is devoting the talents of its members to studying problems of global proportions (such as those engendered by exponential growth). Moreover, they are managing to impress governments and the general public alike with the seriousness of their findings.

As Dr. Meadows said, it is one thing to analyse problems, but solutions depend on our willingness to change life-styles and to suspend our customary reliance on improved technology (which almost invariably creates fresh problems). In other words, we have to start thinking more of the effect of our present way of living on brothers in other parts of the world and on generations yet to be born.

* * *

If any reader is going abroad this summer and wishes to make Theosophical contacts in other countries, I shall be pleased to provide the pertinent information.

Also, details on summer camps should be available shortly. Just drop me a line and ask for a copy.

* * *

The film, "How Many Lifetimes" was recently borrowed for video-taping by a Quebec City TV station. This came as a result of initiative by a local member.

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Canadian readers (outside Toronto) who think their stations would be willing to show this film (or our other one, "Reincarnation") are invited to get in touch with me.

* * *

I am pleased to welcome to the Canadian Section a former member of the Theosophical Society in East Africa, Mrs. Divyaprabha P. Raval, who has joined the Toronto Lodge.

T.G.D.

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

If you are a subscriber or a member-at-large and are planning to change your address, please send us a change of address card as soon as possible. If you are a member of a Lodge, please advise your Lodge Secretary so that the information may be passed to us. Second class mail is not re-addressed by the post office. - Eds.

ORPHEUS LODGE

With great regret Orpheus Lodge has accepted the resignation of Mr. Ernest F. Wilks as President. He had served in that capacity for 13 years, and was given a warm tribute by the members.

Our new President is Mrs. Lillian Hooper.

R. Hedley

MONTREAL LODGE

Members of the Montreal Lodge held their Annual Meeting on January 9. The following were elected to office:

President	Mrs. Viola P. Law
Vice-President	Mr. Fred T.A. Griffiths
Secretary	Miss Jean Low
Treasurer	Miss Muriel Kerr
Librarian	Mr. Fred Wilkes
Assistant Librarian	Mrs. Phoebe Stone
Publicity Chairman	Mrs. Eileen Blackburn

The Lodge members gave the outgoing President, Mrs. Dorita Gilmour, a gift for her wonderful loyalty and devotion to the work of Montreal Lodge. Mrs. Gilmour will be with us for a little time yet but then is off to the West Coast. We will all miss her very much.

The Lodge will endeavour to have a Members' Study Class every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m., and talks and discussion at the Public Meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Viola P. Law
President

TORONTO LODGE

In the early morning of Saturday, January 20, a fire broke out in the headquarters of the Toronto Theosophical Society, 12 MacPherson Avenue, Toronto. The fire brigade was called and did a wonderful job in getting it under control. However, considerable damage was done to the north-west side of the building: the Travelling Library, and the Library, Canadian Section and General offices suffered in particular. Except for a pervading smoky smell and a dusty coating on walls, etc., fortunately the main auditorium, the Blavatsky Room and the basement were relatively untouched.

According to the Fire Chief, the fire started in the Library office. It was ascribed to old wiring.

Insurance adjusters and construction crews moved in right away. Rebuilding proceeded at a tremendous pace, and it was particularly fortunate that all the while

there was a gaping hole in the roof the weather stayed clear and dry. As well as part of the roof, some flooring, ceiling and joists have had to be replaced. Walls have been washed down and much repainting has been necessary. The whole building has been treated with a special process to remove the smell of smoke. Damaged library books are being sent away for repair.

Considerable electrical work was necessary as a result of the fire. In addition, the Lodge decided to replace some of the undamaged parts of the system to reduce the danger of shock and fire in the future.

The Sunday evening lectures were cancelled until March 4, although the Secret Doctrine class continued. The Library and Travelling Library will not be in operation for a few weeks yet.

A MODEL FOR A HISTORY OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

J. H. DUBBINK, PH.D.

The purpose of this article is to try to develop a "model", a structure, which might perhaps enable a student of the Theosophical Movement to put his thoughts in order. Properly placed within such a structure, his observations might increasingly become functional parts of a great whole.

In the course of this paper, persons who left our earth forty or more years ago will inevitably be mentioned. There is a Latin proverb, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* — of the dead, let nothing be said but what is favourable; but those who moulded the history of our Movement have achieved what the Latin poet Horace hoped, *non omnis moriar* — I shall not wholly die, i.e. my works will be immortal. Indeed, Mr. Sinnett, Mr. Leadbeater, Mrs. Tingley Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant still live in their

works and words, and we are daily confronted with the results of their activities. In that sense, they live, and it is the historian's duty to study critically that part of their lives and energies (their *karman*) which is still influencing the lives and thoughts of many students of esotericism.

Now my "model" consists of some (in my view) very obvious observations.

(1) As the "Masters" were the motivating force for the founding of the T.S., anyone wanting to play a role in the Movement had to appeal to those same individuals — or to others higher still.

(2) Facts attested to by H.P.B. and in the Mahatma Letters, or better still by both, are taken for granted.

(3) Mrs. Cleather's interpretation of the "failures" of the Society during the lifetime of H.P.B. gives a sound base for the in-

terpretation of the events in the twenty years following her death (to which we confine ourselves) and perhaps to the whole period.

Let us consider my first proposition. Perhaps one may think that nobody at any time *wanted* to play a role, but that everyone who did was in some mysterious way "called thereto" by a Higher Power (with two or more capitals!). I seriously request any reader who might have such a belief in a supra-human "election" of our "leaders" *not* to go on reading the rest of this article. I do not want to hurt them by confronting them with facts which those leaders have always tried to hide from the weaker ones in their respective flocks.

The second point tries to provide a foundation for the structure. An *ex improbabili* is very strong. Why, for example, should one believe in the picture of the Master K.H. as given by Mr. Leadbeater on his own testimony, and not on one any reader may form on the basis of the Mahatma Letters and the testimony of those named in the Letters?

The third point leads directly to the heart of the question: we should interpret the history of the Theosophical Movement *as a history of failures*. It ought to be clear to every serious student that one cannot after all expect an evolution, a sort of "*altius velocius etc.*" as the slogan of the Olympic Games expresses it. In this dark age one can more rightly expect a Vietnam and a Stalin than a steady growth of spirituality and peace. So, why make an exception for the Theosophical Movement? Why should we believe those who try to depict Theosophical history as a movement "from Glory unto Glory"?!

So let us try to face the facts given us in the history of the early years. We can see that a great disaster took place in 1885 when the enemies of the T.S. achieved a rift between H.P.B. and Col. Olcott. The bare facts are to be found in Josephine Ransom's *A Short History of The Theosophical Society*, pp. 222-3. But Mrs. Ransom does not tell much about the background and the

consequences, as her "history" is merely a series of facts loosely knit together by some vague notion of causality. Her reason for writing in such a manner was probably that she did not wish the reader to perceive that all was not well with the T.S. The reality was: most members living in Adyar at that time (1885) lacked the moral courage to trust H.P.B. and to defend her in instances where they had doubts (perhaps well-founded) as to the wisdom of the policy of producing "phenomena". Perhaps they also thought that her phenomena and that of the Mahatmas' to some degree could not be trusted. (The reader is referred to *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Volume VI.) This lack of confidence and unity between the members, some of whom were disciples of the Mahatmas, led to some unexpected results — at least unexpected for us, readers in 1973, brought up in the "maya" of a "historical growth" of Theosophy.

As is generally known, the T.S. was originally founded as a semi-secret society, having three "degrees", the third, or highest being formed of those "Masters" who supported the Society. (cf. Ransom, pp. 105, 546; see also *The Theosophist*, March, 1927, "Some Documents on the History of the T.S."). The "link" between the third degree and the rest of the Society was H.P.B. Not because those Masters were, so to speak, dependent on H.P.B. for their contacts — of course they were not; but for reasons of their own, perhaps economy in the use of their forces, or faithfulness to H.P.B., who had suffered so much for their sake. In 1885 they left Adyar which became an administrative centre of an exoteric society, organized on more or less democratic lines. The influence of the Masters dwindled, according to a letter written to H.P.B. by Damodar in 1886: "The Masters' influence was becoming with every day weaker at Adyar." (*The Theosophical Movement 1875-1950 p. 110*) However, this is not corroborated by other testimony. Mr. Leadbeater, in *How Theosophy Came To Me*, pp. 131-5, tells us how his occult training, on the lines of a sort

of mental gymnastics, was started in 1885 after H.P.B. had left.

A sidelight on this situation is given in a letter by the Master K.H. to Col. H. S. Olcott. In it, H.P.B. is called "our direct agent". (*Letters from the Masters of Wisdom, First Series, P. 51*). This letter was written in 1888 and received by Col. Olcott aboard the ship on which he was sailing to England. In that same letter it is stated: "Since 1885 I have not written, nor caused to be written save thro' her agency, direct or remote, a letter or line to anybody in Europe or America, nor communicated orally with, or thro' any third party. Theosophists should learn it." (*ibid.*, p. 50.) In connection with my second point, it may be said that after that time — in any case between 1885 and 1888 — there did not exist a real contact between Mr. Sinnett and K. H., whatever Mr. Sinnett may have thought.

All this leads to the following conclusion: in 1885 the failure of the esoteric aspect of the T.S. in India is clear; when H.P.B. went to Europe one of her tasks was to try to start a new esoteric department there, in close personal contact with her, the only "direct agent". As it is not our task to write a history of the T.S. in these years, we can only point to the aims H.P.B. had in view with her "Esoteric Section", and the results which appeared after her death.

Her aims are clear from the "Preliminary Memorandum" sent to every candidate who applied for membership in that Esoteric Section. (The Memorandum was published in *The Theosophist*, August, 1931.) By the way, there is very little "esoteric" about that section, as much of the instruction given by H.P.B. was incorporated by Mrs. Besant in the Third Volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (Fifth Volume in the Adyar Edition) as "Some Papers on the Bearing of Occult Philosophy on Life". H.P.B. wanted to restore the T.S. to its original lines. Only through an "Esoteric Section" could the Society be "redeemed" — redemption implying previous "fall.

The time for such a redemption was very short indeed: the period in which the Tibetan Brethren could help the West would expire December 31, 1899 (*The Theosophist*, August, 1931, pp. 596-7.) Why do we, members in 1973, accept the prophecy of H.P.B. that in 1975 a new "messenger" is to come, and why do we not accept her word that between 1900 and 1975, "No Master of Wisdom from the East will himself appear or send any one to Europe or America . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 597)?

Mrs. A. L. Cleather says explicitly that this effort was also in vain. The "Esoteric Section", and later on the "Inner Circle" — of which she was one of the twelve members — betrayed H.P.B. just as the "exoteric" Society had done in 1885. It would be difficult to believe Mrs. Cleather had she not included herself in the number of "failures" (*H. P. Blavatsky As I Knew Her*, p. 26), thus making it clear that her book was not written in self-defence, nor to vilify other members. With the death of H.P.B. (argues Mrs. Cleather), who was the agent of the Masters, all "official" contacts came to an end. Here the definite failure of the efforts of the Masters was made clear for those who had eyes to see.

A bird's eye view of some elements of the history of the T.S. after the death of H.P.B. will corroborate the last paragraph.

Mrs. Besant told the public she had received letters from the Masters after the death of H.P.B. (1875-1891, *A Fragment of Autobiography*, p. 11). After the death of Mr. Judge, Mrs. Tingley came forward from a cloud of mystery as the "leader" backed by an allegedly high authority. According to Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater, the Masters had changed their minds about 1910 and came forward with quite a new program, involving a "World Teacher." Also, some "dii minores", "lesser gods", as for example Charles Lazenby, tried in those years to attract readers and members for their "Blavatsky Institute" by introducing new "Masters" — besides K.H. there were "Hierophants of Isis", "Servants of the Robe of God", etc.

It is clear that one could bring forth many more arguments for every part of my "model". This is not the task of the writer, who wanted only to present to the reader a "model", which he sincerely hopes will be falsified by other students. It is a fact that truth can only be found in discarding error. If it is possible that errors which I have inevitably made can be redressed, I hope this will be done.

After some years of serious thought upon the historical facts, fictions, information and disinformation about the past, I felt it my duty to lay before serious students this all-too-meagre result. For the time being I remain sure of my views, though prepared and willing to accept all corrections.

If permitted, I would like to close with some personal remarks. In a certain way I feel myself to be in the same position as Mrs. Cleather's. She felt that she had not

lived up to the true Theosophical ideals during the last years of H.P.B.'s life, so she was to some degree responsible for the "failure". In an analogous way I feel myself responsible for many years devoted to the pseudo-Theosophical activities of the Liberal Catholic Church, in which I served as priest and bishop from 1941 to 1969. If, therefore, the reader thinks I am unduly belittling Mr. Leadbeater and his activities, I ask him to take into consideration that my personal feelings of being "responsible" for many things I now look upon as rubbish perhaps make the way I express my views as being somewhat too sharp. But at the same time I happen to know from personal experience how deep was the abyss between the world of the "initiates" of Mr. Leadbeater and the spirit of the life depicted in *The Voice of the Silence*.

THE RIDDLE OF LIFE

FRANK P. BOUCHER

(Continued from Vol. 53, Page 136)

If we want to advance this new form of Idealism we must understand the wish must come from ourselves before we can transfer that wish to another.

"Man, Know Thyself" is the great teaching of the Ancient Wisdom. Knowledge, that is the keynote.

One great philosopher, Mr. N. Sri. Ram, says: "If you have knowledge, let others light their candles by it." Another tells us that "to make knowledge fruitful it must be lived, not only studied." And another adds to this saying: "Knowledge increases in proportion to its use, that is, the more we teach, the more we learn."

We hear the cry around us today—there is no freedom, we are ruled by "this" or governed by "that": we do not realise it is only our physical bodies that are bound; our mental and spiritual bodies are always free, and can never be bound except by our own binding. Remember the words of the

teacher Jesus: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

We are what we make ourselves, and I am convinced that every action we take, every decision we make has first been expressed in a more subtle form. . . our own thoughts. "God's thoughts make universes, your thoughts make yourself."

I think man's mind first became enslaved when the priesthood (in all religions) used their power to dominate the minds of the masses: they encouraged the belief that God was an all-powerful being who dominated the lives of everyone, who knew all and saw all, and would reward or punish as He thought fit according to the recommendations of his servants, the priests. In those days the priests were the learned class and it was only natural that the peoples' thoughts and actions would be guided along the way the priests desired. They taught that the mind was a very

unreliable thing, always making mistakes and errors. Oh, yes, they were allowed to think, but the answers must agree with the priestly authority. They, the priests, were the Court of Appeal, and their decisions were given as the ultimate truth.

Even in the eleventh century the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Anselm, held firmly to the belief that "When the Church ruled a certain doctrine was true, men had to accept it without question. Man must never question, belief must precede reason." We must be thankful we have come a long way from this idea today, although I understand there is one Christian denomination that still insists on this doctrine.

Let us try and visualize how far man has come in the evolutionary cycle of life.

Before consciousness was born, that moment we read about in the early chapter of *Genesis*, when God made man and "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul", that moment man learned to ask himself "Is this good or is this bad?" From then on he had to control his desires which previously were his only law. From then on he not only had to be good, but had to teach others what good is.

The Greek philosophers define "good" as "that which all things aim at." In spite of this, I am afraid that even after all these millions of years, we are still not very far from the savage. We boast of the superiority of our schools and universities, our advanced social achievements, but we still hear the cry of "Man's inhumanity to man." I am sorry to say our endeavours today to relieve much of this are streamlined, and even our old friend Santa Claus is being used more and more as a commercial racket. It is only by fighting against these inhumanities we shall attain deliverance for ourselves. Progress depends on our own personal efforts, therefore any restraint on the liberty of thought would be contrary to the great Law of the Universe.

The advancements we have made in the

world today to that of say fifty years ago are almost unbelievable, and where it will end is beyond comprehension.

In early days the children were taught to hear, see, and say nothing. Today they are encouraged to think for themselves, to work out their own problems, and if mistakes are made, to rectify them or take the consequence. Is this good for them?

We read a lot about juvenile delinquency, teen-age rowdiness and discourtesy. We must admit a lot of this is true, but if we take the trouble to get the real facts we shall find the bad element is only a very small proportion of the teen-age population.

We are living in an age of high-pressure salesmanship, and the newspapers are not above taking advantage of this. It is the sensational news that gets the headlines. If we take time to think about all this we must wonder if there is not something better and nobler in life than what we hear over the radio or read in the papers. . . that the purpose of life must be more than propaganda.

For my part I have only been able to find one answer that fully explains this purpose of life, or as I prefer to call it, this Riddle of Life, the answer is the Ancient Wisdom.

It teaches of the origin of the human race from time immemorial, and its ultimate destiny.

The Ancient Wisdom is neither a religion, a philosophy, nor a science, yet it is all three, and its teachings embrace the whole Universe.

The student of Wisdom soon finds that the expression "one world" and "one humanity" are not just phrases but that they mean what they say.

Your God is you—what you were, what you are, and what you will become.

We learn that the purpose of life is growth and progress, that there is a reason for everything, good fortune and bad fortune. Nothing is lost. Nothing is wasted.

Change—yes! Constantly!

It has even been proven that our own

physical bodies are renewed every seven years—what is this but reincarnation?

There is an old saying "Every pleasure has its pain." Likewise, without unhappiness, happiness would be impossible for we would not know what happiness is or was. Everything has its contrast, its opposite if you like to put it that way; black and white, joy and sorrow, light and darkness, heat and cold, life and what we call death, which we will find is no death but only the beginning of life.

We have to learn how to be happy and we also have to learn how to die. If tomorrow there was no more poverty, no more sickness (which is quite possible) I wonder for how long humanity would be really happy.

Patience Worth said, "I care not for wisdom or learning, give me understanding. . . and I shall have both."

If we are to be happier and wiser in the future than we are today we must concentrate our energies more along spiritual lines than intellectual.

The problems today have become so complex and cover so much territory that it is hard, in fact almost impossible for the average layman to grasp them, much less to discuss them; yet we must endeavour to do so for we all share a responsibility in the future, and unless we understand the full meaning of our lives we cannot make that responsibility constructive. More often than not we are being led by some ideal and many of us today, I am sorry to say, are being driven by fear. We will discover that we do not find our real selves or our real strength until we are up against a fight for life. I think that is the reason why the majority of the men and women who were the prime movers in the great reforms have invariably come from humble circumstances or environments. Britain also showed this courage when she had her back against the wall during the Second World War.

Another great problem the world has on its hands today is the fight against intolerance, especially in connection with

racial and religious prejudices. It is hard to define the meaning of the word "tolerance". We say, "Oh, I cannot tolerate so-and-so," when we mean we don't particularly like them. We remark that such-and-such a person's action is intolerable, when we mean it is not just exactly up to our way of thinking. But I believe when we think of intolerance our minds involuntarily recall racial and religious prejudice. We must be careful, for intolerance can easily breed fanaticism which is a forerunner of strife and war.

Tolerance is not only needed to avoid disaster. It is also needed in the furtherance of peace.

We may not always agree with another's point of view, and we are at perfect liberty to say so, BUT we must fully understand the other person is also entitled to his opinion.

Tomorrow we might have to admit he was right.

The Ancient Wisdom does not condone intolerance. The great teacher Gautama Buddha said, "Do not believe what I tell you unless it appeals to your reason and intuition."

Let us never forget that some part of today's unknowable will become tomorrow's known.

Where are we eventually heading for in this Riddle of Life?

We must admit today we are living in a state of turmoil both social and international.

Many of our great present day philosophers, including Professor Sorokin, social thinker and philosopher of Harvard, are greatly concerned over these problems, and the conclusions they will ultimately come to will have a far reaching effect on our future outlook on life.

Briefly what they are finding is this: That an enduring culture, whether it be Greek society, Egyptian society, Chaldean society, ancient Hindu or Buddhist society, rests upon an integration of all human experience.

Every one of these cultures lasted for a

considerable length of time and in considerable part, according to the degree of effectiveness and completeness of their integration in experience through their science, art, religion, philosophy, ethics, and even their sports.

And that is natural, because when all parts of human life can be gathered together in one whole so that the individual and the family and the community can live according to a common purpose that is shared, a purpose that is related to natural law as well as to the enduring purposes of human life, it is in fact inevitable that stability should result.

If we look closely into world affairs today we shall find humanity is not being led by

reason or sentiment but by strange and unknown forces.

The poet Longfellow recognised these forces in the following lines:

No action,
Whether foul or fair is ever done,
But it leaves somewhere a record,
Written by fingers ghostly,
As a Blessing or Curse,
And mostly
In the greater weakness or greater strength
Of the acts which follow it, till at length
The wrongs of ages are redressed
And the Justice of God made manifest.
There we have the Riddle of Life.

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. Is there any reference in *The Secret Doctrine* to the *I Ching*? And how about Yang and Yin?

Answer. There are some references to the *I Ching* in H. P. Blavatsky's work but unless a person has been informed how to look for the references it is unlikely that one will be able to find the passage which will be quoted here. The reason for this difficulty is easily explained. It is because writers on Chinese books usually adopt their own methods of transliterating Chinese characters (or ideographs). Thus Dr. James Legge who translated the Chinese work now known as the *I Ching* (meaning the *Book of Changes*) spelled the book *Yi King*. *I Ching* represents the transliteration of the Chinese words, although the pronunciation is "Yi Jing." Rev. Joseph Edkins, author of *Chinese Buddhism*, whose work is quoted several times in *The Secret Doctrine* used the spelling *Yi King* therefore it was so spelled in the following quotation, which though lengthy demonstrates how the Chinese

book was regarded by H. P. Blavatsky.

"It was often premised (and as unjustly as usual) that China, nearly as old a country as India, had no cosmogony. 'It was unknown to Confucius, and the Buddhists extended their Cosmogony without introducing a personal God,' it is complained (by Rev. Joseph Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, 'On Cosmogony,' p. 323. And very wisely have they acted.) The *Yi-King*, 'the very essence of ancient thought and the combined work of the most venerated sages, fails to show a distinct cosmogony.' (p. 330) Nevertheless, there is one, and a very distinct one. Only as Confucius did not admit of a future life..."

Here H.P.B. adds this footnote: "If he rejected it, it was on the ground of what he calls the changes — in other words, rebirths — of man, and constant transformations. He denied immortality to the personality of man — as we do — not to MAN."

"... and the Chinese Buddhists reject

the idea of *One* Creator, accepting one cause and its numberless effects, they are misunderstood by the believers in a *personal* God. The 'great Extreme' as the commencement 'of changes' (transmigrations) is the shortest and perhaps the most suggestive of all Cosmogonies, for those who, like the Confucianists, love virtue for its own sake, and try to do good unselfishly without perpetually looking to reward and profit. The 'great Extreme' of Confucius produces 'two figures.' These 'two' produce in their turn 'the four images'; these again 'the eight symbols.' It is complained that though the Confucianists see in them 'Heaven, Earth and man in miniature,' . . . we can see in them anything we like. No doubt, and so it is with regard to many symbols, especially in those of the latest religions. But they who know something of Occult numerals, see in these 'figures' the symbol, however rude, of a harmonious progressive Evolution of Kosmos and its beings, both the Heavenly and the Terrestrial. And any one who has studied the numerical evolution in the primeval cosmogony of Pythagoras (a contemporary of Confucius) can never fail to find in his *Triad*, *Tetraktys* and *Decade* emerging from the ONE and solitary Monad, the same idea. Confucius is laughed at by his Christian biographer for 'talking of divination' before and after this passage, and is represented as saying: 'The eight symbols determine good and ill fortune, and these lead to great deeds. There are no imitable images greater than heaven and earth. There are no changes greater than the four seasons (meaning North, South, East and West, *et seq.*). There are no suspended images brighter than the sun and moon. In preparing *things for use*, there is none greater than the sage. In determining good and ill-luck there is nothing greater than *the divining straws and the tortoise.*'" (p. 320) (S.D. I, 440-1; II, 158-9 6-vol. ed.; I, 474-5 3rd ed.)

The "divining straws" refer to the 50 "sticks" (from one to two feet in length) which are used in the divination. The "tortoise" is obviously used as a symbol. The quotation continues:

"Therefore, the 'divining straws' and the 'tortoise,' the 'symbolic sets of lines,' and the great sage who looks at them as they become one and two, and two become four, and four become eight, and the other sets 'three and six,' are laughed to scorn, only because his wise symbols are misunderstood." (*Ibid.*)

Now follows a very interesting passage showing that the originator of the marvellous idea of the hexagrams (as the 6-line figures of *I Ching* are called) was using a very ancient method of using symbols — comparable to those used in the Stanzas of Dzyan. For H. P. Blavatsky continues:

"So the author and his colleagues will scoff no doubt at the *Stanzas* given in our text, for they represent *precisely the same idea*. The old archaic map of Cosmogony is full of *lines* in the Confucian style, of concentric circles and dots. Yet all these represent the most abstract and philosophical conceptions of the Cosmogony of our Universe. . . .

"Confucius, one of the greatest sages of the ancient world, believed in ancient magic, and practised it himself 'if we take for granted the statements of *Kin-yu*' . . . and 'he praised it to the skies in *Yi-king*,' we are told by his reverend critic. (Edkins, p. 325) Nevertheless, even in his age—i.e., 600 B.C., Confucius and his school taught the sphericity of the Earth and even the heliocentric system." (*Ibid.*)

Another significant passage from the *I Ching* may be brought forward. It indicates that knowledge of the septenary constitution of man was there presented, for a person

" . . . has but to look into the oldest sacred books of China — namely the *Yi King*, or *Book of Changes* (translated by James Legge) written 1200 B.C., to find that same *Septenary* division of man

mentioned in that system of Divination. *Zing*, which is translated correctly enough 'essence,' is the more subtle and pure part of matter — the grosser form of the elementary ether; *Khien*, or 'spirit,' is the breath, still material but purer than the *Zing* and is made of the finer and more active form of ether. In the *Hwan*, or soul (*animus*), the *Khien* predominates, and the *Zing* in the *Pho* or animal soul. At death the *Hwan* (or spiritual soul) wanders away, ascending, and the *Pho* (the root of the Tibetan word *Pho-hat*), descends and is changed into a ghostly shade (the shell). Dr. Medhurst thinks that 'the *Kwei Shins*' (See *A Dissertation on the Theology of the Chinese*, pp. 10-11) are 'the expanding and contracting principles of human life'! The *Kwei Shins* are brought about by the dissolution of the human frame, and consist of the expanding and ascending *Shin* which rambles about in space, and of the contracted and shrivelled *Kwei*, which reverts to earth and nonentity. Therefore, the *Kwei* is the physical body; the *Shin* is the vital principle; the *Kwei-Shin* the *linga-sarira*, or the vital soul; *Zing* the fourth principle or *Kama-Rupa*, the essence of will; *Pho* (the animal soul); *Khien* the spiritual soul; and *Hwan* the pure spirit — the seven principles of our occult doctrine!" (*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, IV, 242-3)

Regarding Yang and Yin: there is only a brief reference to them, although the hexagrams mentioned previously in connection with the *I Ching* are actually composed of Yang and Yin lines. The Yang line represents the positive line; in the quotation below it is designated as the Unity ———; the Yin stands for the negative line, the Binary — — —. Quoting *The Secret Doctrine*:

"Admitting for argument's sake that the ancient world was not acquainted with our modes of calculation or Arabic figures — though we know it was — yet the *circle* and *diameter* idea is there to

show that it was the *first* symbol in cosmogony. Before the *trigrammes* of Fo-hi, *Yang*, the Unity, and *Yin*, the binary. . . China had her Confucius, and her Tau-ists. The former circumscribes the 'great extreme' within a circle with a horizontal line across; the latter place three concentric circles beneath the great circle, while the *Sung* Sages showed the 'great Extreme' in an upper circle, and Heaven and Earth in two lower and smaller circles. The *Yangs* and the *Yins* are a far later invention." (S.D. II, 554; IV, 124 6-vol. ed.; II, 584 3rd ed.)

"THOSE IMAGES THAT YET FRESH IMAGES BEGET"

(Continued from page 10)

its purity, without burden or any heaviness.

That hour he is enkindled. But when once more he is become heavy it is as though the fire were quenched." For concerts come to an end, and the eternal concert only begins in that future state when we are freed from the burden of the body. "He will lapse again from the vision, but let him again waken the virtue . . . again know himself made perfect in splendour . . . ascending through virtue to the Intelligence, and thence through wisdom to the Supreme. This is the life of the . . . godlike and happy among men, a quittance from things alien and earthly, a life beyond earthly pleasure, a flight of the alone to the Alone." (*Enn* 6 IX 9-11)

Stirring words, but how to convert them into practical Theosophy? Porphyry, Plotinus' disciple, tells us to lead the life of a Theosophist. Evil is not implicit in the body, but is a misorientation of the mind towards inferior goals. Freeing oneself of unworthy habits of thought by cultivating reason, courtesy and brotherhood among one's fellow-men, then by attempting to purify the soul, one detaches oneself from material and sensual desires and goals on to a higher level of excellence. Porphyry

recommends the ascetic life, vegetarianism, celibacy, abstinence from public entertainment and vain ritual. On the third level of Paradigmatic Excellence, one orients oneself to the Mind, whence one can finally pass into otherworldly union with the One. Porphyry's own disciple, Iamblichus, turned out to be a disappointment, concerning himself with just those vain rituals of the Gnostics that his master had denounced, and with those demonic beings who, oblivious of mankind, exist in regions which are not urgently our concern. Genuine Neoplatonic philosophy resumes again in the fifth century with Proclus (AD 410-485), a Byzantine lecturer on Plato, and for a while President at Athens University. Proclus claimed to be the reincarnation of that Arab Neopythagorean, Nicomachus of Gerash, who lived in AD 140. With Proclus the "theory of communication" of the Divine Light into the Darkness of the Cosmos is resumed, and if a pun can be excused, is "amplified."

Proclus reviews the transmission of Ideas from the One, and emphasizes "self-communication of the three-fold principle." Just as the earthbound soul of Plotinus utilizes a "communications channel" to compare itself with the Original Idea, thus involving a three-fold soul or Triad, so at every stage of the transmission of Ideas, the "Information" checks the fidelity of the reproduction of the Ideas. In modern communications, this process is called "negative feedback." The amplifier (equally in a record-player, a television receiver, or somewhere on the telephone, broadcast or TV network) is equipped with a simple and reliable arrangement invented by Harold Black of Bell Telephone Laboratories, which constantly compares the feeble signals it receives with the amplified signals that it re-transmits, and attempts to remove any difference between the two. There should not be any difference, since both in modern communications and in Neoplatonism, degradation of the pure original in-

formation is evil. This "negative feedback" is precisely the mechanism described by Proclus for his "procession of Ideas from the One." His corresponding Triad is *Mone*, the undistorted input received from afar; *Pro-odos*, the amplified output information, and *Epistrophe*, or the comparative process restoring fidelity to the amplified information. In both the ancient and the modern systems, this is only a partial restoration of identity, and true fidelity can never be attained. Cause is always separate from effect and dependent upon it. There is always subject and object, and only when one is reunited with the One is there no longer the duality of input and output, original and reproduction. And yet . . . pure intuition, that rare direct communication through the Higher World Soul can, momentarily, offer a symbolic vision of the One —

"A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains
All that man is,
All mere complexities,
The fury and the mire of human veins."

— *Byzantium*, 1.5-8

BOOK REVIEWS

Readers Guide to the Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, compiled and edited by George E. Linton and Virginia Hanson. Published 1972 by the Theosophical Publishing House, Madras, India. 308 pp. Price \$4.95.

The study notes are arranged in the chronological order of the letters. Ahead of the notes is a valuable table correlating the number of the letter chronologically, the number of the letter as given in the three editions, page number, date, significant events for each date. This table enables the student to quickly connect a letter to the *Guide* or vice versa.

There are 181 pages of study notes arranged under three headings for each letter: Description, Circumstances, References. Description covers the physical letter; paper, ink, appearance. Cir-

cumstances gives the whereabouts of the people concerned, events transpiring at that time in their lives, H.P.B.'s health, etc. References are to remarks in the letter explaining them where the letter itself does not do so, thus saving the student much research time. For instance, M.L. 43 quotes a verse and the Reference shows that it is from Christina Rossetti's poem "Up Hill" and that the Simla Sage is A.O.H.

192 pages of Alphabetical Notes are particularly useful to a student not familiar with the people in the early history of the Society nor with expressions well-known in the East but not in the West. Terms like 'Bhoot', 'od', 'Chela', and 'Yuga' are explained. The significance of many of the names used in the Letters can be appreciated more fully by reading these Notes. These brief but comprehensive sketches of the life, character and work of people like Bacon, Fern, and R. Hodgson add perspective to the references in the Letters.

Appendices A-F, 60 pages, headed; Sinnett, Hume, Saraswati, the H.O.X. Letter and Comments, Kiddle Incident and Koot Hoomi's Travels. These outlines condense much important material necessary for intelligent understanding of the Mahatma Letters. It would be distracting for the student to leave the study of the M.L. to look up the information given in the Appendices and some might not have the time or necessary facilities. It is very helpful to have this work done so capably.

The *Guide* is, indeed, a very useful companion book for the Mahatma Letters. It is a reference book not a commentary, so does not interfere with the student's judgement. He is saved many hours of interesting but distracting research. Facts are arranged carefully for quick reference and have been selected with discrimination and no bias. Using the *Guide* in a study group, we have found that it saves time and aids considerably in understanding the Letters. A huge amount of painstaking effort has resulted in this compact, reliable, useful *Guide*. Fleet B. Berry

Dynamics of the Psychic World. Comments by H. P. Blavatsky on Magic, Mediumship, Psychism and Powers of the Spirit. Compiled, with notes, by Lina Psaltis. A Quest Book Original, published 1972 by the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A. xvii + 132 pp. Price \$1.95.

Dynamics of the Psychic World is an anthology of writings by H. P. Blavatsky on various psychic and spiritual matters. In my opinion it might well prove to be one of the most important Theosophical publications of the seventies. It is virtually a handbook for students of the "supernatural".

Lina Psaltis has carefully selected material from all H.P.B.'s works, including the ten so-far published volumes in the *Collected Writings* series. (In fact, this source has been tapped more than any other.) The quotations are assembled under appropriate subject headings and supplemented where necessary with helpful explanatory notes by the compiler. The chapter titles indicate the scope of her work: Natural Law and Psychic Phenomena; Magic, Hypnotism and Witchcraft; Spiritualism and Mediumship; The Power of Thought; Spiritual Progress; Planes of Perception; Soul Dynamics.

As might be expected, the concentration in this manner of information on psychic subjects carries a tremendous impact on the reader. To those not previously convinced of the complexity of this study, and its inherent dangers to those who dabble in it, these pages should be sufficient to relay the message clearly.

It is particularly gratifying that so much use has been made of the material contained in early *Theosophist* and *Lucifer* magazine articles. In spite of their availability in the *Collected Writings* for several years past, this mine of Theosophic information seems little used, even by students of long standing. Yet, as is obvious from this excellent book, not only the standard works are valuable for serious study.

Ted G. Davy

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