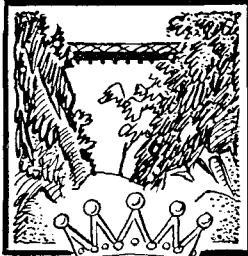


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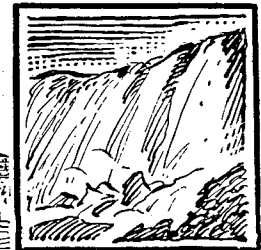
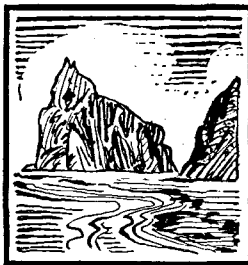


THE GROUNDWORK IN PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

By P. G. Bowen

Many a man has essayed the steep ascent to the Occult Path and has fallen and failed because the ladder used was planted on insecure ground. The Path is in SELF. The ladder by which the Path is reached is in Self. The base upon which it rests is in self. Self-testing is therefore the groundwork of true practical occultism, but it is equally true to say that occultism in any of its degrees is always a testing of SELF in one or other of its aspects.

Testing for the aspirant who as yet is not even a neophyte begins with self-questioning. From within himself the answers must come, and must be true, for to the extent that they are self-deceiving they become obstacles and snares in the way, making success difficult or impossible. Of their truth, the Learner himself is the sole judge. His guide or teacher, should he have one, will pass no judgment upon him, nor tell him the truth concerning himself, but he will, as I attempt to do in this lesson, strive by explanation, illustration and



exhortation to lead him to discover whatever truth is in him.

Let the aspiring Learner begin by asking himself a series of questions such as those that follow, and strive by the aid of whatever light he can find within himself, or through study of spiritual scriptures, or through consideration of such hints as I give, to answer them truly and rightly:—

Question 1. Do I believe that man is perfectable?

If the answer should be no, it is evidence of unfitness for any true occult effort, and can mean only that the aspirant is seeking results from the work, in the shape of some sort of satisfaction or aggrandisement for his existing, and most imperfect selfhood. If it should be yes, it then becomes necessary to subject it to close examination to determine what its real nature is. The belief required is very different from that which the ordinary religious man declares when he says he "believes" in the dogmas of his Church, merely an unreasoning faith, or a pious hope. To the true aspirant his own inherent perfectability appears as a fact as axiomatic as that the whole is greater than any of its parts; if not, let him ask himself towards what end does he work.

Question 2. What is my true motive in seeking the PATH?

In the East this question is always the first the would-be disciple is required to answer, though not always is it formulated in words, nor is the answer required in words, but rather in *being*. Here to help the Learner it is placed second, since the first propounded leads towards the right answer, which is not, however, the one which first springs to mind, namely:—

I desire to attain to perfection.

But this at once suggests another question:

Question 3: What is Perfection?

and its answer:

Selfconscious union with Universal Being.

Question 4: How is this union achieved?

Answer: By following the Disciple's PATH.

Question 5: What is the Path?

The Learner may perhaps attempt to answer this question, but unless his philosophic understanding is unusually deep he will fail to do so with any correctness. The true meaning of this constantly used term the PATH is but very rarely understood.

The PATH is the EVERBECOMING of Universal, or Noumenal BEING.

This BEING (the unmanifest Logos of Greek philosophy) exists eternally in each and every one, and all of its infinitude of aspects. Noumenally each is its own essential, or ultimate self, but regarded in another way it is, exactly equally, BEING. Hence BEING. The Everexisting, exists in Everbecomingness, its aspects eternally becoming itself. H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* calls this noumenal Everbecoming, Absolute abstract MOTION.

As a conception the foregoing is doubtless very difficult, but it will repay the student to get some measure of understanding of it, for upon it as a philosophic basis rests the whole fabric of true, Practical Occultism. Absolute abstract MOTION, or noumenal Everbecoming manifests in the phenomenal worlds in incessant change, in the infinite gradations of being, in all that we know as growth, or evolution; all these are aspects of BEING becoming itself, as perceived by the limited and imperfect consciousness now used by man. Outside the Everbecoming, therefore, or in any opposition to its law (which is itself) there can be no true growth or progress.

The importance of grasping what I attempt to convey in the two preceding paragraphs is, for the typical Western aspirant, very great, for it gives him a logical philosophic basis, satisfactory to the reason for the practical efforts which will later be required of him as a true neophyte, or disciple. Of the Oriental, and of a few natural mystics in the West, this is less true, for they have an instinctive, or intuitive appreciation of universal law which the typical Western student has not, and which

he has to acquire by intellectual effort.

The PATH is, then, universal becoming, and all the life of unselfconscious nature moves upon it—more accurately, is the phenomenal manifestation of it. From it man alone of all creatures is a wanderer, for with his attainment of selfconsciousness he made, and continues to make the little spark he knows as self the goal of his becoming, instead of the infinite flame of Everexisting BEING, in which, only, perfect selfhood can be found. The task that confronts him, now true aspiration has begun to stir within him, is to struggle back into the PATH, and that means, as has been shown, to make himself once more an integral part of the Everbecoming, but this time with clear consciousness.

To be upon the PATH in any real sense is to be already in union with Universal BEING in its one absolute attribute of Everbecoming, and this understanding leads back to the true answer which the question, "What is my true motive in seeking the PATH"? demands. The motive must be desire for the PATH itself—desire to be the PATH. It is clear that to be the PATH means to have surrendered self absolutely to the law of BEING, and therefore (and this is a most wholesome thing) it reveals to the aspirant that, as he now stands, the true PATH lies far above him, and beyond his reach and sight, and that if he is ever to attain it, he must begin upon and within the ground and conditions that surround him.

The work he does there must correspond in nature to the activities which constitute the PATH, for, as the ancient Hermetic aphorism says, "*As it is above, so it is below: there is but one Life and Law.*"

At the very outset let the aspirant examine himself to make sure that he has at command the form of energy needed to do the work he thinks to do. Noumenal Energy, that element which links abstract Consciousness with abstract Substance, and in interaction with them forms BEING, is manifest in an infinite series of aspects in the phenomenal world. Let the Learner

enquire which of these it is which links consciousness steadfastly with any subject or object, and holds it there to the exclusion of all other subjects or objects. The answer is easy: it is *interest*—concentrated desire. Powerful and sustained interest in the actual work, or activities that constitute becoming, or lead towards it is the form of energy, or motive power which the aspirant must possess, or which he must strive to cultivate, for without it he cannot advance. He may learn what to do and may do it, but if his interest is centred in results and not in the work he is not moving towards the PATH, but wandering as almost all men do in bypaths, now far more mazy than those he followed of old. This is a serious warning to all would-be occultists which they should take to heart.

At this point many questions will arise, some of which may be answered by a teacher, or a more experienced learner; but for the most part must be resolved by the aspirant himself. In seeking such answers, though to the ordinary mind it means delay, or stagnation, he is actually doing an enormously important work, for he is calling into conscious activity a higher Self which observes and questions, and in due time will come to direct the lower, acting, and outwardly manifesting self, or selves. When once the process is begun it tends to produce, and to be its own interest, for it opens up a view of life which is no longer that of the self involved in the activities which constitute earthly life, and gives a hitherto unsuspected insight into the nature of others. But it also means entry into a strait and perilous way wherein every step is accompanied by dangers unknown to the world of common man, which if not recognized and rightly encountered will check the Learner's progress, or even throw him back to begin all over again. To indicate all of these that may threaten is wholly impossible, but a few of the most common may be pointed out.

The first detached, uninterrupted view which a Higher, watching Self achieves of the lower, manifesting selfhood inevitably

invites attack upon it, and the attack comes from either the particular aspect of self now under observation, or from others of its very numerous kindred which lurk unseen. It usually manifests in some such way as this: For a brief moment the observing Self stands free, and sees clearly to what unprofitable ends an aspect of lower—that is personal—selfhood is tending; then the attack comes, and a host of excuses for the delinquent self fill the field of consciousness, each masquerading, or attempting to masquerade as the vanquished Higher Self. When once the attack is recognized for what it is, the observing Self can again withdraw without too severe a struggle, and resume its study of the masqueraders, but in doing this the Learner should be on guard against two more subtle dangers: first, that of regarding with abhorrence and condemnation any aspect of his lower, acting selfhood, for to do so is to identify himself with it and to lose the momentary freedom he has had. The lower selfhood is not evil in itself. It is a misleader if it rules the being, but as an obedient servant to the Higher Self it is good and useful in its own place. If watched and studied without condemnation, approval, or excuse and the ends to which it would move the being marked, it will help the Self to higher and wider vision still, for the energy it manifests is taken up and transmuted to serve its Master.

The second danger, yet more subtle, is that of pride in the freedom and vision achieved. The watching, directing Self of the moment which has a momentary freedom, is not, and will not be until progress is far advanced the true Higher Self which is of a deep inner Being, wholly beyond personal, human selfhood. The watching self of the moment is, as is seen by its susceptibility to attack, simply a higher aspect of personal selfhood, but it is, nevertheless, for the Learner in his world, the *witness and symbol* of that true Higher Self which may one day become known. As such it is a step inward, or upward, no-

thing more. To feel pride in it is to fall into worship of it, which is the way of common man, but the fall is now more steep and deep. To guard against pride in Self, attend to the advice given by a Teacher of old: "*Examine the examiner, watch the watcher, and judge the judge.*" The Self which surveys a lesser self should instantly be made the subject of surveillance by another higher, or more detached, and that by another, and so on. This process is the very essence of true practical occultism, a constant inward retreat which gives a constant view of and a constant command of the legions of the lower selfhood which manifest in the myriad activities, objective and subjective, constituting what is known as personality, or character. When really established it means being upon the PATH, moving as an integral part of Everbecoming BEING, to the extent to which this is possible in our human phase. The union is there if the work described is done unflinchingly, but what the disciple's consciousness comprehends is not itself the ultimate union, perfection, Nirvana, but *the witness, or the symbol* of it. The Higher, watching Self, for the moment that it subsists, is the symbol of free, Everliving BEING, but as it changes into a higher still, and itself becomes the subject of surveillance it is the symbol of Everbecoming.

The groundwork in practical occultism consists of a steady, patient effort to establish as a *habit of being* the process indicated. All more advanced activities which fall under the heading of occultism, even up to the use of magic and the rousing of powers, are all instruments to the same end, though "end" is a word unfitted for application to an activity which has no end. Does Nirvana mean an end? It would be presumptuous for one who is hardly a disciple to attempt to say what Nirvana may be, but I cannot conceive it as an end of activity. H. P. Blavatsky says, "*That which is motionless cannot be Divine*". If anything may be postulated of Nirvana it is as a state in which subsist together as one an absolute selfconsciousness of Ever-

living, and of Everbecoming BEING.

The more abstruse aspects of the philosophy of occultism very often prove a snare, and I incline to deprecate its study, unless as I strive to show, its practical implications can be perceived and acted upon. Neither should I place any value and reliance on philosophic hypotheses, unless there is some practical way, such as that which I suggest, that when diligently followed tends towards demonstration of their truth.

On more everyday levels the value of self-watchfulness of the kind described can easily be proved. I have said that it consists in itself in the establishment of a habit of being. It is consequently the most effective—indeed the one truly effective means of overcoming and dissipating those numerous hampering aspects of the lower selfhood which we call bad, or idle habits. Psychologists, and many who call themselves occultists teach as the best means of overcoming a bad habit the substitution of a good one. The principle is correct, but the advice begs the question, what is a *good* habit. The ordinary individual, or the tyro in occultism cannot judge what is good. In cultivating what he thinks is a good habit to displace one he thinks bad he is usually but exchanging one taskmaster for another. The man who breaks the cigarette habit by substituting that of gum-chewing or candy-eating, may possibly, but not certainly gain in physical health; but from the occult point of view he is as securely bound to an aspect of his sense nature as ever. But the establishment of the habit of self-watchfulness will restore the being to its true balance, with the result that vitality is withdrawn from all those minor forms of outer activity, and from activities of the less deep aspects of the subjective nature, manifesting in unprofitable habits, desires, impulses and thoughts, and they will consequently gradually wither away and disappear.

The desire for results in the shape of increased knowledge or power is one of the giants in the path of the beginner in occult-

ism. How to overcome it is an everpresent problem. Interest centred in self-watchfulness is a certain means to victory. The work itself is interest provoking, and is its own result and reward.

The views above expressed do, perhaps, small justice to the subject, for they are vague and sketchy in the extreme. In leaving them thus, however, I act with intention. Enough has been said, I think, to stir some interest in the mind of any serious student, and my hope is that this interest may lead some to renewed study with a fresh outlook. I recognize also the possibility that criticism from certain quarters will be roused against certain of my ideas. I hope that this is no more than a bare possibility, for where so much is left so vague the chances are that the critic may be but smiting shadows, not realities. Cogent questions to secure elaboration of anything said, or implied, or which are suggested by anything said, or implied, I welcome. If readers of the C. T. care to ask such questions, either through the pages of the magazine (with the editor's permission) or direct, through letter to myself, I shall be happy to reply to them. In doing so I may possibly benefit the questioner, and others, but most of all I shall benefit myself.

P. G. BOWEN.

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Our readers will be pleased to know that an important article by Captain P. G. Bowen on "Magic" will appear next month dealing with the disclosures of occult information by Israel Regardie and others.

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KARMA AND FATALISM

By Cecil Williams

One of the aspects of the current Theosophical conception of Karma is an idea expressed tersely and clearly by Dr. Annie Besant in *The Ancient Wisdom*. "In no case," she says (page 265), "can a man suffer that which he has not deserved." William Q. Judge made the same declaration. In *The Ocean of Theosophy* he wrote (p. 91): "Each man is the maker and fashioner of his own destiny, *the only one who sets in motion the causes for his own happiness and misery.*" The words I have italicized leave his meaning in no doubt; it is apparent he meant what Dr. Besant meant.

This idea is repeated in various ways by nearly all exponents of Theosophy. Recently it was expressed by Dr. G. de Purucker in his work *The Esoteric Tradition* (p. 58, note): "It is . . . erroneous to suppose that whatever happens to a man in his endless series of lives in time and space, in the worlds visible and invisible, during the æons-long course of his peregrinations, is in strict accuracy 'unmerited' or that events in any particular, or in general, happen to him apart from his own causative action."

The concept is one of absolute karmic justice applied to the individual. Whatever happens to me or my neighbour, to my friend or my enemy, is for each the reward or retribution for past actions, desires or thoughts. It is a concept that instinctively repels many who assert, "This is fatalism!" Are they right or can we reconcile what I shall call the Judge-Besant concept of Karma with the equally Theosophical tenet of free-will?

Both Judge and Besant have said we can. Man, able to think, can change his thoughts and so replace evil with good says Dr. Besant (*Ancient Wisdom*, p. 262), and Judge, in an article on Karma in his magazine, *The Path*, said that by directing energy from one plane to another past Karma will "unfold itself on that plane"

(U. L. T. pamphlet, No. 6, p. 6).

Man's freewill is, of course, limited. Often, at a particular moment, there is no choice. We act according to what our thoughts have made us, according to our character. Knowing a man intimately we can sometimes predict, with reasonable accuracy, what, in certain circumstances he will do. A humanitarian, carrying a gun for a friend across a field, sees a rabbit: we know he will let the animal run unmolested. A sportsman, we are sure, would send a shot after it. But suppose the man with the gun is one who has shot rabbits yet is coming to regard the sport as wrong. Then there will be an internal conflict; old habits will wrestle with new ideas. At that moment he can exercise freewill.

But the question which most exponents of Karma, so far as I know, have failed to consider, is this: Is it the rabbit's Karma to be shot? To put the question broadly, if A, exercising freewill, injures or aids B, is such injury or aid, B's Karma?

As, according to the Judge-Besant concept of Karma, nothing can happen to anyone that he or she has not deserved, the answer to this broad question is in the affirmative. The injury done, or the aid rendered, B by A is B's merited Karma.

It therefore follows that A is the *instrument* of B's Karma, that is B's merited Karma reaches him through A. Consequently, A, carrying out the law of Karma, is an automaton.

But, says Theosophy, he is not an automaton. He has freewill, he is the agent, that is the *creator* of Karma.

It can be seen that between the Judge-Besant concept of Karma and the Theosophical tenet of freewill there is a real contradiction.

The Judge-Besant concept of Karma was not H. P. Blavatsky's, nor was it the Masters'. This is made very plain in *The Key to Theosophy*. "We say" she wrote (p. 27, U.L.T. edition), "that man suffers so much unmerited misery during his life, through the fault of others with whom he is associated or because of his environment.

that he is surely entitled to perfect rest and quiet, if not bliss [in devachan], before taking up again [in another incarnation] the burden of life."

In a note to another expression of the same thought (p. 126) she said, "Some Theosophists have taken exception to this phrase [unmerited suffering] but the words are those of the Master. . . . Men often suffer from the effects of the actions done by others, effects which thus do not strictly belong to their own Karma *but to that of other people*—and for these sufferings they, of course, deserve compensation."

The passage to which the note refers, and the note itself, are copied in *The Key* from an article "Constitution of the Inner Man," in the magazine, *Lucifer*, of January 1889, also by H.P.B. (Studies in Occultism, No. VI., p. 33). The phrase I have italicized above is omitted in *The Key* but is contained in the original note, which also contains the following passage, the italics being in the text: "If it be true that nothing that happens to us can be nothing else than Karma—or the direct or indirect effect of a cause—it would be a greater error to think that every evil or good which befalls us is due *only to our own personal Karma.*"

Let us get this straight! Whatever befalls us is Karma, for we cannot escape from the operation of Law, but it does not necessarily follow that what befalls us is deserved. To illustrate this point H.P.B. takes an extreme case:

"A man, who, believing in Karma, still revenges himself and refuses to forgive every injury, thereby rendering good for evil, is a criminal and only hurts himself. As Karma is sure to punish the men who wronged him, by seeking to inflict an additional punishment on his enemy, he who instead of leaving that punishment to the great Law adds to it his own mite, only begets thereby a cause for the future reward of his own enemy and a future punishment for himself." (*Key*, U.L.T. edition, p. 157).

The significance of this statement, as illustrating the working of Karma, has escaped attention. Yet it illustrates the problem of unmerited suffering. The man who is the victim of revenge might be said, by the thoughtless, to have deserved the injury done him, but not so according to the Law of Karma, for he is compensated. Therefore, in strict Karmic justice the vengeance wreaked on him comes within the classification of "unmerited suffering", unmerited, that is, in Karmic justice.

It is easy to see why this is so. Karma returns upon the point of origin, as shown in H.P.B.'s well-known illustration of a stone thrown in the water, which creates circles of disturbance that react upon the centre. To add to the reaction is to exceed Karmic justice and to create an injustice.

This is the logic, as H.P.B. intimates, of the injunction to forgive our enemies. Karma will surely punish their misdeeds, but for any revenge taken by us we will be punished and they rewarded.

A man is not compelled to seek revenge, for he can, if he chooses, forgive. Possessing freewill, he can injure others. The very fact that he possesses freewill gives him this power. But he can also, if he chooses, aid others.

But men injure others not merely through revenge, but because they are ambitious, greedy, selfish, malicious, and it would be absurd to say that these injuries are merited. All that is suffered by anyone, through the actions of others, comes, therefore, under the classification of "unmerited suffering".

If we admit unmerited suffering, injustice, as logically we must do, have we not then destroyed the grand idea of Karmic justice? By no means! Man may be and often is unjust, Karma is unerringly just.

The action of Karma is not confined to reward and retribution for acts done by the individual to others; it includes compensation for human injustices or unmerited suffering endured by the indivi-

dual. In saying, "You can only suffer that which you have deserved," the Judge-Besant concept errs. It should be, "You *always* suffer that which you have deserved, and suffer undeservedly also from the actions of others, but for the latter you are *always* compensated."

There are passages in the writings of H.P.B. which appear to lend support to the Judge-Besant concept of Karma and positively to contradict the quotations given above. But do they actually support this theory? Let us consider a typical passage, taken from an eloquent page of *The Secret Doctrine*:

"But verily there is not an accident in our lives, not a misshapen day, or a misfortune, that could not be traced back to our own doings in this or in another life." (Vol. I., pp. 643-4).

At first blush this appears conclusive. Blavatsky is saying what Judge and Besant said! Yet people do not ordinarily write like lawyers, with every possible qualifying clause attached to each sentence, neither did H.P.B. and the Masters. Witness the discussions with Sinnett in the *Mahatma Letters* over implied conditions not expressly stated! (E.g., xxiii, A & B).

This passage may therefore be interpreted in four ways: (1) It can mean that *all* evil which befalls us, including suffering caused by the actions of others, is just; (2) It can be taken specifically *not* to include injustice arising from the actions of others, for the words "accident", "misshapen day", and "misfortune" do not necessarily mean or include evil done voluntarily by others; (3) A qualifying clause "except for unmerited suffering" may be understood; (4) It may mean that all evil, even that done by others, is remotely due to our actions in the past, i.e., if X injures me, it is because in a previous incarnation, I was associated with him, though he is not compelled to hurt me and the injury is unmerited.

This typical sentence is, in my opinion, unsatisfactory textual evidence. It is by no means conclusive. And supposing it

does mean that no suffering is unmerited, how is that to be reconciled with the statement above quoted, from the *Key* "that man suffers so much unmerited misery during his life through the fault of others," which, if it means anything, means that some suffering is unmerited? The reconciliation may be made in two ways. We can either say, "Apart from unmerited suffering all suffering is merited," which is reasonable, or we can say "Although some suffering is unmerited all suffering is merited," which is nonsense.

The Judge-Besant concept of Karma appears to me to be erected on too narrow a foundation. After considerable reflection, my conviction is that the post-Blavatsky exposition of Karma misrepresents the teaching as a whole. If I were to say—as I do—that the Judge-Besant concept is untenable from the broad lines of karmic action as well as owing to its incompatibility with human freewill; that unmerited suffering arising from the actions of others is not confined to the direct operation of freewill, and that there must be also a sort or sorts of unmerited suffering in addition to these and that endured because of the personality's ignorance of the deeds of a previous life (to which I shall, in a moment, refer), I would probably astonish the majority of the present-day exponents of Theosophy; yet I am convinced that such is the truth and that I could present a good case for my reasoned beliefs, whereas the defenders of the Judge-Besant concept of Karma have, so far as I can see, no case worthy of the name at all.

For what is the defence of the Judge-Besant concept of Karma? It is that while there is unmerited suffering of a sort, namely that explained in the following passage:

"If it may be said that there is not a mental or physical suffering in the life of a mortal which is not the direct fruit and consequence of some sin in a preceding existence; on the other hand, since he does not preserve the slightest recollection of it in his actual life, and feels himself not

deserving of such punishment, and therefore thinks he suffers for no guilt of his own, this alone is sufficient to entitle the human soul to the fullest consolation, rest and bliss in his *post-mortem* existence." (*Key*, U.L.T. edition, p. 126).

This, exponents of the Judge-Besant concept of Karma assert is the *only* kind of unmerited suffering existent. Now, neither in this passage, nor in the context, is there one word stating that this is the only unmerited suffering endured by man. It is as plain as a pikestaff that what this passage implies is, "So just is Karma that *even* the suffering occasioned by the sense of injustice due to ignorance of deeds in a past incarnation is compensated." There is absolutely no warrant, that I can discern, for using this passage to deny H. P. B.'s statement that men suffer undeservedly through the actions of others.

But this is theological argumentation, that is, argument from texts, and the Theosophist should be less a theologian than a philosopher. But such arguments are necessary to demonstrate, not that the Judge-Besant concept is wrong, but that it differs from Blavatsky's.

I have suggested that the case against the Judge-Besant concept of Karma is not limited to the argument from freewill, but to develop this other evidence would take a volume. The story goes that a lawyer once rose in court to say that he had fourteen reasons why a client could not appear, the first of which was that the man was dead. "We do not need to hear the others," interrupted the Judge. I may not have fourteen reasons for concluding that the Judge-Besant concept of Karma is erroneous, but what I have given is quite sufficient.

If the defenders of the Judge-Besant concept of Karma can, as theologians, explain away, H.P.B.'s positive assertions that men endure unmerited suffering *through the actions of others*; and, as philosophers, explain how man is at the same time and in the same way an automaton and a free agent, then I will modify my conclusions, but if it is asserted that Kar-

ma is too deep for human comprehension then I reply, in the words of *The Secret Doctrine*, "Karma has not involved its decrees in darkness purposely to perplex men."

This question is not an academic one. It has a far-reaching moral significance. Is a negro lynched, is a guiltless man executed, do the machinations of financiers create privation among thousands, does war bring misery to millions? The Theosophist, steeped in the Judge-Besant concept of Karma, consciously, semi-consciously or unconsciously, tends to adopt toward these events a negative attitude. He thinks, "That is their Karma." Is he not convinced that none can suffer what they have not deserved? In so thinking he is an unconscious fatalist. And worse, his sympathy is weakened by the thought that the sufferers receive only their deserts.

But let the Theosophist understand that these evils are due, largely, not to Karma but to human injustice, and that by his neglect to spread the truths of Theosophy he also is culpable; that he and those he loves must sooner or later suffer from the reverberations of these evils, that unless he bestirs himself misery will increase, and his attitude must become positive.

To the erroneous and even harmful teaching of Karma contained in the Judge-Besant concept I ascribe much of the inertia that has sapped the movement of its vitality, its urge. It is tragic to see one who joined the movement with a passionate revolt against human injustice drained of his crusading spirit by the stupifying effects of the Judge-Besant concept of Karma, and sink slowly into inanition and futilities.

The purpose of Theosophical teaching should be to guide the crusading spirit into right channels, not to inculcate an unconscious fatalism. I cannot see anything but failure for the present revival of Theosophy unless the true concept of Karma is firmly grasped and clearly taught.

God-like is man; he is able to create good and create evil; to bring into being

new miseries and new happinesses for others. Properly understood the doctrine of Karma calls upon us to overcome human injustice by right effort. Meditation upon the right concept of Karma gives us greater consciousness of freedom, power and responsibility.

UNMERITED KARMA

Madame Blavatsky declares that a person may meet with "unmerited trials." (Key to Theosophy). How can this be? If the Law is absolutely just, how can it mete out to us anything but justice?

Answer.—Simply because, in a world of exceeding complexity, it is inconceivable that the merit and demerit of each man should be exactly balanced up at each moment of his life.

Look closely at this. If there can be no unmerited trials, neither can there be unmerited blessings. If a man commits a grave wrong and it is not punished till later, any intermediate blessing must be unmerited. Similarly as to a good deed. Hence the theory of the questioner requires that awards should follow *instantaneously* upon acts, and, as this must be so as much at one date as another, that it should always have been so. And from this flows the consequences that a man's condition at any moment exhibits exactly his merit or demerit at the preceding moment.

Now such is obviously not the fact. We can so convince ourselves by watching the career of any one prominent in the community or well known to us personally; or, better yet, by recalling our own. Was every evil deed punished, every good deed rewarded, the instant afterwards? Assuredly not. Sometimes the consequences did not become visible for years, in other cases they are still unmanifest.

Nor are the reasons obscure. A world in which right and wrong met with immediate reward would be a world managed solely for moral purposes. Nothing could happen to anybody which was not at the moment deserved. Ice so weak as to crush

under the sinner would be strong enough to support the saint; railway accidents would pick out the undeserving on a train and spare the good; only reprobates would be drowned with their vessel; stocks which would go up for the benefit of the philanthropist must at the same time go down for the reproof of the monopolist; storms and floods and droughts and fires must visit the vicious, while skipping the adjacent territory of the righteous. Evidently in such a world there could be no physical law. There would be no connection between events or between phenomena, for the only connection would be between an event or a phenomenon and a moral condition in some particular man. Forces would not play equally or regularly, but would rush zigzag in any direction as needed for disciplinary ends. Science and history and commerce and education would disappear at once.

Another reason is that, in the world as it actually exists, not only are physical laws no respecters of persons, but the operation of all forces is enormously complicated by the existence of a vast number of varied, changeable, and unregulated human wills. If all men were equally intelligent and equally conscientious, the course of things would be comparatively simple. But when there are millions of individuals, each more or less selfish, stupid, flighty, or whimsical, forces of opposite, jarring and conflicting character must be constantly set in motion and constantly produce a discord which cannot affect only the causer. If "A" bears the market, the ramified influences reach the virtuous I. who is ignorant and the meritorious T. who is timid; both sell out and lose, thus suffering an "unmerited trial," while the covetous A, who ought to have a merited trial, amasses wealth. Nor could this be otherwise, for in the vast and complex net-work of agencies constituting social organism and started by impulses from different hands and different motives, all individuals are enmeshed, and accidents and evils must inevitably occur.

Still another reason is that a system of evolution in character precludes the turning of men into automata. If all men treated each other according to exact desert, it must be either because all have reached the state of entire illumination of truth and entire consecration to right, or because all, whatever their desires, are constrained by external powers to act thus judicially. But we know that the former alternative is not the fact, and we can see that the latter would make an automaton of every one, would destroy all moral responsibility and growth, and therefore cannot be a fact. Yet if neither is true, it of necessity follows that there must be occasional injustices and wrongs,—“unmerited trials,” in other words.

This does not in the least conflict with the law of Karma. It has never been held that Justice vindicates itself immediately, but only that it vindicates itself inexorably. Long time may pass, incarnations even, before a deed receives its appropriate reward. It is certainty, not instantaneity, for which we must look. The scales cannot be balanced at each successive moment. There is an approximation to justice always, but absolute precision is only to be found in the totality of incarnations.

Moreover, it is to be remembered that Devachan provides some remedy for “unmerited trials.” As a spiritual condition it is more real than the illusory condition on earth, and we can easily conceive that it contains resources of compensation quite as copious as any here. When we add to these the possibilities in a later incarnation, no one need fear that a temporary loss will not be amply made up to him. The Law does not sleep, but has full means of vindication, and never fails.—*W. Q. J. in the Theosophical Forum, New York, No. 11, April-May, 1890, Question 50.*

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So many people like Theosophy, and yet they at once wish to make it select and of high tone. It is for all men. It is for the common people, who are ever with us. *W. Q. J.'s Letters.*

SELECTIONS FROM “THE MAHATMA LETTERS”

Chosen by the Late Rev. Robert
Norwood, D. D.

(Continued from Page 37.)

THE PATH: Introduction Page xviii

The path of discipleship leads into the heart of Nature itself; the condition of entrance—an obedience to her laws—complete and absolute. Before those Immutable Laws even the highest Adept must bow in humility. To the candidate for discipleship all things are permitted which are natural to Man. No simple *natural* act can defile. But “Occult Science is a jealous mistress, which allows not even the shadow of self-indulgence,” and if the higher levels of spiritual attainment are to be reached the disciple must be prepared to sacrifice and transcend the natural desires of the body, and lead a life which, in the Master K. H.’s own words “is ‘fatal’ not only to the ordinary course of married life, but even to flesh and wine drinking.” (*Letter xviii*).

THE PATH: Page 38.

We must all be *blindfolded* before we can pass onward; or else, we have to remain outside.

THE PATH: Page 351-2.

“Patience, patience. A great design has never been snatched at once.” You were told, however, that the path to Occult Sciences has to be trodden laboriously and crossed at the danger of life; that every new step in it leading to the final goal, is surrounded by pit-falls and cruel thorns; that the pilgrim who ventures upon it is made first to confront and *conquer* the thousand and one furies who keep watch over its adamantine gates and entrance—furies called Doubt, Skepticism, Scorn, Ridicule, Envy and finally Temptation—especially the latter; and that he, who would see *beyond* had to first destroy this living wall; that he must be possessed of a heart and soul clad in steel, and of an iron, never-failing determination and yet be

meek and gentle, humble and have shut out from his heart every human passion, that leads to evil.

THE PLANETARY SPIRITS: Page 45.

I trust that you have given up the queer idea—a natural result of early Christian training—that there can possibly be *human* intelligence inhabiting *purely spiritual* regions?

However ethereal and purified of gross matter they may be, the pure Spirits are still subject to the physical and universal laws of matter.—They *cannot* if even they would span the abyss that separates their worlds from ours. *They can be visited in Spirit*, their Spirit cannot descend and reach us. They attract, they cannot be attracted, their Spiritual polarity being an insuperable difficulty in the way.

The cycle of intelligent existences commences at the highest worlds or *planets*—the term “highest” meaning here the most spiritually perfect. Evolving from cosmic matter—which is akasa, the primeval not the secondary plastic medium, or Ether of Science instinctively suspected, unproven as the rest—man first evolves from this *matter* in its most sublimated state, appearing at the threshold of Eternity as a perfectly *Ethereal*—not Spiritual Entity, say—a Planetary Spirit.

THE PLANETARY SPIRITS: Page 46

Each star world has in its turn its own cycle of Evolution which starts with a purer and ends with a grosser or more material nature. As they descend, each world presents itself naturally more and more shadowy, becoming at the “antipodes” *absolute* matter. Propelled by the irresistible cyclic impulse the Planetary Spirit has to descend before he can re-ascend. On his way he has to pass through the whole ladder of Evolution, missing no rung, to halt at every star world as he would at a station; and, besides the unavoidable cycle of that particular and every respective star world to perform in it his own “*life cycle*” too, viz.—returning and reincarnating as many times as he fails to complete his

round of life in it, as he dies on it before reaching the age of reason as correctly stated in *Isis*.

PREJUDICES: Page 4.

The world’s prejudices have to be conquered step by step, not at a rush.

REINCARNATION: Page 404.

What has the number of incarnations to do with the shrewdness, cleverness, or the stupidity of an individual? A strong craving for physical life may lead an entity through a number of incarnations and yet these may not develop its higher capacities. The Law of Affinity acts through the inherent *Karmic* impulse of the Ego, and governs its future existence. Comprehending Darwin’s Law of Heredity for the body, it is not difficult to perceive how the birth-seeking Ego may be attracted at the time of rebirth to a body born in a family which has the same propensities as those of the reincarnating Entity.

ROSENCRAUZ: Page 280.

Eliphas studied from the Rosicrucian MSS. (now reduced to three copies in Europe). These expound our eastern doctrines from the teachings of Rosencrauz, who, upon his return from Asia dressed them up in a semi-Christian garb intended as a shield for his pupils against clerical revenge. One must have the key to it and that key is a science *per se*. Rosencrauz taught orally. Saint Germain recorded the good doctrines in figures and his only cyphered MS. remained with his staunch friend and patron the benevolent German Prince from whose house and in whose presence he made his last exit—Home.

SPIRIT AND MATTER: Page 63.

Spirit and matter are *one*, being but a differentiation of states not *essences*.

SPIRIT AND MATTER: Pages 141-142.

Our doctrines show, but one principle in nature—spirit-matter, or matter-spirit, the third the ultimate Absolute or the quintessence of the two,—if I may be allowed to use such an erroneous term in the present application—losing itself beyond the view and spiritual perceptions of even the

"Gods" or Planetary Spirits. In the book of Kiu-te, Spirit is called the unultimate sublimation of matter, and matter the crystallization of spirit.

SPIRIT AND MATTER: Page 159.

Spirit, life and matter, are not natural principles existing independently of each other, but the effects of combinations produced by eternal motion in Space.

(To Be Concluded.)

THE STUDENTS' CONVENTION

The International Theosophical Students' Convention for 1937 will be held on Saturday and Sunday, JUNE 12 and 13th, at the Fox Head Inn, NIAGARA FALLS, ONT.

The Committee in charge of arrangements is doing everything to ensure that the Convention will be a success. The programme is not quite complete, but in order to give the Public an idea of the range of subjects which will be discussed, we present a bird's eye view of the proposed programme.

There will be three public lectures and a Symposium. Our old friend, Dr. Alvin B. Kuhn, will give one of these on the second object of the Society, i.e. "The Comparative Study of Religion, Philosophy, and Science." The subject "Theosophy and this War-Mad World" has been chosen by Dr. Evelyn Mitchell, well known Boston psychiatrist, for her public address. At the Toronto Convention a paper by Dr. Mitchell was read and was rated very highly, but this time she has promised to attend and give her talk in person. Another public lecture we hope will be given by Dr. A. C. Parker, Director of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, who will speak on the subject "Native American Occultism and Religious Belief." The Symposium on Sunday evening, June 13th, will be ably handled by Mr. Frank Sutherland (Toronto), Mr. Rupert G. Lesch (Buffalo), and Mr. Dudley W. Barr (Toronto), the subject being "The Three Fundamentals of the Secret Doctrine."

Due to the popularity of the half-hour

Student talks (followed in each case by discussion) last year, the Committee has arranged for eight of these to be given this year. From the point of view of the student who has studied for himself, these talks are undoubtedly the most interesting, as the speaker can go so much deeper into his subject than at a public talk. Subjects already chosen are:—"The Eye Doctrine" by Mr. Emory J. Clapp (Boston). "The Heart Doctrine" by Mr. A. E. S. Smythe (Hamilton); "Theosophy and Astrology" by Mr. A. C. Fellows (Toronto); "From Intellect to Intuition" by Mrs. R. Somers (Toronto); "The Ancient Wisdom" by Mr. L. E. Waters (N. Tonawanda); "Young Theosophists" by Miss E. Webley (Toronto). There are still two more to be arranged.

There will also be ample time for those wishing to participate in an Open Forum. Two periods have been set aside for this purpose. The Musical end of the programme is under the direction of Miss Laura Kelsey, well known Buffalo musician.

Programmes will be mailed about June 1st to all on the Convention mailing list. If you are not on the regular list and want one, you may obtain same by writing Mr. Cecil Williams, 49 East 7th St., Hamilton, Ont.

Mrs. J. K. Bailey is in charge of transportation from Toronto. A bus will probably be chartered if there is sufficient demand for one. All those from Toronto or Hamilton wishing to travel by bus should communicate with Mrs. Bailey, (Lombard 1486), or write her at 52 Isabella Street, Toronto.

Kathleen Marks.

OF STUDYING THEOSOPHY

It is often asked: "How should I or my friend study theosophy? In beginning this study a series of "don'ts" should first engage the student's attention. Don't imagine that you know everything, or that any man in scientific circles has uttered the last word on any subject; don't suppose

that the present day is the best, or that the ancients were superstitious, with no knowledge of natural laws. Don't forget that arts, sciences, and metaphysics did not have their rise with European civilization; and don't forget that the influence of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle of ancient Greece is still imposed upon the modern mind. Don't think that our astronomers would have made anything but a mess of the zodiac if the old Chaldeans had not left us the one we use. Don't forget that it is easy to prove that civilization of the highest order has periodically rolled around this globe and left traces great and small behind. Don't confuse Buddhism with Brahmanism, or imagine that the Hindus are Buddhists; and don't take the word of English or German Sanscrit scholars in explanation of the writings and scriptures of Eastern nations whose thoughts are as foreign in their form to ours as our countries are. One should first be prepared to examine with a clear and unbiased mind.

But suppose the enquirer is disposed at the outset to take the word of theosophical writers, then caution is just as necessary, for theosophical literature does not bear the stamp of authority.

We should all be able to give a reason for the hope that is within us, and we cannot do that if we have swallowed without study the words of others.

But what is study? It is not the mere reading of books, but rather long, earnest, careful thought upon that which we have taken up. If a student accepts reincarnation and karma as true doctrines, the work is but begun. Many theosophists accept doctrines of that name, but are not able to say what it is they have accepted. They do not pause to find out what reincarnates, or how, when, or why karma has its effects, and often do not know what the word means. Some at first think that when they die they will reincarnate, without reflecting that it is the lower personal I they mean, which cannot be born again in a body. Others think that karma is—well, karma,

with no clear idea of classes of karma, or whether or not it is punishment or reward or both. Hence a careful learning from one or two books of the statement of the doctrines, and then a more careful study of them, are absolutely necessary.

There is too little of such right study among theosophists, and too much reading of new books. No student can tell whether Mr. Sinnett in *Esoteric Buddhism* writes reasonably unless his book is learned and not merely skimmed. Although his style is clear, the matter treated is difficult, needing firm lodgment in the mind, followed by careful thought. A proper use of his book, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, and all other matter written upon the constitution of man, leads to an acquaintance with the doctrines as to the being most concerned, and only when that acquaintance is obtained is one fitted to understand the rest.

Another branch of study is that pursued by natural devotees, those who desire to enter into the work itself for the good of humanity. Those should study all branches of theosophical literature all the harder, in order to be able to clearly explain it to others, for a weak reasoner or an apparently credulous believer has not much weight with others.

Western theosophists need patience, determination, discrimination, and memory; if they ever intend to seize and hold the attention of the world for the doctrines they disseminate.

William Brehon.

(First printed in THE PATH for January, 1890, and in June, 1890 it was followed by:

"Much Reading, Little Thought."

MAGAZINES

Dr. G. de Purucker contributes a remarkable article to The Theosophical Forum for May, entitled "The Esoteric and Esoteric H.P.B." In some respects it is a reprint, being the embodiment of two addresses previously delivered. He regards H. P. Blavatsky

as an avatara of a certain type or kind. In *The Theosophist* for May, Mr. Jinarajadasa presents his answer to the query: "Did H. P. Blavatsky Invent the Mahatmas?" It is a careful but brief summary of the whole position. He also presents portions of a letter alleged to have been sent to Mrs. Besant, written on the blank spaces of a letter written by B. W. Mantri to Mrs. Besant and mailed on or about August 22, 1900. This was years before the Liberal Catholic Church revelation, and a striking passage in the present letter reads: "The T. S. was meant to be the cornerstone of the future religions of humanity. To accomplish this object, those who lead must leave aside their weak predilections for the forms and ceremonies of any particular creed and show themselves to be true Theosophists both in inner thought and outward observance." Nor does the Mahatma wish "to be propitiated and made idols of," wherein he is consistent with previous letters. He also says "We never try to subject to ourselves the will of another." All of which is better evidence of authenticity than any handwriting can be. The Hares can only estimate handwriting and spelling, however, and the higher criticism appears to be beyond their powers. *Fraternization News* notes that Dr. Arthur C. Parker, head of the American Indian Esoteric societies and a 33rd degree Mason, will speak at the Students' Convention at Niagara in June. Robert Hughes in a brief article asks why the Theosophical Societies have not progressed more than they have. He says it is because "its philosophy is for the guidance of its servants, not for their intellectual gratification." A shorter answer is because they do not live the Theosophical life. In *The English Theosophical Forum*, Mr. A. Trevor Barker writes on "Fraternization." It had been reported in England that Dr. de Purucker was not in favour of Fraternalization, whereas he was very much in favour of it, but not in favour of Organic or even Federal union of the various Societies. What we have asked for in

Canada is cooperation, but even our own members are slack in yielding as much as that. The duty of attending the public meetings of the Lodges is more honoured in the breach than the observance; still members wonder why the public do not attend. Why should they, when the members will not? When two or three little Lodges prefer to hang separately rather than hang together they must not expect to impress the public with their brand of brotherhood. There is an excellent article on "The Future of Theosophy" in *The Theosophical Movement* for April 12, by a British ex-member of the T. S. in England (Adyar). One remark may be quoted: "The impersonality we seek is that of the Higher Self, and not the indifference of personality. If we be truly impersonal we will be discriminative in the right use of our powers. The world is tired of information; it cries out for the vitality of Truth, and the future of Theosophy is commensurate with that need and the success of our efforts to meet it." *Theosophy* for May continues a valuable series with the second article on "The Symbolic Christ." For those who are emancipating themselves from sacerdotalism such teaching is priceless. *The Aryan Path* for May is distinguished by an article by the well-known exponent of modern culture, C. E. M. Joad, entitled "What is the Soul?" Mr. Joad closes his article, which is based on a perusal of H.P.B.'s "Psychic and Noetic Action," with this observation: "It is impossible not to feel the greatest respect for Madame Blavatsky's writings on this subject; of respect and, if the word may be permitted, of admiration. Writing when she did, she anticipated many ideas which, familiar today, were in the highest degree novel fifty years ago." *Buddhism in England* for March-April is as usual packed full of interesting material, among the articles being "Love in Buddhism," the continued translation of the Tao Te Ching, to be completed and issued in September, and a fine address by Sohaku Ogata on "The Zen Way of Life."

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 Frederick B. Housser, Died 28th December, 1936.
 Kartar Singh, 1720 Fourth Ave. W., Vancouver, B.C.
 Wash. E. Wilks, 925 Georgia St. W., Vancouver.

GENERAL SECRETARY

Albert E. S. Smythe, 33 Forest Avenue,
 Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

OFFICIAL NOTES

This is the very last call for ballots, which must reach the General Secretary by 25th inst. If you have no ballot send in your annual dues at once and receive one.

* * *

Mr. N. W. J. Haydon writes to remind us that he was never a member of the Boston Lodge, but was president of Alpha Lodge, Boston. He thinks that his three years' vice-presidency of the Toronto Lodge is now of more importance.

* * *

It is expected that the ballots in the election for the new General Executive will be counted on Friday, May 28, when Mr. A. S. Winchester, barrister of Toronto, will superintend the proceedings. Will your ballot be included in the count?

* * *

The Temple Artisan, received April 24, announces the marriage of Dr. W. H. Dower to Miss Pearl Wilshire on March 22. The ceremony was performed with

Temple rites, and the occasion appears to have been a particularly joyful one. We extend our congratulations.

* * *

We begin this month the publication of articles by the late William Quan Judge, taken from *The Path* and also from *The Theosophical Forum*. His writings have a flavour of their own, concise, direct, logical. Some day there will be a collected edition of Judge's writings and it will be a most helpful and instructive volume.

* * *

The Bulletin, No. cii. of the United Lodge of Theosophists, 17 Great Cumberland Place, London, W.1. England, has begun to publish material from "the ancient storehouses of India", and selects a passage from the *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* for the April issue. "Its understanding requires heart wisdom and not head learning."

* * *

Dr. A. L. Morris, on his way from the Bahai Convention in Chicago to Toronto, called on the General Secretary, and discussed the general situation. He views the aims of the T. S. and the Bahai movement as identical. He expects to speak to the Bahai group in Toronto, and then proceed to Detroit and elsewhere in the United States. He drives his own car and is a solitary apostle.

* * *

The annual session of Mr. Smythe's study class in Hamilton concluded on Tuesday evening, May 4. Mr. and Mrs. Hick entertained the members at the close of the class. On the motion of Miss Carr and Miss Putnam a hearty vote of thanks was accorded them for their hospitality during the years in which they gave the use of their rooms weekly through the season from October till May for this purpose. The books used during the sessions were *The Key to Theosophy*, *Echoes of the Orient*, and *Modern Theosophy*.

* * *

Dr. Arundale, P.T.S., has favoured us with a souvenir of The Gardens of Adyar, presenting a photograph of the Trilithon

entrance to the Gardens with a view of the Headquarters, and four leaves, or rather two leaves and two sprays from the Garden of Remembrance. There is a leaf of the Great Banyan, a leaf of the Bo Tree, and a spray of Tulsi, and of a small creeping herb, the *Pilea microphylla*. In this month of the Wesak it is especially appropriate and welcome, and we are grateful to Dr. Arundale for the gift.

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Elsewhere will be found an outline of the International Theosophical Students Convention, as furnished by Mrs. Robert Marks, one of the Secretaries. It will be seen that it is being held at the same place as the first Fraternalization Convention, the Fox Head Inn at Niagara Falls, Ontario. Dr. Alvin B. Kuhn, Dr. Evelyn Mitchell, Dr. A. C. Parker and Mr. Rupert G. Lesch are the featured speakers and a varied programme has been prepared. Full information may be had from Mr. Cecil Williams, 49 East Seventh Street, Hamilton, Ont.

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Orders for the new *Bhagavad Gita* should be sent direct to The Blavatsky Institute, 52 Isabella Street, Toronto, Ontario. The prices are 30c and 50c in paper and fabricoid covers respectively. Postage should be added. And it is respectfully pointed out that United States cheques are not payable in Canada without heavy discount and bank collecting charges. Money orders or Express orders are easily obtainable. This is true for the Theosophical Society as well as for The Blavatsky Institute. Every Lodge should sell at least a couple of dozen of the *Gita*.

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Mr. W. A. Griffiths of the Montreal Lodge, writes under date May 5, that "Mr. Belcher's visit last week-end was most successful. We had tea and a nice homey meeting Saturday evening at Dr. and Mrs. de Broissiere's home; on Sunday evening a public meeting in the Mount Royal Hotel, which was very well attended; and the final one Monday evening in the Lodge room wound up his rather strenuous week-

end activities. The attendance at all his meetings was excellent and we were very pleased at the way he was received."

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A pleasant symposium was held on Saturday evening, May 1st at Cawthra Mansions in Toronto, when about 25 ladies and gentlemen, most of them in the early twenties, met to discuss and hear opinions of various systems of religious thought. There were Christian Scientists, Oxford Groupers, Spiritualists, Unitarians, Jews, Baháists, Theosophists, and various unidentified thinkers, and an enjoyable exchange of views was the result. There was no attempt at propaganda, but a free and frank exchange of opinion. There is no better way for the cultivation of toleration and brotherhood. The suggestion can be commended to other cities and groups.

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We hail the publication of William Kingsland's last and posthumous work, *The Gnosis or Ancient Wisdom in the Christian Scriptures*, as further and highly important evidence that Madame Blavatsky's work has not been a failure. The volume reaches us too late for review this month, but we must acknowledge our indebtedness to The Blavatsky Association and "The Kingsland Literary Trust" who have made the publication possible. It is finely printed and issued by Messrs. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Museum Street, London, England, at 10/6, and should be in the hands of every earnest student of the Mysteries. To quote from the Editor's Preface: "In this work Kingsland shows how the fundamental teachings given to the world at the beginning of the Christian era, were derived from the Gnosis or Ancient Wisdom, but in time have become so perverted that the modern interpretation of Christianity represents merely their debased survival." We hope to give an extended review of the volume next month.

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The month of May is the shrine month of Madame Blavatsky, who died on May 8,

1891. That day has been designated White Lotus Day and observed by the Lodges all over the world, and by all branches of the Movement. She has been the revered and inspiring teacher of a great cloud of witnesses, and now that she has been honoured by the Hare Brothers as having the genius to create such marvellous characters as the several Mahatmas that have become familiar figures in the Theosophical World, and such a magnificent system of scientific, philosophic and religious thought as *The Secret Doctrine* presents, we fear she is in danger of being elevated to the position of a Personal God. We prefer to think of her, however, as the humble, faithful and dutiful servant of the Masters she adored, the diligent and untiring worker for humanity who founded the Theosophical Society in the interests of the Brotherhood of Man, and who sought no fame and no reward but the opportunity to offer herself up on the altar of service. "Those who cannot understand her," said a Master, "had best not try to explain her; those who do not find themselves strong enough for the task she outlined from the very first had best not attempt it."

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The World Congress of Faiths, which has been having such successful and inspiring conventions, has inaugurated a Continuation Movement. The International President is His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda, one of the most enlightened rulers in the world, and he has made his own State a model in the way of reform, education, social development, and in the promotion of every humane and civilized influence. The object for which the World Congress of Faiths is organized is to promote a spirit of fellowship among mankind through religion. The Congress seeks to awaken and develop a world-loyalty, while allowing full play for the diversity of men, nations and faiths. A week-end intensive Congress will be held at Oxford, England, on July 23rd to 27th, 1937, with residence for men at Balliol College and for men and women at Somer-

ville College. The subject for deliberation will be "The World's Need of Religion". A Symposium on "Can Politics Replace Religion?" will be conducted from three distinctive points of view. A public meeting will be held in the Town Hall, Oxford, on Saturday, July 24, at 8 p.m. Sir Francis Youngusband is Chairman of the Congress, and Mr. Arthur Jackman, Secretary, who may be addressed at World Congress of Faiths, BM/Congress, London, W.C. 1, England. Membership in the Congress costs Ten Shillings, and the terms for the Oxford Congress, from Friday tea till Tuesday luncheon, £2 15s. Only members who have joined in 1937 can be admitted.

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Williams & Norgate, publishers of *Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?* have sent out a circular in which they line up all the recognized enemies of the Theosophical Movement in approval of the Hare Brothers' effort to outshine the sun. Even in this document we find the same old dodge of partial quotation, so as to turn friendly comment into something else. Most amusing of the comments is headed "Critics Disagree" but this does not refer to the critics in general but to an alleged disagreement among those who disagree with the Hares. "Finally," it is said, "The Editor of the *Canadian Theosophist*, perhaps dissatisfied with the work of his contributors, enters the field himself in the February, 1937, issue." Then it is stated that it was argued that if the Hares had believed in reincarnation they would have believed in K.H. and M. and their authorship of the *Letters*. The argument was, of course, that if one does not believe in reincarnation it is impossible to believe in Mahatmas. In India, where they know Mahatmas and understand precipitation, which the Hares do not, their book has little reputation. The Bombay Theosophical Bulletin for April remarks: "It is by twisting fibres together that a cord is made and so it is by twisting facts that prejudices, fictions and fads are produced. The book is full of twisted material, of perverse

logic, and of conclusions based not on facts, but on the omniscience and infallibility of the authors. A good part of the book is full of insinuations, distortions and accusations not supported by facts. The following are some of these:—Master M. thanks Mr. Sinnett for a pipe which he calls ‘tabacco machine.’ It is common knowledge that one uses the pipe in the East for smoking many things other than tobacco. Still the book has a fling at the Master. ‘The liberty that Mahatma allows himself in respect of tobacco smoking may not strike a European reader as worthy of remark. Smoking in that country (Tibet) is regarded as a crime’ (page 38). Where did these impartial, unprejudiced judges get the information that the Mahatma smoked *tabacco*?”

EMIL AUGUST NERESHEIMER

The announcement of the death of Emil August Neresheimer, on April 16, comes from his widow, Mrs. Neresheimer, at 475 Twentieth Street, Santa Monica, California. Mr. Neresheimer celebrated his ninetieth birthday on January 2nd, “and continued to carry on all his activities until the very last.” A short illness of three days’ duration preceded his passing, which was peaceful, and his long pilgrimage thus closed in serenity. He was born of Catholic parents in Bavaria at Moosburg near Munich in 1847. At Munich he graduated from a business college, and then learned the silversmith’s and jewellery trades in Switzerland, Augsburg, and Berlin. He went to Australia in 1868 and disliking it took ship for San Francisco. When he entered the Golden Gate he felt in his pockets for his funds, and finding only a quarter, he flipped it overboard. He was willing to face the world with his bare hands. It did not take him long to find his place, and in 1872 he moved to New York where he was soon established as one of the leading diamond merchants and jewellers of the city. In 1886 he first heard of Theosophy and read *Esoteric*

Buddhism. An abusive article in a newspaper gave him the address of William Quan Judge, General Secretary of The Theosophical Society in America at that time, and he became a Fellow in January, 1889. Subsequently he called on Madame Blavatsky in London and had some conversation with her at her rooms in Lansdowne Road, but had no greater acquaintance with her. He became the chief support for some years of Mr. Judge, and assisted in gathering together a strong group of wealthy and influential men who stood by the General Secretary until his death in 1896. Mrs. Tingley cast her spell over Mr. Neresheimer and he followed her loyally till her death. After this, the spell appeared to be broken and he began to realize that all had not been as he had thought it was. I wrote to him an account of the proceedings by which he had superintended my dismissal from Point Loma, having been sent on a roundabout wild goose chase to execute a bogus mission in New York, where on arriving I was delayed till Mr. Neresheimer also arrived with orders to send me back to Toronto as fast as possible. Why should I not have been sent direct to Toronto, but Mrs. Tingley had advertised me as a black magician and this was one of her pretty ways. Mr. Neresheimer wrote me a reply confirming all I had described and acknowledging that he had acted on her orders. This is not mentioned in derogation of anyone now living, but it helps one to understand why Mr. Neresheimer severed his connection with Point Loma. He became a subscriber to *The Canadian Theosophist*, which he said he held in high esteem. He was intensely loyal to Theosophical ideals, and in spite of allegiances which divided him and many others from old friends, he remained faithful to the memories of Judge and others of earlier days. It was a relief to him to find himself in harmony with some of those who had survived the differences that had been created, and to understand that similarity of aim, purpose and teaching is the real tie that binds. That clutch

holds, and no companions of The Path need be severed.

A. E. S. S.

CORRESPONDENCE

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL"

Editor Canadian Theosophist:—In your April issue of the magazine there was an article on The Theosophical Horoscope, signed by the writer Ariel, in which appeared a strange reference to vegetarians. As a Theosophical student I feel duty bound to make some reply.

Plato taught that the animal kingdom is the clothed lower nature of man, including his own body and corporal nature, and that man's conscious abode is that middle region between the gods and the lower world. Plato, who has been shown by the Masters to be an initiate, and who therefore speaks as the god, portrays the nature of man as endowed with volition which enables him, if he so wills, to ascend to intimate relation with the god and finally become that god, or who may by reason of his discursive nature descend lower than the animal (morally).

The Masters have shown how the animal kingdom is held in a groove, without moral choice, their time not yet come, and therefore they are innocent, incapable of evil—This condition has been replaced in man, after ages, by that of responsibility. Man's rightful position, then, would be that of sovereign protector of the lower animal world. But he has disavowed that sacred obligation by slaughter and the malicious interference with the lower forms of life.

The great teachers of all ages have implored man, "Thou shalt not kill", but this, like all the holy teachings, has been profaned by temporizing and altering to suit man's personal whims and selfish aims.

Man staggers through a world of chaos and confusion surrounded by misery and tragedy, often swamped by his manifold unsolved problems and in his desperation he looks up and cries for mercy, but he does not give any below him. Man exploits

the life below him, the only field he has for mercy. He is not even fair when he looks above for that which he is unwilling to give below. Man craves for powers but he exploits what little power he already has. His hands are dripping with innocent blood in his wanton slaughter of the animals and when he is not appropriating their bodies for so-called food he is frequently killing for entertainment. And yet how quickly we proclaim the sacredness of life when our own head is in jeopardy. How can man flaunt the merciful plea of the Lord Buddha,—"Kill not for pity's sake—and lest ye slay the meanest thing upon its upward way."

There must be two classes of members in any Theosophical Society, those who are there to learn and those who by their position and understanding are there to teach. And while there is some excuse for the exoteric learner to imitate the carnivorous animals, there can be no excuse for those who represent themselves as understanding the law and who presume to teach and guide. The Mahatma Letters, Madame Blavatsky, and all true teachers, whenever they have dealt with this subject have left no uncertainty. Some Theosophical students no doubt have refrained from eating animal flesh with selfish and vain motives, but man must refuse to kill by reason of his understanding of the brotherhood of man and the unity of all life—for there is nothing outside of man.

W. T. Hawkins.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

REVIEWS

"THE SECRET WISDOM OF THE QABALAH"

Probably no system of occult science is more talked and written about and less understood by the average reader than the Qabalah or Kabala as we usually write it. This is of course due to the extraordinary closed-mindedness of all exponents of Christianity. The dogmatic and creedal system of the Churches prevents its ad-

herents from even considering any other system or any explanation of their own system that would serve to enlighten their darkness, even on matters on which they are admittedly uninformed. It is not to the credit of other systems of occult knowledge that the Kabala is either ignored or deprecated, though there may be reason in some of the traditions that have associated it with black magic which have scared some students away from its study. There need be no longer any reason, from fear, or obscurity, or difficulty of interpretation, that any student should hesitate to make an effort to acquaint himself with the elements, and even many of the deeper mysteries of the system, if they get hold of Major-General J. F. C. Fuller's book, *The Secret Wisdom of the Qabalah*. (Rider & Co., London, England, 7/6).

It is not too much to say that without the Kabala the Old Testament is a sealed book for those who desire to understand its occult messages. What an exoteric exegesis may lead to is well illustrated in our British-Israel, our Jehovah's Witnesses, and other mad-cap cults which adorn our Christian civilization. If our clergymen, our Sunday School superintendents and class leaders would read and understand this book we would get rid of more superstition in a year than we have lost in the last 1500. As it is we are all the time adding to our superstitions and our idolatry instead of diminishing them. The great difficulty in all religious matters is to get back to reality and away from the images and parables that were intended to unveil reality but unfortunately now conceal it in the ignorance of our generation of the key to their meaning.

No one would ever think of associating the familiar chalk diagrams on the pavements with the deeper truths of religion, but the hop-scotch diagram of our youth is undoubtedly derived from the table of the ten Sephiroth, its ten stations being disposed to represent a pilgrimage around the cycle. So the little boys and girls hop from Malkuth, the kingdom, up to Kether

the Crown, without any idea of the Mysteries they are passing through. We read in this connection of the Macroprosopus and the microprosopus, the Long Face and the Short Face, the heavenly man and the earthly. The mystery of good and evil is dealt with frankly and in open language as it is not elsewhere in Church books. Isaac Myers is quoted, and the passage closes with the statement: "The purpose of evil is to stimulate goodness." The three divine essentials are shown to be Necessity and Liberty linked together by Harmony. In this duality of good and evil the danger is, we are told, that the uninitiated see two separate unities; they are good as God and evil as Satan. Consequently they love the one and hate the other and so establish a disunity within and among themselves. Thus we have the mystery of the dual serpents, Deus est Demon Inversus. "Satan, as we call this power, is in fact the Tree of Life of our world. . . . Satan is therefore the Shekinah of Assiah, the World of Action, the perpetual activity of the Divine Essence. . . ." Satan is also the Flaming Sword which brought light from heaven. In man Will is the magician; when it tends towards evil it is called black, when towards good it is called white. When it tends towards neither and in place harmonizes both, then it manifests not as the magician but as the Shekinah. The problem of sex, the reason for Creation, the aspects of Ruach, Neschamah and Nepesh, and the mystery of the Redemption, the problem of original sin, are among the themes expounded. The first instance we have met in recent literature of modern science in the person of Sir James Jeans being challenged, occupies pages 150-155. "The science of today represents in more than one way, what the scientist of fifty years ago would have called chaos. The law of causation is to disappear, conservation of energy is to disappear, uniformity is to disappear, determinism is to be replaced by probabilities, and Law by Chance. Jeans says "the universe appears to have been designed by a mathematician." a Qabalistic

assumption, says our author. And this means, "that science, which during the last century broke away from the idealistic conception of religion—the spiritual side of man—is today tending towards a return to these concepts." Tomorrow we shall laugh at the scientific theories of today, says the Major-General. Hitlerism is disposed of, and we have a wise discussion of morality, symbols are expounded and their frequent inversion noted, we are advised to sweep clean our minds of dogmas, rituals and the canons of the Churches, and to make Wisdom our mission and our study. The volume has several valuable diagrams and is well printed, but we observe typographical errors on pages 73, 78, 126, 152, 155, 170, and 180.

EVOLUTION OF THE VOICE

Madame Elena Garnetti Forbes' book *The Amazing Phenomenon of the Voice*, is introduced by Dr. Alexander Cannon, who also calls in Madame Clark Holland to support his most favourable opinion of the book. It will be news to the outside world, though it ought to be a commonplace to students of the occult, that the Voice is the creative agency in the development of the inner vehicles of life and thought. How the throat sounds of the animal ever became altered and modified into human speech is as interesting a study as anyone can undertake, and Madame Forbes supplies a basis for such study to those who would pursue it. Those old Italian *Maestri* of *bel canto* fame declared that "he who knows how to breath knows how to sing," and our author says that careful research into the principles of Respiration confirms this dictum, and furnishes a new conception, not only of the Voice, but of the evolution of Man." Again, "Inspiration—not expiration—sustains the phenomenon of Life in the Human Body. Therefore we may say that *Voice represents the exercise of energy.*" The third part, filling some 70 pages, deals with The Evolution and Physical Exercise of Voice. It is stated that if the mechanics of movement

of the human body (the somatic skeletal form) be not carried out in strict accord with the normal development of the physical machinery, sooner or later (however healthy may be the individual body), the machinery will "jam" or warp! The mechanism of the nervous system will no longer function normally, and disease of some sort or another will make its appearance. Neglect of this, it is warned, may lead to grave evils. "Every physical and mental power must be exercised, and carefully sustained, or else the higher powers of common sense and wisdom cannot develop into those mystic or psychic powers which are within the attainment of each one who will devote *all his energies* to their development." There is much more that goes to show the value of the proper use of the voice in the development of mental and other powers, and the supreme gift is regarded as the power of invocation through which we may receive guidance and ineffable Grace. (Rider & Co., London, England, 5/-).

THE FASCIST INCLINATION

When Samuel Butler wrote his objur-gation—"O God! O Montreal!" he provided a precedent for present expression. Nothing so really scandalous has happened before in that belated resort of finance than the ousting of Principal A. E. Morgan from McGill University. But it is just what Samuel Butler might have expected. Unfortunately it looks as though the rest of Canada must share the odium of the act, for no one seems able to provide him with a position to redeem our reputation and to elevate our standards. The proper place for him would be at the head of the University of Toronto, but Premier Hepburn has hardly the sense to accomplish such an advantage to the Province.

Dr. Morgan addressed the Empire Club in Toronto on April 29, and the Club did what was possible to show how deeply his removal has been resented, by an unusual display of enthusiasm at the conclusion of his speech. He spoke on democracy and

declared that "if democracy is to be saved, it will be by the Anglo-Saxon people and France." But Montreal is not anxious to save democracy. It is setting its course towards Fascism, and recent events in Toronto indicate that Premier Hepburn and *The Globe and Mail* are heading in the same direction. It is a sign of their policy that Dr. Morgan's views are not acceptable to them.

"It is a test of Government," he remarked, "to say, 'does it assist in organizing society so that the bulk of the citizens get a reasonable mode of life?' Ventures in foreign lands, the waving of flags, have a place in our psychology, but no Governors are going to get away with it always. There seem to be people today ready to starve so long as they are fed on heroic accounts of how their brothers are shooting down black men. I am alarmed," he pursued, "when I see in this country and the other countries of the Empire a too great compliance in the actions of governments. The essence of democracy is criticism, not leaving to the politicians the task of governing. We want to know what it is all about. That attitude would make an end to bills run through in a few hours. We want some of the flexibility of government which democracy alone has. We are law-abiding peoples because we make and believe in the laws. The best way to make a rebel out of a Britisher is to treat him to government by tyrants. We Britishers have done much to build up democracy to the pitch it has arrived at. Ours is a great responsibility.

"As a Briton, as a member of the great family of people to which we all belong, I believe the future depends on us, with the United States and France. I believe on these falls the task of saving democracy. It is in the courses of the stars. The essence of democracy is the belief that men can do things together by the process of labouring together kindly and intelligently, as against the other doctrine that men should be told what to do. Cooperation has been the object of mankind for a mil-

lenium, but the great quality of democracy is that it tries to achieve this quality from within."

These are just a few pregnant sentences culled from an important utterance, which at once justifies the speaker and impeaches the McGill Board of Governors.

A. E. S. S.

THE THREE TRUTHS

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

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

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

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

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

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One of the privileges of living in the Twentieth century is the opportunity of allying oneself with the Theosophical Movement originated by the Elder Brothers of the Race, and of making a conscious link, however slender, with them. Join any Theosophical Society which maintains the traditions of the Masters of Wisdom and study their Secret Doctrine. You can strengthen the link you make by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility. We should be able to build the future on foundations of Wisdom, Love and Justice.

THEOSOPHY AND THE MODERN WORLD

Conducted by W. Frank Sutherland

WHAT IS LIFE?

In the preface to *The Secret Doctrine* H. P. Blavatsky indicates that one aim of the work is to show that Nature is not "a fortuitous concurrence of atoms." Another, to show that the Occult side of Nature has never been approached by the science of modern civilization. In Volume One she predicts that Chemistry and Physiology are the two great magicians of the future which are destined to open the eyes of mankind to great physical truths.

Today the greatest puzzle of all science seems to be nearing a solution. Yet, as it breaks up, its parts in turn form newer, more baffling puzzles. This fact is made manifest in an outstanding article called "What Is Life," by T. Swann Harding. It appears in the April issue of *The Scientific American*.

The author maintains that recently something definite about the mysterious realm between living and non-living matter is in process of discovery by research workers upon the virus diseases which afflict human beings, animals, trees and plants. It is pointed out, however, that the difficulty at the outset is, to agree upon a definition of *Life*.

Modern Chemistry holds that living and non-living substances may differ very little in chemical structure. The difference is sought rather in some new geometrical arrangement of their atoms or molecules. Hence what we regard as mineral matter, or as mere non-living metal, may from time to time become "alive" due to some mysterious internal change in the pattern of its atoms and molecules. "So it is easily possible to imagine," writes Harding, "that a complex protein might under certain circumstances rearrange itself internally and begin to live.

Complicated Single Cell

Organisms that cause disease are next described. As Alexis Carrell, distinguished surgeon and scientist has shown, most of these are not only very minute and very much alive, but they possess an exceedingly complicated structure. Some consist of a single living cell which is the structural or functional unit of the plant and animal world, as the atom is of the mineral world. The single cell is by no means the mere "drop of gelatine surrounded by a semi-permeable membrane," as the author accuses some biologists of carelessly describing it. But rather it contains the full genetic machinery of inheritance, the genes and chromosomes; also, an elastic-walled balloon called the nucleus, which seems to be full of inert, transparent jelly. It contains numerous particles which are in continuous violent agitation. Some have the special function of nourishing the cell; others appear to be granules, globules and long filaments, whirling and dancing endlessly.

To quote: "If the structure of the cell is baffling, its chemical composition is still more intricate. Generally speaking, it is said to consist of 'protoplasm', but the minute the biologist tries to analyse this it ceases to live and hence is no longer protoplasm, for life is one of its properties. Even the nucleus, which appears to be empty, contains those marvellous but mysterious agents which rule the hereditary tendencies of both cells and men."

Virus Particles

A still smaller thing is the bacteriophage, an ultra-microscopic living organism, parasitic on bacteria, which reproduces itself and is capable of destroying malignant bacteria. Smaller still, so small that they pass through the biologist's best filters, and elude his highest-powered microscopes, are

the so-called virus particles which produce human diseases such as smallpox, mumps, and infantile paralysis, animal diseases like hog cholera and rabies, and plant diseases such as tobacco, peach and sugarcane mosaic.

It is maintained by Harding that attention today is focussed upon these virus particles. "For it appears," he states, "they may soon answer the question: What is Life?" He claims that new and strange findings have been made, which have tremendous significance both from the standpoint of disease causation and from that of the basic nature of life.

Up to the present, the research worker has concentrated chiefly on the destructive mosaic disease of tobacco plants because he has found it his easiest point of attack. However, it is shown that human diseases are indirectly, but certainly involved. The figures representing the minuteness and infectiveness of virus particles are staggering, but they do not particularly concern us here. To quote from the article: "Are those particles alive? That is the question, and it leads right to the centre of life itself."

In 1932 it was made known that infective particles had been crystallized out and found to be a chemical substance, a protein. (the kind of chemical we know best as lean meat). This substance was called a "pathogenic enzyme," an enzyme being a ferment, hence a ferment capable of causing disease. In its pure crystallized form it did not appear to be alive, but when put in contact with normal living tissue cells it would begin to act like a disease germ. It began to reproduce itself, to spread, to cause disease—"Had non-living matter thus suddenly become living? The question is actively debated today."

Limited space prevents describing the numerous experiments carried out during the intervening years. The work continued steadily and finally in 1936 Dr. W. M. Stanely of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, who had taken the most prominent part, made an announcement.

Briefly, it was that the "autocatalytic protein," as he called it, could be inactivated permanently by treatment with certain chemicals or with ultra-violet rays. Drastic treatments changed the protein chemically, partly broke it down, partly destroyed it. Less drastic treatments deprived it of its power to "come alive" when injected in plants, yet without making any perceptible change in it. These mild treatments only made the protein lose its power to cause disease or to become self-propagating under favourable conditions. Stanely therefore concluded that the enzyme (or ferment) part of the structure was injured by these mild agents, hence the protein was no longer autocatalytic. So, not only can life be killed, but the potential power to come alive under proper circumstances may be snuffed out.

Dr. Stanely is quoted in the article as follows: "The idea that proteins, which suggest meat and eggs to most of us, can be viruses and produce disease, is new and startling. But there is no longer any doubt that this virus activity is a property of the protein itself. The only explanation is that somewhere along the line between life and death there is a middle ground where chemicals have the attributes of living organisms without being themselves alive." He also suggests that "bacteriology may soon have to cede to chemistry's priority in the struggle against disease."

The author concludes thus: "Meanwhile the riddle of life remains unsolved, but science is closer than ever to its solution, insofar as the distinction between living and non-living matter is real and not merely verbal."

Theosophical View

Students of theosophy must surely appreciate the tireless efforts of science and the tremendous progress it has made since the publication of *The Secret Doctrine*. To measure its strides one has only to realize that when the following statement was made, the molecular "billiard ball" theory was being entertained. Quoting from the *Doctrine* I, 268-69: "Occultism does not

accept anything 'inorganic' in the Kosmos. The expression employed by science, 'inorganic substance,' means simply that the latent life, slumbering in the molecules of so-called 'inert matter,' is incognizable. All is Life, and every atom of even mineral dust is a Life, though beyond our comprehension and perception, because it is outside the range of the laws known to those who reject Occultism."

According to Occult teachings, not only dead organisms of both man and animal are swarming with bacteria of various kinds, but our bodies, as well as those of animals, plants, and stones are altogether built up of such beings.

With reference to the physical and chemical constituents of physical man, animal, reptile, plant, rock, etc., H. P. B. says: "Not only the chemical compounds are the same, but the same infinitesimal *invisible* Lives compose the atoms of the bodies of the mountain and the daisy, of man and the ant, of the elephant and the tree. Each particle—whether you call it organic or inorganic—is a *Life*. Every atom and molecule in the universe is both *life-giving* and *death-giving* to such forms, inasmuch as it builds by aggregation universes, and the ephemeral vehicles ready to receive the transmigrating soul, and as eternally destroys and changes the *forms*, and expels the souls from their temporary abodes. It creates and kills; it is self-generating and self-destroying; it brings into being, and annihilates, that mystery of mysteries, the *living body* of man, animal, or plant, every second in time and space; and it generates equally life and death, beauty and ugliness, good and bad, and even the agreeable and disagreeable, the beneficent and maleficent sensations. It is that mysterious Life, represented collectively by countless myriads of Lives, that follows in its own sporadic way the hitherto incomprehensible law of Atavism; that copies family resemblances, as well as those it finds impressed in the Aura of the generations of every future human being." (*S.D.* I, 281-82). Further, H. P. B. says: "Having discovered the

effects, Science has yet to find their *primary* causes; and this it can never do without the help of the old sciences of Alchemy, Occult Botany and Physics."

From a Theosophical standpoint, science may be expecting overly much from the "virus particles" which, according to Harding, may soon answer the question: What is Life? However, as the feeling seems to be widespread among men of science that these significant virus researches may have opened up a new period of biological advance, students might be interested in knowing that the *Scientific American* intends publishing a second article devoted to the same subject.

R. S.

A BEGINNER'S BOOK OF YOGA

(A Book Review)

Many readers of this magazine will be interested in a new book that Farrar and Rinchart have published. It is a selection, out of the more occult writings of L. Adams Beck, of these passages more especially dealing with Yoga. While published posthumously and, while the selection has been at the hands of an editor, Daniel M. Bramble, a happy choice has been made, and the book is probably more useful, for its specific purpose, than the sources from which it has been drawn. Mrs. Beck wrote much about Yoga and in fiction form. Those who have read her novels will appreciate having this material in compact form.

Although the editor in his foreword might lead one to believe that the book centres around Hatha Yoga, it is, however, one which can be placed safely in the hands of the beginner athirst for Occult knowledge. The spiritual side and aim of Yoga is stressed almost to the exclusion of the attainment of powers.

The book opens with a selection from *The Way of Power*, which tells of the early manifestations that led the author on her lifelong search for truth and knowledge in the field of Occult philosophies. Then follows a selection from *The Openers of the*

Gate, a selection which the editor calls "one of the loveliest pieces of writing in any of the author's books." "It is the mature expression of faith," he says. Courage is needed by those who would tread the path of attainment and a brief quotation from *The House of Fulfilment* follows in substantiation.

The actual description of the path of Yoga begins with a study of Concentration and its powers, which leads into the companion study of Concentration and its Attainment. Both these sections are drawn from *The Story of Oriental Philosophy*, one of the finest expositions of the oriental viewpoint which has ever been written. A brief quotation from *The Garden of Vision* deals with the Zen teachings concerning Matter and Spirit. More could have been taken from this work of Mrs. Beck's, since it deals with the Zen branch of Buddhism, the branch which offers many things of value to the West.

The remainder of the book, some three sections in length, is taken from *The Way of Power*. It deals with self-realization and the possibility of success which is possessed by all who have the courage and patience to pursue the path.

A Beginner's Book of Yoga is sold in Canada by Clarke, Irwin and Unwin, Toronto.

W. F. S.

IMMORTALITY

It is not often that we open a morning newspaper to find one of the leading editorials written on the subject of Immortality, but this was so on April 7th when the *Toronto Globe and Mail* published an article entitled "After Death". It is of interest to students of Occultism because the writer gives two reasons for a belief in immortality supplementary to the orthodox Christian one, i.e. the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

It would appear that the proofs of survival beyond the grave as put forward by modern Spiritualism do not appeal to the writer of the editorial. He says: "He

would be a bold man who would say that all Spiritualism is false, but for three reasons it would seem to be an unsatisfactory phenomenon. First, the character of the methods employed; the ouija board and the modern seance are not impressive. Again, the character of the messages is trivial beyond words. Most of us would have to confess that if these conversations are genuine the character of the dead would seem to have deteriorated in the transition."

Occultism has always admitted the fact that communication with the next world is possible, but disagrees with the Spiritualist as to the nature of the entity which is attracted to the seance room. In a letter which Mme. Blavatsky wrote to her sister in 1875 giving a description of a seance which she attended in America, she says, in part: "It was a sight to see the welcome given to these *umbræ* by the Spiritualists. If they only knew that these simulacra of men and women are made up wholly of the terrestrial passions, vices, and worldly thoughts, of the residuum of the personality that was; for these are only such dregs that could not follow the liberated Soul and Spirit, and are left for a second death in the terrestrial atmosphere, that can be seen by the average medium and the public." The Master K.H. also says: "However ethereal and purified of gross matter they may be, the Pure Spirits are still subject to the physical and universal laws of matter. *They cannot* if even they would, span the abyss that separates their worlds from ours. *They can be visited in Spirit*, their Spirit cannot descend and reach us." (See *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, page 45).

Is it any wonder that in the light of these two quotations our newspaper friend thinks that "the dead seem to have deteriorated in the transition"? However, as the late F. W. H. Myers, and other writers have pointed out, survival of bodily death does not necessarily imply Immortality. It must remain a hope, a belief, a faith, based either on a supposed *divine* revelation, or

else on philosophical grounds.

The writer of the editorial, then, after scoring out the proofs that have been offered by spiritualistic phenomena, continues by saying that the main arguments in favour of Immortality are based on two great truths, the first of which is "Man's longing for life beyond the grave." He goes on to say: "It does not matter why it has been so, but when a normal human desire is found not amongst a few, but among all races of men, the presumption is that there is some reason for its existence. In the long run organisms do not respond to imaginary forms of stimulus. This is not the superstition of savages, but the experience of the noblest and best of all mankind. Why should we not trust the instinct of all that is highest in humanity? There must be reality behind it all."

We agree with the writer, but that reality is—what? We would suggest that it is Man's *subconscious* knowledge of his own inherent Divine nature, and an *unconscious* longing to return to the source of his Being. Thus the Secret Doctrine puts it: "The only eternal and living *Reality* is that which the Hindus call *Paramâtma* and *Parabrahman*. This is the one ever-existing Root Essence, immutable and unknowable to our physical senses, *but manifest and clearly perceptible to our Spiritual natures*. Once imbued with that basic idea and the further conception that if It is omnipresent, universal and eternal, we must have emanated from It, and we must, some day, return to It, the rest becomes easy." (*S. D.* III, 512)

According to the writer of the above mentioned editorial, his second reason for a belief in Immortality is the character of God. He says: "If there is a God He must at least be equal to man at his best. Given powers that we have not, we expect of Him the noblest government that His human creatures can conceive. But if this earth is all there is of life we may well doubt the righteousness of the Ruler of the world. We don't expect God to pay wages every Saturday night, but if this world is

the end of life every account should be squared in the sight of men. But is this so? What about undetected crime? What about the unexplained injustice of human History. It is unthinkable that there is not an opportunity for mercy and judgment to come to flower."

It would appear that up to this point the editor and the student of Occultism are walking side by side, but the latter pushes forward and maintains that crimes and injustices committed on a plane of objectivity and in a world of Matter cannot be adjusted in a world of pure subjectivity. —in other words you cannot sow wheat in Canada and expect to reap it in the United States. This at least is what those who are unable to accept the theory of Reincarnation, and its twin doctrine of Karma, would have us do.

Theosophy says: "It is only the knowledge of the constant rebirths of one and the same Individuality throughout the Life-Cycle; the assurance that the same Monads have to pass through the 'Cycle of Necessity,' rewarded by such rebirth for the sufferings endured, or crimes committed in the former life; it is only this doctrine, we say, that can explain to us the mysterious problem of Good and Evil, and reconcile man to the *apparent* injustice. For, when one unacquainted with the noble doctrine looks around him and observes the inequalities of birth and fortune, of intellect and capacities; when one sees honour paid to fools and profligates, on whom fortune has heaped her favours by mere privilege of birth, and their nearest neighbour, with all his intellect and noble virtues perishing of want; when one sees all this and has to turn away, helpless to relieve the undeserved suffering—that blessed knowledge of Karma alone prevents him from cursing life and men, as well as their supposed Creator." (*S. D.* II, 317)

When the people of the Western world as a whole accept the theory of Reincarnation as a fact, a great many of the problems of life will be explained for them. Who knows how many commenced to reason the

pros and *cons* of Immortality for themselves after reading the editorial under consideration. A great number, we sincerely hope.

K. M.

THE RECALL TO RELIGION

On Tuesday, March 16th, 1937, *The Daily Star*, Toronto, printed an article by their London correspondent, Mr. M. H. Halton with the arresting headline "Brotherhood of Man Greatest Passion of Mighty Indian Ruler." The article gave an account of an interview with the Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda, in which the Indian prince expressed many ideas and hopes of the greatest interest and importance to Theosophists.

"I believe," said the Maharajah, "that only a universal religion will effect the salvation of the world. . . . I, and people like myself are trying to found a universal religion which would take the best from all religions, and leave the bad behind. . . . A universal religion and a universal code of ethics—these things and these things alone will make possible the brotherhood of man."

This Indian ruler has made education for the people under his rule his life work, and ruling passion; the recital of what he has done in the last sixty years, in establishing schools, universities and free libraries throughout his state is inspiring to read. Added to what he has done for those under his immediate rule, he has extended his activities to be the founder of the World Congress of Faiths by which along with other intellectual leaders, and religious leaders, he hopes to put these ideals of universal brotherhood into a practical system of ethics.

There was a World Congress of Faiths in the United States in August, 1933, which the Maharajah attended, and at that time he is reported to have said, "There is no religion higher than truth and no beauty without harmony."

That there is a growing recall to religion, and a desire to raise the standard of

conduct in private life and public affairs in England; and, if possible, in other parts of the world, is evident in the *Recall to Religion* issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The leaders of the Free Churches (of Great Britain) are reported in the *Manchester Guardian*, February 25, 1937, to have held a meeting at the Athenæum Club in January, at which they promised full co-operation with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and issued a statement, in which they appealed to the ministers of their churches for support. The statement reads in part: "We believe that, if all in this land who call themselves Christians were to make a resolute and sustained endeavour to lift their daily life to the level of their deepest faith, so great an effect would be made on the mind and character of our nation that problems that baffle us would be solved as we go. And we should be worthy and able to make a full and beneficent contribution to the life of the world. . . . We cannot convince others until we ourselves are sure of our possession;" and concludes with: "This is a recall, not to a single act of a religious character, but to religion itself, the new linking of our individual and national lives to God in a service which shall endure and increase in years to come."

The aspirations and ideals expressed by the Maharajah of Baroda, and those expressed by the leaders of the Free Churches of Great Britain are an inspiration, but far more than that, they are a challenge to Theosophists everywhere to "make a resolute and sustained endeavour to lift their daily life to the level of their deepest faith."

D. H. A.

THE SHAMAN COMES

INTO HIS OWN

Throughout the works of Madame Blavatsky references are to be found to the Shaman, the medicine man, priest and prophet of so-called primitive races. Science has heretofore treated him with scant

courtesy believing his art to be mere buncombe and his audience merely superstitious savages. Now, however, Professor Nathaniel Sherman of Yale University, in the bulletin of the Associates in the Science of Society says that the Shaman for all his grimaces, dances, tricks and witchcraft is credited with an effectiveness that our physicians have cause to envy. "He got results. He actually cured patients," says the Professor.

Professor Sherman states in his article that he recently attended a psychiatric clinic where physicians were discussing the case of a patient who had been unsuccessfully operated upon—major operations, too—to cure an ailment of apparently mental origin. "A primitive Shaman might well have cured this case in his first attempt, and even if he had failed four times he would not have endangered the life of the patient on each occasion."

The success of the medicine man, says Sherman, must be attributed to psychological insight. The Theosophist might have other and more occult explanations for his success.

At any rate, the New York Times in comment sagely remarks that "Evidently there are more things 'twixt heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our medical philosophy."

MISSING LINKS AND A SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

Scientists are still hunting for the missing link, so-called, although the idea that man has descended from the anthropoid apes, has long since been discarded. Nowadays it is believed that both modern man and ape have descended from some common ancestor of primitive type. So today the missing link is merely another link in a long line of ancestors back to a primitive beginning.

Recent reports of a new find are interesting by reason of the antiquity premised and also by reason of the view-point expressed by the discoverer.

The latest claimant for admission to the

gallery of man's none-too-distinguished ancestors is the skull of a female of 18. It was found last summer in a limestone cave at Sterkfontein, in the southwestern corner of Transvaal, South Africa, by Dr. Robert Broom, keeper of vertebrate palaeontology and anthropology, Transvaal Museum, Pretoria.

It has been given the name *Australopithecus Transvaalensis* Broom, or the Sterkfontein Girl."

Likened to the Taungs Boy

The Sterkfontein Girl, Dr. Broom says, bears a strong resemblance to the Taungs Boy, found in 1924 in a similar Transvaal cavern 300 miles away from the Sterkfontein Cave. The Taungs Boy has been pronounced by some authorities to be a true "missing link" and by others as being no more than a pure bred chimpanzee.

The Taungs Boy and the Sterkfontein Girl were not contemporaries, however, Dr. Broom states. He places the former at Lower Pleistocene, about 750,000 years ago, and the latter at Middle or Upper Pleistocene, about 250,000 years ago. The Taungs Boy, he adds, was probably a contemporary of the Java man.

Dental Link to Humanity

"The teeth of this Sterkfontein Girl," Dr. Broom says, "are almost entirely human, and in my opinion there can hardly be any doubt that she is closely related to the ancestor of man, or to the group from which man has risen in Pliocene times a million to two million years ago."

The Sterkfontein Skull was found in the cave in proximity to a skeleton of the extinct sabre-tooth tiger. From the condition of the bones of the ape-human it is concluded that she was probably killed by the sabre-tooth.

In an interview with the New York Times, Dr. Broom stated his belief that evolution was guided by "non-material forces" until it reached its goal, man, and that since achieving its goal evolution had come to a stop.

"I believe that all evolution has been

brought about under the guidance of non-material forces—spiritual, if you will, directed from the beginning toward man as the result,” he said.

“Man is the end of evolution. I think evolution has stopped and that even ten million years from now there will be no new forms of life on earth.

“Evolution seems to have gone forward in spurts. Practically all the main groups of mammals arose in the Eocene Period and during the forty million years since then no new mammalian group has been evolved—except man.

“Then, about a million years ago, there was a sudden blossoming out of man-like forms. It was as though a host of powers had been commissioned to make man. Each tried his best, but all but one made failures who died out. It looks like the end was planned from the beginning.

“I know I am unorthodox in my belief. But Julian Huxley is now writing a book in which he arrives at the same conclusions.”

Comment on the views expressed above is needless, since they are more or less in agreement with Theosophical beliefs. One should note, however, that while there may be no new forms of life on earth ten million years hence, evolution will not have stopped by any means. Physical evolution may indeed have run its course, but having done so, and having achieved a suitable physical vehicle, the purely physical may step aside so that the spiritual may progress—in man.

KENNETH MORRIS

Our friends at Point Loma have sustained a most serious and grievous loss in the death of Kenneth Morris who passed away at Cardiff, Wales, on April 21. I have the deepest regret personally over this most unexpected blow, for Morris was one of the most promising as he was one of the most enlightened and devoted of Theosophists. I first met him in Dublin in 1898 when he was one of the group gathered

around George W. Russell and *The Irish Theosophist*. He was 19 (born July 31, 1879) and was writing poetry under the inspiration of the time and place. Eventually he came to Point Loma and as professor of English Literature there did splendid work in the Lomaland magazines and in other ways justified his discipleship. Eventually he moved to Wales to become president of the Welsh section of the Theosophical Society (Point Loma). His monthly issue of the Welsh Theosophical Forum (*Y Fforum Theossofaidd*) was always a welcome visitor and carried many wise and helpful words. Outside Theosophical circles all who came in contact with his writings admired them and anticipated for him a wide popularity. The prejudices against Theosophical writers and their connections are undoubtedly a handicap, but the beauty and the artistic quality of his writings and their high inspirational qualities will preserve them for the appreciative minds of succeeding generations. The miserable sectarianism of our Theosophical Societies prevents the students of one body extending their appreciation to the writings produced in another. or Kenneth Morris would be more widely known. He contributed at one time a series of articles on English Literature from a Theosophical view-point which are of the highest value for students. His Welsh legendary books, *The Fates of the Princes of Dyfed*, *The Secret Mountain*, and *The Book of the Three Dragons* are notable contributions to English Literature. The last mentioned is a noble book in its fine illustrations and its perfect printing. As time passes these books will become more and more valuable. Their author has taken a brave part in the Theosophical Renaissance and his work will endure. We extend our earnest sympathy to his brother, Mr. R. A. V. Morris and other relatives and friends in their bereavement.

A. E. S. S.



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