





# HARVEST



# *Harvest*

AN ANTHOLOGY OF LECTURES  
DELIVERED IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## FOREWORD

I AM VERY HAPPY to present *Harvest* to the Fellows of the Theosophical Society everywhere and I hope to many others who have some interest in those great teachings men call Theosophy.

The Institute for Theosophical Publicity, originally established in South Africa as a distributing agency for Theosophical books published in other lands, has recently brought out several books which have been well received throughout the Society, notably Clara Codd's "So Rich a Life" which was acclaimed and enjoyed everywhere.

This has encouraged us to offer the present volume which is an anthology of lectures given in South African Lodges during the past year or so: it is a gathering of our work and so we have called it *Harvest*.

The lectures are grouped in a certain order, beginning with a thought-provoking and inspiring article. Then we deal with the brotherhood of man and with its logical development, the Elder Brethren. Papers on the problems of human freedom and of racial tensions are followed by a glimpse into the Mystery tradition of Africa. Three shorter contributions of a more speculative nature, then two cultural papers and two of an inspirational character. Finally, a factual appreciation of the life and times of Dr. Annie Besant to remind us of the source of so much of the teaching we value.

I hope that the publication of this type of anthology may become an annual event in this Section. The responsible committee is already collecting material for *Harvest II*.

On behalf of the Theosophical Society in Southern Africa I would thank all those who submitted manuscripts and particularly those enthusiastic members who have typed and re-typed, edited and compiled, and done all those things necessary to place this book in your hands.

ELEANOR STAKESBY-LEWIS,  
*National President.*





# CONTENTS

<i>Lecture</i>	<i>Page</i>
I A PHILOSOPHY OF WHOLENESS <i>Natalie N. Hammond</i>	I
II THE NEED FOR HUMAN SOLIDARITY <i>S. Stakesby-Lewis</i>	12
III THE ROBE OF THE FUTURE <i>M. Ford</i>	19
IV THE ELDER BRETHREN <i>Clara M. Codd</i>	28
V ONE LIFE OR MANY? <i>Lorna Retief</i>	32
VI FREEDOM—A CULTURAL NECESSITY <i>Clifford Brooks</i>	44
VII ONE HUMANITY—MANY RACES <i>H. L. Morris</i>	52
VIII THE MYSTERY TRADITION OF AFRICA <i>Eleanor Stakesby-Lewis</i>	63
IX THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING <i>Shirley Young</i>	72
X THE PHENOMENON OF SLEEP <i>R. E. Hartig</i>	76
XI THE END OF THE BEGINNING <i>R. K. Stocks</i>	80
XII THE POWER OF WORDS <i>Ethel Dougall</i>	90
XIII SHAKESPEARE, BACON AND THE RENAISSANCE <i>Arnold S. Banks</i>	105
XIV ON INSPIRATION, TRUE AND FALSE <i>Pamela Mitford-Barberton</i>	118
XV THE GARMENT OF GOD <i>Cynthia Pizzighelli</i>	120
XVI TRUTH, LIBERTY AND SERVICE <i>Phyllis S. Lean</i>	132



## I. A PHILOSOPHY OF WHOLENESS

*Natalie N. Hammond*

**A**S WE LOOK at the conflicts of our world today, who could believe that Unity even in diversity is the great aim or goal of humanity? It sounds fantastically untrue.

And yet just as a river, either swift or sluggish, seeks the ocean, so does everyone, either consciously or unconsciously, and in his own time and fashion seek Unity.

But to approach even the thought of such a Spiritual Ultimate as Unity (the one spiritual fact in Nature) we need stepping-stones. And one such stepping-stone is the idea of Wholeness.

We might think of Unity as the great and lost word and of Wholeness as a temporary substitute, nearer to the limits of our present understanding.

Much use of the idea of Wholeness has been made by many modern psychologists. They have applied it successfully in the treatment of various aspects of "split personality," which often arises from a refusal to take life as a "whole," either deliberately or unconsciously shutting out that which is distasteful. This is a most natural reaction as we would all agree, but it does not make for wholeness, or "wholesomeness" . . . and it is thought by some in the psychological world that many of us suffer from a mild form of this schizophrenia without being aware of it. It is an ostrich-like kind of disease, and unhealthily prevalent. But for an inner approach to our subject we must see it in relation to a spiritual background.

Therefore I would very briefly remind you of St. Paul's three-fold idea of man as Spirit, Soul and Body- for clearer understanding including in what he calls "Body" the more

ordinary likes and dislikes of the average human being.

As Spirit. While thinking of man as a complete being we should realise that at the same time he is part of the greater whole or totality of Universal life. For wholeness is distinctly (in the sense we are using it) a relative term.

And finally, Soul, which plays a most important part since it is the connecting link or bridge between Spirit and Body. And in this shattering world there are many broken bridges, the chief task of spiritual or psychological healing being today that of "bridge mending."

On looking for signs of wholeness in the world today we shall only be able to touch on a few of those which seem most significant. Then, at greater length we shall try to link these with their occult and inner origin. This should naturally lead us to consider the idea of wholeness in our own personal lives. For as Krishnamurti has continually been saying in our time, putting old teaching into simple modern words, the *individual* problem is truly the crux of any world problem.

The many modern inventions from telegraphy to the 2,000 inch telescope, space ships and inter-planetary communication, are too well known as unifiers of time and space to need comment. Rather is it from the minds of the unusual men of our time that we shall best feel and see something of the pattern.

Foremost in the modern scientific world was that spiritual giant in his own sphere, Sir James Jeans. Something of his outlook is reflected in the minds of many who are building the bridge from materialistic science to the enlightened stand arrived at by Jeans himself when he acknowledged that the Universe was guided by an over-all *spiritual intelligence*. This is possibly the most important pronouncement of a scientist of any time.

The scientist who can think in that way, rising as did Jeans from the minute up to a grand principle of the whole, is a true follower of the great Socrates and Aristotle, both of whom followed the scientific method of induction from below to above. The later philosophers, Pythagoras and his followers, used the reverse method, starting from a principle—a whole—seeing it reflected down into diversity, understanding the many in the light of the greater whole, which they held continually in mind as a pattern.



Look for a moment at the torn state of international affairs. Consider the influence of General Smuts and his attempts to apply his own philosophy of "Holism" to bring about "World-Wholeness."

In this connection we recall that some twenty-five to thirty years ago Dr. Besant with rare spiritual insight was sowing the seeds of present attempts to establish International Organisations by talking openly in her Queens' Hall lectures of a Federation of European States—an unforgettable memory for those who heard her. General Smuts was once asked how he and others might be helped in their efforts to establish international understanding. Smuts replied: "Give us an atmosphere in which we can work." He was referring to the jealousy and obstructive criticism which all too often thwart idealistic men in public affairs.

Those who know a little of the power of thought will know what the General meant, and will therefore realise the need for generous recognition and co-operation with those seeking to create wholeness, if only to save us from disaster. Danger is a great incentive where other methods have failed.

But to turn to a more encouraging note, frustrated as UNO seems to be at present it was most interesting to hear a few months ago in Durban a description by a delegate from UNESCO of an all-inclusive and unbiassed history of the world in the making, very significant in the interest of wholeness and a tremendous factor in the future of education.

In the worlds of medicine, psychology and religion boundaries are fast becoming blurred. No hard and fast line can be drawn between them. That highly respectable and orthodox medical journal "The Lancet" was recently the common meeting ground for the Church, the medical profession and the spiritual healers.

There is a well-known and broadminded Minister in London who does much to open the minds of his large congregation to spiritual healing and kindred subjects. A few months ago the "Rand Daily Mail" quoted "The Lancet" as having actually commended this preacher, Dr. Leslie Wetherhead, for his interpretation of healing in the light of the "Whole Man," "The Lancet" having used just those very words. Truly, I think, a sign of the times.

In the world of art there are strong signs of a blending of hitherto separate forms of expression. This has for some time been obvious in the cinema, which is itself a medium not only for entertainment, but for education also, two activities which are far more closely related than people once thought.

We have recently heard in this Lodge of a reunion of a branch of the Drama with Religion, where in ancient days it properly belonged. We heard of performances taking place inside church and cathedral, with a vivid description of a particular play being acted therein. This play, "A Sleep of Prisoners," was very recently read in a church in Johannesburg.

But by far the most remarkable trend towards wholeness in the Art world is, I think, to be seen in the Ballet. This blending of rythmical movement, living statuary, sound and colour, accompanied by either story or sequence of ideas, is an enormous step in the direction of realising Beauty as a *Whole* ideal: Unity behind a wholeness of exquisite and disciplined technique.

Lastly we touch on that most important subject—Religion. Many Christian denominations have shown strong signs of wanting to draw closer together. Another outstanding effort has been the work of the Fellowship of Faiths, which in the field of comparative religion has built bridges between the adherents of the great world faiths. And in this connection it is impossible to assess the great work of the Theosophical Society, so great has it been during its life of seventy-five years (to say nothing of its work in what may generally be called super-physical science).

And yet, the most important object of the Theosophical Society is Brotherhood, which means wholeness in thought and action. Brotherhood is a hackneyed word today; it needs revivification to reveal its deeper and more universal meaning.

As we move backwards in time, and before coming to the truly ancient world, I would like to remind you of one of the bravest attempts at "wholeness" ever made. This was the work of King Akhnaton of Egypt, who lived 1,400 years B.C. To the surprise and consternation of many of his subjects the King suddenly denounced the priest-ridden system of the worship of many gods, substituting the ideal of the One God, whose

physical symbol he revered as the Sun.

And although it did not last long this was indeed a gigantic achievement, for the priest-craft of that day was not only decadent, but mighty. Even the Queen Nefertiti, it is hinted, had to catch her breath and steady her normally wonderful composure before she followed humbly in the footsteps of her lord.

Historians make much of this return to a unified concept of God, and those who study the inner side of religion find the name of Akhnaton constantly coming to the fore. I think one reason for the persistent memory of Akhnaton's achievement is that it was so definitely in line with God's great plan; a temporary fore-shadowing of a more lasting return to Unity.

Now again we move backwards in time to a very much earlier phase of human life. It is not expected that all the following ideas will be acceptable to everyone, especially on first hearing. They are, however, held to be true in principle by most students of the Secret Doctrine, many members of this Society and by large numbers in the widely-spread comprehensive Theosophical Movement.

At the time we are considering, humanity was *very* young and had not long been left by its first divine Teachers, Beings from another planet. The people were still enveloped in a remnant of those "clouds of glory" which these great Visitors had trailed to Earth from their own planet, Venus. The effects of this tremendous visitation, though long past as we count time, were still felt, and showed themselves in a crystal-clear and child-like faith in the one all-providing Power. Here it is that we can see how the Spiritual Fact of Unity took root in the simple mind of man. For was it not natural for him to think that the season's fruitfulness, as well as all the benefits of earth, moon and sun, should come as a direct gift from the one guiding Power, that source of all Bounty who had sent them Teachers from afar?

However, in time, which causes division before it again unites, different aspects of the All-Provider took shape in the minds of the people as Nature's different Powers. This was the second stage. The third was the gradual naming of these Powers and the investing of great beings with their attributes.

And so it was that after long ages the Gods, and later the

demi-gods appeared. Taking one example only, from earliest Greek times, there was Zeus the Father of All, Pallas Athene his daughter, Goddess of Wisdom (Minerva in later Roman times), Demeter, Goddess of the abundant earth, and Pluto, mighty lord of the underworld. As time went on the gods not only increased in number but became more definitely personified, eventually being considered as demi-gods, or half human, less remote and more easily contacted and placated with sacrificial offerings.

This same process had its counterpart in India, Egypt, Chaldea, Crete; also in the North and far North. Everywhere the same principle was at work; the one eternal source of goodness dividing up in the human mind, first as the different forces of nature, these gradually becoming personified as gods, then demi-gods, and finally ending in the tribal gods of the most backward races. Truly had the One become Legion.

Let us recall the greatest story of all time: an embodiment of that principle which we have just been considering. It is the universal world-drama of Unity broken into fragments' only to be reunited after ages of search and sorrow. This story has its counterpart in every great religion. In its best-known form it is the story of Osiris and Isis of Egypt.

Osiris, the Father God, is murdered through jealousy. He is dismembered and the fragments dispersed far and wide. Then comes the long search of the bereft Isis, Wife, Queen and Goddess, who, representing in her highest aspect the Intuition, is led through it to discover the slain Osiris, and through her great love, to unify the separate parts. From this reunion was the Son, the Saviour Horus, born. Here is the basic Trinity of very ancient Egypt.

This sacred and ancient allegorical drama is essentially the *world-drama* as lived by humanity. There was the dis-unity, the "fall," the breaking up of the one into fragmentary process we call life. And it is only as the Isis intuition develops in humanity that *our* "search" will bring about the restoration of our broken-up shadow of life, first into assemblance of wholeness, and eventually into Unity.

Descend from that Cosmic Mystery, from the sublime to that which may seem ridiculous (to see how near these two



opposites can be you have only to remove the letter "S" from the word "Cosmic"!') It might well startle those who hear it for the first time to know that our childhood's nursery-rhyme "Humpty-Dumpty" is a reflection at the lowest level of the myth of Isis and Osiris. It also reflects that ancient far-eastern tale of the Head of Padmapani, which is said to have split into a thousand fragments.

Humpty is the Universal World Egg. His fall and breaking-up symbolise the division of the One into the many which constitutes the extreme variety of our living. And the wall upon which he balanced so precariously, with its two sides representing polarity, or opposites, is the first step down from unity to duality—from which position any kind of accident may occur, as it did to poor Humpty. But note particularly that all the King's horses, the very best of the ordinary means, could not put Humpty together again.

I am afraid that the state of our own particular World-Egg resembles that of the nursery-rhyme far more as yet than it resembles that of the great Osiris-Isis Saga. For do we not still place too much faith in "All the King's horses and all the King's men," those so-called remedies which deal with effects or parts, rather than wholes?

To turn now to the individual standpoint. The search of Isis for Osiris is the search of the soul for Unity with God, and the dynamic truth of this Universal drama is the power, the driving force which lies behind each lesser, human being for completeness. But White Occultism, in any one of its schools knows the "soul-mate" theory, however beautiful in theory, is just this in essence: Isis seeking Osiris at all levels, life after life; the human soul searching for God, Eternal Goodness, Beauty or Truth. And men and women engaged in the lesser search become slowly but increasingly aware of their divine origin and background. And just because of this the human reflection may wonderfully inspire but can never wholly satisfy the soul whose restlessness leads him always onwards to the divine Union. To this, mystic after mystic has attested throughout time, for it is true "the soul is ever restless till it finds its rest in Thee."

To us, individually and practically, what can this idea of

wholeness mean? Many people know those "dry as dust" periods when nothing seems to help very much. Reading, lectures, the experience of others, just do not cut any ice at all! But, because of the Law of the Cycle of Rhythm and Change, however long the dark period, a new cycle follows wherein the arid experience *itself* becomes incorporated into a further stage of the whole-making process. Have you ever seen those dried-up little Japanese paper flowers, and watched them gradually open in a glass of water, their various parts becoming a living whole? The human whole-making process is rather like that, translated into living and spiritual terms. It is, however, a process outside of time and space; although to the individual there may be long periods of this darkness and drought, alternating with illumination of varying degrees from occasional intuitive flashes to an almost total rebirth of outlook, as when one turns a kaleidoscope around and the little glass pieces form an entirely new pattern. We often have to break up an old pattern, a lesser whole, to allow another to form. Not to turn the kaleidoscope of life and look calmly at the same picture is to remain static and in a sense, dead.

Let us not be deceived in our thinking of wholeness, nor seize upon the idea as a comfortable refuge. For often a lesser whole must be sacrificed to a greater. A tree must lose its branches, and a limb has occasionally to be amputated. In the same way a society or an organisation must sometimes lose members so that the greater whole may survive and achieve a stronger "wholesomeness." For "wholeness" is no sentimental philosophy. It cannot be, because it is based on Unity, which is love in its highest state. And in real love there is no sentimentality, but a compassionate understanding. If asked for a summing up of the practice of "wholesomeness" in as few words as possible, I would say it is the relating of everything of which one is thinking, or in which one is engaged, to the *greater whole* to which it belongs. This might have to begin as a mental process, but it can become a constant awareness of the larger life behind everything, be it person, family, business, a group, or a whole organisation, so that every problem concerning any of these is seen not only in relation to immediate circumstance and environment but also in relation to the larger

whole. It sounds easier than it really is, for it means the absorption of sentimentality for persons, and their possible discomfort, into something very near compassionate love for the needs of the whole. And although hardness has certainly no place in the philosophy of wholeness, neither has what one of the Masters has called a "flabby kindness," for both these are in essence and in effect separative.

Let us think now of wholeness as related to individual temperaments. More specifically (while still keeping the general principles in mind) for some it will be through becoming one with the ideal and practice of service in the wisest way, laying accent on enduring quality and what seems best for the whole. For others at the same time the Whole may be personified in a super-human being, one of the Masters, or the Lord Christ Himself . . . or simply God, Life, the All-pervading Spirit in which he feels himself immersed, and by which he knows himself to be ensouled. Such an ideal if not personalised or in any way belittled can surely act as that Faith which brought wholeness to the woman who came to Christ for Healing. Service, Love, Understanding could as well be used as the word Faith, and the woman might have been told to go on her way in the knowledge that any one of these had "made her whole."

To live in the sense of "as above, so below," thus gradually becoming aware of oneself as a miniature universe, would be to some the most unifying and whole-making of all methods. It is the way of the Great Ones, as They work consciously as agents and embodiments of the law, fully aware that They are part of that Law. And that, for all of us, is the greatest value of any study; becoming gradually and continually aware of ourselves in One-ness, wholeness with that Great Law. For is not the student of the Bible asked if he does not know that he is the Temple of the Most High God? And the point is not merely knowing the correspondences and analogies, mentally interesting though they are, but living as if he really knew that he was that Temple, a Shrine for the Divine Life.

Similarly with the student of the Kabala. He is shown a means of becoming one with the Tree of Life, that grand plan of God's plan, and the point is not only knowing the formation of the Tree and the names and qualities of the ten Sephiroth

together with a host of correspondences and symbolic analogies, but gradually becoming one with the Living Scheme that the Diagram so wonderfully represents. The student of occult literature finds many statements and detailed diagrams indicating how man is truly a Universe in miniature. But these are of little importance unless that miniature whole, which is himself, begins to experience union with the Universal whole.

However, the method used is of secondary importance. A method is but a door, and it is no good standing outside admiring its workmanship. One must go through and almost forget it, in the greater life on to which it has opened, but into the heart of which it can never conduct, since being a door it is naturally fixed as regards position and limited as regards function. Doors are means to an end and are not very important when compared with that which may be found beyond them. But wholeness must include all doors or methods. For many it may be the grand and wise approach of the Theosophical teaching, a present expression of the eternal Wisdom, along any of its branches. Either in the Society itself, or within the widely spread field of the entire Theosophical movement you may find yourself developing a sense of wholeness through contemplation of the symbols of Temple, Tree of Life, practice in ceremonial, or, gradually, coming to feel yourself as a miniature world. This is truly a most humble-making process, yet one which awakes just those very Universal powers within oneself, inclusiveness at the same time as a necessary discrimination, confidence at the same time as an essentially true humility, impersonality at the same time as compassionate love. For it is really only in the light of this sense of wholeness that the dangers in self-development are minimised.

It is wise to note a few of the chief dangers: self-satisfaction, self-content, smugness, that is, favourably comparing our methods with those of others. These are limiting and destructive. These lead to a dead-end, a *cul-de-sac*, rather than towards the Osiris wholemaking process in which many besides ourselves are also engaged, though differently. These dangers apply to every path, even to one as yet unmentioned, one which may be the path for some of you. I mean, paradoxically, the pathless, nameless path, without any proper ladders, props, doors or

techniques. It is the way of the real mystic—the hardest of all, I believe, with perhaps the greatest compensations.

We will end as we began on a note of Unity, Unity in diversity, with “wholeness” as a “stepping-stone.”

Many years ago Mrs. Besant gave an Invocation for anyone who cared to use it. It is also an Evocation, a calling “up” from within oneself as well as “down” from a greater “Whole” of that power which lives in both. For many it is a reminder; for some it may be new:

*“O hidden life, vibrant in every atom;  
O hidden light, shining in every creature;  
O hidden love, embracing all in oneness,  
May each who feels himself as one with Thee  
Know he is therefore one with every other.”*

## II. THE NEED FOR HUMAN SOLIDARITY

*S. Stakesby-Lewis*

A NEW CONCEPTION of brotherhood is making itself felt in the Western World. Slowly it grows, amidst the distress of nations; and those who realise its truth are impelled to give the idea a fuller expression in human life.

Brotherhood is not a new idea; it is as old as humanity. Now what is the *fundamental truth* underlying the great fact that all men are brothers? It is the recognition of the *One Life* which dwells in all.

The ideal of Brotherhood is often misunderstood, as we still think of "Liberty, equality, fraternity"—the famous formula of the French Revolution. Now brotherhood emphatically does *not* mean equality. Even in a family it implies difference in age and consequently all sorts of differences in strength, in cleverness and in capacity. Even more so in the human family where there is so wide a difference between younger and older souls. The younger ones stand on the lower rungs of the ladder of evolution, represented by primitive and undeveloped people; among the older souls we find highly cultured men and women who naturally become the leaders, teachers and inspirers of their age.

The great scheme of evolution, which is God's plan for humanity, reveals a vision of the goal and purpose of life and of our own relationship with the ultimate. Through Theosophy we at once gain vision and enthusiasm, because it shows us that man is a god in the garment of man, that there is a wonderful goal for evolution, and that we can all help to bring it about more quickly. You may say, "How can God have a plan," for if we look around we see so much discord, suffering, misunderstanding, sordidness, ugliness, and it seems almost impos-

sible for such conditions to fit into a perfect plan.

Let me give you a simile. Supposing an architect plans a beautiful township on a spot where there are existing slums which have to be demolished first. Supposing you go and pay a visit to a place at a stage in the proceedings where rubbish, dust and disorder prevail and you say: "I see nothing but a mess. How can this place ever become a beautiful township?" And yet all the time the vision of the beauty is in the mind of the architect, and if you only knew the plan you would be able to rejoice in the beauty to come, and you would not mind if things were a bit disorderly at first. That is precisely the position in which Theosophists find themselves. We have had a glimpse of the plan. We can see the chaos now, but at the same time we can understand the beauty that will come out of it all. And we know that our efforts can hasten the eventual realisation of that beauty.

The Architect is God Himself, and He selects and trains us as his bricklayers and carpenters, and we are necessary for His work even though we have very few virtues and many weaknesses. This conception can indeed give us great enthusiasm to grow purer and nobler so that we can become better fitted to work for the building of a perfect structure. It is in order to gain this vision and to be of better use that Theosophists study the laws of the visible and invisible worlds. We strive to gain perfection in all we do, so that we may be able to draw a greater power for the blessing of all men.

As all men share in the One Life none may stand apart and seek to live alone. The law of the survival of the fittest may rule the animal kingdom, but becomes an anachronism in the human family. In its place must come the law of co-operation. So long as man knows himself as a physical body rather than as a spirit, so long is he dominated by the laws that rule the animal kingdom, for matter grows by taking. Grasping and holding is the condition of *material* success, but as this condition is against the law of brotherhood, unhappiness results.

And do we not see the disastrous results of such an attitude in the world today? Civilisation, of which we are so proud, has landed mankind in conditions of war, of strife, of starvation, of exploitation and of poverty. We may truly call this a "deadlock" in our history. No new systems of government

can solve a deep-rooted problem. There is but one way out of this chaos, but one solution, and that is the *recognition of Brotherhood*. Many of the world's leading men and women agree that the greatest need of today is practical brotherhood. This does not mean that all differences between nations, classes and parties, or all differences of opinion must disappear. So long as there are in the world people of varying types, born and growing under varying conditions, differences are inevitable. Differences are necessary to growth and hasten it, provided always that we do not deny brotherhood. The world suffers today from lack of human solidarity, a solidarity which should be the richer and the stronger for the differences it includes.

Our flag has written on it "Universal Brotherhood." Let us examine how we stand in the world with the brotherhood of man. First of all we see jealousy amongst the nations, and a world just finished with a great war but still raging with hatred, and our scientists in the paid service of our rulers misusing their intellect in order to discover more and more effective devices for destruction and killing.

Let us now turn to the religions and see what picture they present. It does not seem much more hopeful—there is rivalry. Each proclaims a salvation which it claims to be unique. If we expected to see a picture of one God waiting to embrace all mankind then we are to be disappointed. For the picture which is presented is that of different Deities, as depicted by the religions, competing against each other like business men, each striving to outdo the other so that they can make their own business more prosperous. How can all these religions help to build a universal brotherhood if their preachers do not accept the Spiritual Unity of all mankind?

There is one Universal Religion for which all can work, and that is *Brotherhood*. If the present-day churches fail us where are we to find a ray of truth and hope? It is to *man* himself that we must turn. Never was there an era so full of idealists as today. There is hardly a journalist, writer, or social reformer who is not dreaming of a better future. There are many films which bring to us an element of courage and hope. Some of you may have seen such films as "Men of Boys' Town," "Blossoms in the Dust," "Going My Way," and so on. There



are also many books full of idealism, such as those written by J. B. Priestley, Pierre van Paassen, and many others.

The statesmen of today are continually talking of tolerance and better understanding between all nations, and here in South Africa we heard the late Mr. Hofmeyr, addressing school children, say that it was his belief that there was only one ideal worth working for in the world—the brotherhood of man. He went on to say: “It may seem foolish for a politician to preach this doctrine in South Africa but it is my belief that this is the only philosophy of life worth while.” And let me also quote what General Chiang Kai Shek said in a manifesto to the Union of South Africa (at the inauguration of the Chinese Republic). He ended with these words: “I also hope that the ties which unite our two nations, both cultural and economic, will be further strengthened and that they may collaborate more effectively in serving the cause of world peace and prosperity based on the ideal of Universal Brotherhood.”

There is at present a very important attempt being made. This is the United Nations Organisation. In this movement we find a unique opportunity for the furtherance of our “first object,” which is to form a nucleus of the brotherhood of mankind. The membership of the participating organisations represents many millions of people, and we cannot help being impressed with such an effort, which has been launched with greater strength than ever before in human history. Here, surely, lies a remarkable opportunity both on the physical and on the inner planes, for we can make a tremendously powerful contribution to the life of the movement by the definite use of creative thought and meditation.

In theory it is not difficult to admit that life is one and the same in every living being. But a theory, however beautiful, is not enough. Theosophy is not meant to be just another creed, but Theosophy is a *way of living*. Our truths need to be *experienced* before they can be lived, and then only will they be a vital power in the rebuilding of the world on a better basis. Brotherhood is not just a word but a great reality.

How necessary is, today, a change of heart, of character. No peace, no understanding will ever be brought about unless this occurs. This means that education, instead of being directed

by competition as it is at present, must be directed towards the establishment in every youth of such character as will help him or her to live in a spirit of brotherhood with all mankind and at peace with himself.

We cannot help being convinced that the world's urgent need is a renewal of character, of the qualities of the heart no less than of the mind. At present the growth of the mind has outstripped that of the heart and morality has become obscured by the intellect. We have become keen-minded at the expense of our large-heartedness, but now the time has come to create a clearer understanding of the purpose of Life, which is human perfection. For this reason the building of character is the only lasting progress we can make. Noble qualities are the only possessions we can take with us through the portal of death; and such qualities culminate in the love of our fellow men. The need is urgent to make simple brotherhood a living, a dominant force in the lives of all. The keynote for the New Era, then, is co-operation and a sense of solidarity resulting from the recognition of Brotherhood as a fact in nature.

If this basis is accepted how can it be applied? In every department of social life the older brothers should feel their responsibility for the helping and guiding of the younger ones. The weaker ones should be protected and not exploited. The younger races should be educated and not treated with indifference and contempt. The Courts of Law should be composed of a group of elder brothers, consulting how best to help one weaker than themselves whose strength they strive to build up. It should be understood that every criminal trial is of society as much as of the culprit, and that prison walls are the very negation of brotherhood.

Brotherhood expressed in action means service, and this is the attitude of the practical idealist, the spiritually evolved man. He finds joy in giving and not in taking, for in his heart is love and compassion and these find fulfilment in his eager wish to help and serve others.

The present crucial situation of the world is viewed by many with sadness and grave doubt, and another war is accepted by some as inevitable. Although such a point of view may seem justified by much evidence on every side, this dreary picture of

the future is reinforced by the weight of hatred, lust for revenge and prejudiced thinking. What an amazingly different picture we contemplate if these same facts are regarded in the light of the Great Plan in the process of unfoldment. In this light, tragedy begets a new meaning, for by it humanity grows in compassion and the deep realisation of its essential brotherhood. By sorrow man is cleansed of the diseases of hatred and selfishness. Knowing the Great Plan of Evolution, we can be patient and wait for the time when the Future will reveal itself in all its splendour.

Reconstructionists aim at changing social laws and systems, but the Theosophist says: "Let us change our hearts, and the laws and systems will take care of themselves." A change of heart will inevitably create greater understanding and a spirit of brotherhood, with all its beautiful modes of expression. Right individual living and sympathetic relationships with all—these constitute right character, and so those who would create a happier world must plan to rebuild the ideal of character in every human being, for Character is the Inner Shrine of the Temple of the New Living in which the whole world will some day dwell.

Evolution is a slow process and cannot be forced. But its course is sure and progress is certain. With the ultimates in view we may help to prepare the next step for humanity and help to bring about solidarity.

In this country we are faced with great issues which have to be solved. Much understanding and sympathy will be needed, but to whatever nation, race or religion we belong we can today play our parts and be helpers if we think and act clearly in the light of the Great Plan; if we feel with kindness towards our fellow men, and so become the real builders of that new era of brotherhood.

We think of civilisation as a process of "transforming the savage into a human being," but we must take a further step and see it as a process of "transforming the human into the Divine." Some day the policy of our statesmen must be centred round this one idea: how to call forth the divinity hidden in each citizen.

We have now been learning from the Gospel for nearly two thousand years. It is time to close the book and see how

we can translate the lessons into reality, that is, to make the lessons take shape in new social institutions, in new human relationships. Mankind is losing interest in the churches, but is becoming highly interested in the lives and characters of men. That is why the churches appeal less and the cinemas more! We want to know how other men live and feel. Psychology attracts a great deal of attention, and there is an inrush of the Brotherhood Idea everywhere. We can release a great power today if we use the ideal of Brotherhood rightly. How can we achieve this? How can we bring about a feeling of human solidarity? By renouncing our own individualism, by sacrifice, by service, by discovering the joy of working for and with others. The world of cut-throat competition is slowly dying and the Time Spirit is with those who believe in Brotherhood.

Through the agonies and horrors of the present-day, man is coming into a happier heritage when, instead of rivalry, tyranny and greed, the era of human co-operation, understanding and tolerance shall be born, with the ending of poverty and war. This is the great field in which Theosophists are expected to sow. Therein lies our special *dharma*.

In conclusion may I quote some sentences from that wonderful writer, Pierre van Paassen.

In his book "That Day Alone," he says:

"Slowly the hopes and aspirations of mankind turn into concrete achievements. There is something utterly pathetic in all man's individual endeavour. But not in the collective march of humanity towards its ideal. The day will surely come when man, having grown tired of walking alone, will turn to his brother. On the day when we shall have learnt to feel the sorrows and the joys, the suffering and the hope of others as our very own, that world order of love and justice for which the Universe yearns, and of which the planets in the stillest night are the splendid but imperfect symbols, shall have come near. On that day alone the Brotherhood of man will have become a reality."

### III. THE ROBE OF THE FUTURE

*M. Ford*

IT HAS BEEN SAID by one of the leaders of our Society that if it be true that every right-minded man and woman is a reformer, how many thousand times more true must it be that God Himself is a reformer, for surely He cannot be content with the world as it is!

This idea will no doubt seem strange and even shocking to many people. They are accustomed to thinking of God as having created the world and all that is in it at some distant period in the past—the “beginning”—and as having then, as it were, retired and left the world to run itself according to certain laws laid down by Himself, reserving to Himself only the function of a Judge, meting out reward or punishment according to the degree in which these laws have been observed or disobeyed. It is true that God is also recognised as our Father, yet in their dealings with Him men are far more prone to regard Him as the stern judge than as a loving and understanding parent.

To the Theosophist, however, it becomes clear that in all the Universe there is none so active, so constantly at work, as God himself, and that were He to cease for one moment from such activity, the world and all that is in it would vanish and “like the baseless fabric of a vision . . . leave not a wrack behind.”

How, then, to account for this imperfection of the world as we know it? Did God in fact create everything in perfection and then, so to speak, sit back and suffer man, beginning with the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, gradually, throughout the ages, to wreck His handiwork? And is there no hope for the world save that God Himself, as some believe, should come again in person, in human form, to reign as King and set the world to rights? Such an idea may have attraction

for some minds but to many of us it is entirely lacking in conviction and we feel that it cannot be the answer to the world's problem.

Let me try and show you the picture, as far as I am able, as seen in the light of Theosophy.

Slowly, as he ponders over these matters, studying them in the light of the theosophical teachings, the Theosophist comes to realise that the world as we see it around us is not in fact the whole of the picture—that this is not the world as created by God and then defaced by man, but that there are as it were two worlds, the world as planned in the Divine Mind, the perfect world in which there is no ugliness, no ignorance or misery, no suffering or degradation, and this is what is called the Archetypal World, the world of spirit; and there is the imperfect world which we know, the world of matter, but which is in fact only an inverted reflection of that other world. Picture a mountain rising from the shore of a great lake and see how its highest peak is reflected in the lowest depths of the water. Even so the Archetypal World, existing on the highest planes of spirit, is reflected in the lowest depths of matter, our physical plane. Or take another simile, one which I have borrowed from our International President, Mr. Jinarajadasa. Picture the world as we know it as a triangle with its apex pointing downwards, and picture that Archetypal World as a triangle with its apex pointing upwards—but the two triangles, instead of being interlaced as we see them in our theosophical seal, lie with their bases parallel to one another and the second triangle slightly above the other. And then imagine this second triangle as a magnet, gradually lifting up the lower one and drawing it into itself until the lower becomes completely absorbed into and one with the higher; and this process of absorption and unification is God's plan for man which we call Evolution.

The question is often asked—why is there any need for evolution at all? If the spirit, which is the true man, is in fact divine in its origin, is it not perfect from the beginning? What need then for evolution? The answer is, as I understand it, that although man is indeed divine in origin, the spirit, or the Monad as it is usually called, is at first only a germ or seed of divinity although having latent within it all the potentialities

of its divine Father. But, just as the seed must be buried in the ground in order that it may germinate and grow into the perfect tree or flower, so must this seed of divinity be buried in matter on the lower planes of nature in order that it may grow and unfold all its latent divine powers. To put it another way, since every man (and of course that includes woman too) is a god in the becoming, he must be trained in the school of experience to exercise his divine powers—he must become a lord of matter in order that when the time is ripe he may enter into his heritage and become, in his turn, the creator of a universe. And since this may sound strange and even presumptuous to some of you to whom the thought is a new one, let me remind you of that incident in the life of the Christ when His enemies tried to stone Him, and He asked them why they did so—was it because he had sought to do good, bringing healing to the sick and sight to the blind? And they replied that they did not stone Him for any good work but for blasphemy in that, being but a man, He claimed to be equal with God. And He answered them by quoting words of the 82nd Psalm:

“Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.”

But in this long process of training mankind has never been left to struggle on alone and in ignorance. Always behind it stands, and has stood, the Great White Brotherhood, the Inner Government of the World, whose members are dedicated to the service of humanity and from whose ranks there come, from time to time, great Teachers who re-state the eternal Truth, each in turn emphasising that aspect of it which is best suited and most helpful to the people to whom He is sent and the period in the world's history at which the teaching is given. The names of some of these Teachers are known to all of you—Tehuti or Thoth in Egypt, Zoroaster in Persia, Orpheus in Greece, Krishna and the Lord Buddha in India, the Christ in Palestine, Mohamed in Arabia. And then, too, there are the great laws of nature which exist for the guidance and helping of mankind; the law of Reincarnation or Rebirth, which gives a man all the time he needs for the learning of his many lessons, and the law of Karma, or of Cause and Effect, whereby man is given the opportunity to put right the mistakes he has made and the wrongs he has



committed, and at the same time to profit by those mistakes in the acquisition of wisdom and the building up of his character. The evolving soul also gains further valuable training by being born, in the course of many incarnations, into different races and in many different parts of the world. In long past ages many lives will have been spent among the primitive peoples of the Third Root Race on the ancient continent of Lemuria; then many lives in the Fourth Root Race as an Atlantean on the great continent of Atlantis itself or among the Atlantean offshoots in Asia. Later still there will have been lives as an Aryan of the Fifth Root Race—in India, Persia, Egypt, Arabia, Greece, Rome, and other countries of Europe, or America, Australia, South Africa and other countries conquered and inhabited by Europeans. And in all these lives the soul will have worn, sometimes a red, brown, yellow or white, and in some very early incarnations he might have had even a blue or orange skin. What an infinite variety of experiences have we not had in our long march towards that goal which is the subject of our thought tonight!

And considering thus the story of man's long past, the question may well arise—How is it that after all these millions of years, with all these opportunities and aids, mankind seems to have made so little real progress? Why is the world in the mess we see it in today? How can we ever hope to realise that future of perfection?

The answer, I think, lies in the constitution of man himself.

You are, no doubt, all familiar with the story of the evolution of forms in the animal kingdom. You have heard how structural changes have gradually come about in animal forms as the result of changes in environment and the necessity for survival. How, for example, certain animals had to develop the faculty of speed to enable them to survive in the particular environment in which they found themselves, and how accordingly certain changes eventually appeared in the animal form as a result of this necessity. Now the teaching of Theosophy is that all forms in nature exist only for the sake of the indwelling life or consciousness which needs a form for its expression—just as a musician needs an instrument, a violin or piano or whatever it may be, to enable him to express the music which is in his soul.



And thus every form in nature, from a grain of sand to the human form itself, and beyond, is but a vehicle of expression for some portion of the great stream of logioic life which the Logos, or God, is constantly sending forth into His universe. But this life or consciousness—for the two are synonymous, only when we think of the One, the whole, we say “life,” and when we think of the part, or the separated entity, we say “consciousness”—this consciousness, then, is ever unfolding and expanding and consequently forms must evolve; that is, must become more complex and highly organised, in order to be fit instruments for the expression of the unfolding consciousness.

Thus we see that, not only for man but for all creatures, from the mineral upwards, there is a “Robe of the Future” which shall be the perfect vehicle of expression for the consciousness in that perfect, archetypal world towards which all are travelling. But as we study the subject more closely we see that in the lower kingdoms of nature evolution proceeds by impacts from without, and the consciousness is that of a Group Soul and not of a single individual. Man alone is a separate, self-conscious individual and for him evolution must proceed through self-initiated impulses from within. Moreover he is endowed with freewill, that is freewill within the law, and the problem has always been, how shall mankind be induced, of its own freewill, to follow the law of righteousness, which is the law of evolution? And this can only be done by leaving humanity to learn by its own mistakes. For man, in his personality or lower self, is a very selfish and self-centred creature, and obstinate and wilful. In the earlier stages of his evolution this extreme self-awareness, if one may call it that, is useful and indeed necessary, for at that stage the object is to build up a strong individuality in order that strength of character may be developed. It must be remembered that the consciousness has only lately emerged from the animal kingdom where it was part of a Group Soul, shared by many creatures. In the man it is for the first time the consciousness of one individual. Therefore in the undeveloped man, the savage (though undeveloped souls are found at all the lower stages)—in such people, then, this sense of separateness, of grasping at things for the self and seeing all things only in relation to the self, is permissible because it is a necessary stage

in the growth of the soul. But it is a condition that must eventually be outgrown if true progress is to be made.

In our theosophical studies we learn that in the Great Plan of the Logos there are seven stages of evolution, the whole being symbolised by a circle, or a serpent swallowing its tail. During the first  $3\frac{1}{2}$  stages, represented by the downward arc, spirit is descending and becoming more and more deeply involved in matter. The middle of the fourth stage is of course the lowest—the deepest plunge into matter, and from that point starts the upward trend, the return to spirit. This is the point now reached by humanity as a whole—it has started the long climb out of matter back to spirit, the source from which it came. It is the stage in the story of the Prodigal Son (which is an allegory of the pilgrimage of the soul) when he says “I will arise and go unto my Father.” Or we can put it in the words of St. Paul:

“When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things.”

Humanity has passed its childhood and therefore it behoves us to put away childish things. And now perhaps we can see the answer to our question: Why is the world in the sad state it is in today? Why do we appear rather to be going backwards than forwards? Materially we have made great progress: science has given us many gifts—motor cars, aeroplanes, wireless, electricity, wonderful discoveries in medicine and surgery, to name only a few—and last of all has come the discovery of atomic energy with all its tremendous possibilities. What then still ails us? The answer was given long ago by the Christ: “Man shall not live by bread alone”; and by St. Paul when he declared that tho’ all else should fail or pass away—prophecies, tongues, knowledge, yet “Charity never faileth.” And that is what we lack—charity, love. For man is a creature not only of material needs, but of emotional and mental needs, and whilst today he is satiated with material things, emotionally and mentally he is starving himself. If he would fit himself to become a citizen of that perfect world of the future his robe must be woven of a threefold thread, material, emotional and mental. But it is a curious fact that man, whilst quite ready to cast aside the customs and methods of his ancestors in material things—

he much prefers electricity to candle-light, a motor car to an ox-wagon—not to mention all the other comforts and amenities of our civilisation—yet, when it comes to matters of thought and emotion, how we cling to the past! We hug to ourselves the prejudices we have inherited from others, we glory in our ignorance of the spiritual outlook of those who differ from us in religion; we strut about in our armour of separateness and mistake it for superiority!

What are the things that separate? Race, creed, sex, caste and colour. It is true that each of these has its place in the Plan, but none of them was meant to be set up as an eternal barrier between man and man. Not one of them alters the fact that all men are brothers, children of one Father, sharers of His life, inheritors of His divinity. If only we could grasp and hold on to this great truth and let it find expression in all our dealings—in the councils of the Nations, in our National Parliaments, in our civic institutions, in our homes and in our personal approach to life, how different would be the world! If only we could realise, and realising, strive to give expression to it in our daily lives, that what the world needs today is Charity, Brotherhood, the spirit of co-operativeness and not of separateness; our prejudices and superstitions would fall from us like an old, moth-eaten garment and understanding take the place of ignorance.

No man or nation can live in the past, for the law of evolution, which is the law of life, is a law of progress and advance, spiritually as well as materially. The past is useful only as showing where we have erred and in what measure we have followed Truth, but one who tries to go through life constantly looking back at the past will inevitably, like Lot's wife, become immobilised and unable to go forward. It is true that in the long course of evolution every son of God shall eventually return to his Father's house from which he went forth so many ages ago, but when we study the world's history we see that there have been, and are, many brave, pioneer souls who were not content to jog along with the crowd but who made great efforts and forged ahead in order that they might the better serve their brother men. These are the saints, the teachers, the wise statesmen, the great scientists, the artists, the social reformers—by many paths they have travelled towards the goal, but when we

study their lives we find that they all have one characteristic in common, they are all philanthropists, lovers of mankind; they all possess the virtue of charity and their lives are lived not for their own power and glory but for the service of mankind, and we think of them with admiration, reverence and love. These have already started to weave their Robe of the Future; they have learned the great lessons of sacrifice and self-surrender and are drawing very near to—some indeed have already entered—the perfect Archetypal World. Others there are who by force of character have also forged ahead and become leaders and rulers of men, but in them the mainspring of action has been self-glorification and love of power, not love of mankind, and while we may think of them with fear and even admiration, we do not offer them reverence or love. Yet, later, when they too have learned the lesson of love and unselfishness, the force they have generated will be turned to nobler uses.

But there is still another type: Those, and they are the majority, who are content to jog along from life to life, learning their lessons slowly but making no particular efforts to advance more rapidly. For such there is a danger, for life, as we have seen, is a school. Now in every earthly school there comes a time when an examination must be held to determine who are fit to pass on into the higher classes and who must stay behind because they have failed to make the grade and must go through the lower course again. So, too, in the school of life comes the time of the great sifting-out, the Day of Judgment if you like to think of it in that way, when only those who have shown themselves fit to wear the Robe of the Future, or who have already donned it, can be allowed to go forward; the rest must stay behind and go through the course again. It is, you see, the story of the guest who came to the wedding feast not having on a wedding garment. You will remember that the King ordered his servants to bind him and cast him into outer darkness. But that does not mean, as some have supposed, being cast into a hell of eternal damnation and punishment, but only that such souls must remain behind for a long period in the lower school of life to learn the lessons they have failed to learn the first time, so that when the next time for the examination comes they may pass, perhaps this time with honours. But no doubt to such, the

contrast between the lower worlds and that perfect world must seem like being condemned to outer darkness.

And so, if we would not be among the laggards, even if we do not wish to be in the vanguard, it behoves us to take stock of ourselves here and now and begin at once to weave the materials for our Robe of the Future, which, like that other Robe worn by One to whom many of us look as our ideal of the Perfect Man, must be "without seam, woven from the top throughout." But in life there are no bargain counters; never are we offered anything for nothing but must be prepared to pay the price. None but ourselves can weave our Robe of the Future. In the words of Sir Edwin Arnold: "Its threads are life and love, and death and pain the shuttles of its loom." So we must be prepared to cast away our prejudices and superstitions, our fears and hatreds, our greed and separateness, all of which are the knots in our thread, if we would have our garment ready in time. It is not an easy task—it is the path of renunciation, of suffering and pain, of self-sacrifice and a crown of thorns—but there are those who have trodden it before us and what they have done we, too, can do. And will it not be worth it? Listen to the words of St. Paul in relation to one of the greatest of these:

"Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Note that word "joy"—not power or glory but "joy" is the guerdon offered.

Thus, "Not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by the taking of the manhood into God," shall mankind attain to perfection; and thus shall each one of us, Sons of God, if we faint not, come back at last to our Father's House, the Archetypal World, and, wearing our robes of glory, shall enter in and go out no more.

#### IV. THE ELDER BRETHREN

*Clara M. Codd*

THERE ARE CERTAIN QUESTIONS which we are always asking ourselves. We want to know who we are, and why we are here, and if there is any goal to life, and if there is any design behind this wonderful universe. Religion, science and philosophy try to answer these questions, and often the answer seems incomplete and unsatisfactory. Yet we intuitively feel that there is an answer, and that that answer must be completely in accord with the natural order of things. Are there deeper facts about life which, if we knew them, would make us understand life better, and if so, who knows them, and what are they?

There are vast and immutable laws governing the progress of life. This is its science. Most of us are merely children in the great School of Life, and are learning by experience something of these great laws. But there must be those who know them thoroughly, and therefore share their power. William James, the psychologist, once said that all great thinkers presuppose that there must be behind the many different forms of human knowledge, a *Root Knowledge*. What would that Root Knowledge be? Surely the great Art and Science of life itself. Occultism, about which we hear so much these days, has been defined by a great occultist as "the Science of Life and the Art of Living."

Just as in the science of mathematics there are children learning that two and two make four, and the great professors of science like Albert Einstein, for example; so in the great School of Life there are scholars of varying degrees of growth and attainment, and also the great Professors of that Science of all sciences and that beautiful Art of all arts. For untold ages in the history of this planet great master-minds, sages and adepts,

have garnered this deeper knowledge, and have handed it on from one generation to another and now, in these modern days, they have lifted a tiny corner of the veil which screens this tremendous knowledge, and given us, through their pupils, an outline of the universal principles which govern life. This outline we call Theosophy, and the ones who gave it to us the Elder Brethren of the race, or the Masters of the Wisdom.

They are the flowers of the race, those who have graduated and passed out of the School of Life. Their further development is too grand for us to visualise, but we know that some of them elect to go no further but to remain with us upon this planet, guiding, helping, teaching where they can, but for the most part unseen and unknown of men. They belong to different categories, for life is very like a school, and holds scholars of very different aptitudes and characteristics. And in a school, the younger scholars first receive an all-round education, and then, as they grow up, begin to specialise, so in the School of Life, every soul to begin with receives the ordinary impacts of life, and as his growth proceeds, life after life, his essential characteristics begin to show, and his line of development emerges from the mass.

Speaking very generally, there are three of these great lines of growth, belonging to a man who has a bias in disposition to either action, thought or emotion. The man of action becomes in the end a hero; the man of thought, a sage; the man of feeling, a purified saint. We may regard these as graduates from the top class of life, those who are the world's idealists and saviours. Already they have emerged from the nations which gave them birth, and belong now to all. Shakespeare, Michael Angelo, Beethoven, Abraham Lincoln, many others, belong now to the world. And from their ranks come different classes of adeptship, when they pass beyond this school of service and experience.

The Hero joins the ranks of the Adepts who guide (in so far as they can in obedience to the great Law which says that no man's free will must be interfered with) the destinies of nations and races, and all the systems of government that arise amongst us. The Saint becomes the spiritual teacher and saviour of men. This class of Adept more often appears physically amongst us than any other, for from their ranks come the great Teachers of



men and the originators of the different religious systems which appear from time to time. The Thinker becomes the illuminated Sage and the Master Magician of life, understanding and manipulating the hidden laws of nature for the help of mankind, guiding discovery and sometimes delaying it.

What are they like, these Perfected Men? The first thing to remember is that they are *men*, not gods, though possessed of what may seem to us god-like power. Some of them, not all, still live in a physical body, and generally inhabit quiet and unknown spots on earth. Yet from those quiet places they watch and guard all life. They help unseen the aspiring search of scientist, saint and teacher. A wonderful esoteric book from the East, *The Voice of the Silence*, calls them "the Guardian Wall of humanity," saying that "it shields mankind, since man is man, protecting it from further and far greater sorrow." It is wonderful to feel that, in spite of all appearances, the great progress of men is in hands which are infinitely wise and compassionate. They are the divine viceroys upon earth, and will be with us until this planet's ending, when we too pass beyond from ignorance to light and from sorrow to bliss.

The co-founder of the Theosophical Society, Colonel Olcott, at first thought they were "spirit guides." So an Egyptian Master wrote to him: "I am not a dismembered spirit, brother, I am a living man, gifted with such powers by our Lodge as are in store for yourself some day." They are not often seen of men, but if we ever saw one what would he be like? That has been described for us by a great disciple of such a One. He said at first you would not distinguish anything uncommon for the Master is still a man, but you would detect three things in his wonderful eyes. First, a look of very high purpose, for the Master is always thinking of the world and humanity as a whole, and never of himself, and this will lend his eyes a starry, far-away look. Then a look of infinite kindness, and too, quite often, a merry smile of kindly humour. And lastly, a look of infinite peace and security, for he knows that however long we may be upon the road, and whatever trouble we create for ourselves by our own ignorance and selfishness, the end is sure, and that there is not a single son of man who will not "come home" one day, for he too is always the "son



of the Most High.”

Perhaps one of the unspoken missions of the Theosophical Society is to restore to men the knowledge of the existence here and now of the older brothers of the race. What a lovely thing to think of! And to remember that we too are incipient “perfect men” and will one day join their ranks. Indeed the last stage of that immortal journey is trodden under the personal care of such a One. And so the beautiful old story of discipleship is also true. The Older Brother stretches out his hand to the younger one, that he too, in his turn, may learn all the secrets of life and how best to help his younger brethren still toiling at his side.

The Brothers, as They call themselves, are the product of the great process of evolution, through repeated lives on earth. They have become Perfect Men, and life holds no more lessons for them. To be in touch with such a One must be the holiest, happiest event in life. Yet in reality all are in touch. Our Lord the Christ holds high position among them, and He and They are never out of touch with the smallest thing that lives. When the hour is ripe, they draw ever nearer to the aspiring soul, longing for power to help, for Truth to illuminate his darkness, for Eternal Love to uplift his arms. In the words of Dr. Annie Besant: “No soul that aspires can ever fail to reach; no heart that loves can ever be abandoned.”

## V. ONE LIFE OR MANY?

*Lorna Retief*

LONG AGO IN PALESTINE, the Christian Master asked his disciples a question of such far-reaching importance that had its full meaning been understood by later generations the whole religious history of Western civilisation would have been changed, and mankind saved from the menacing growth of materialism which has brought about such a dangerous crisis in the world today.

"Whom say the people that I am?" He asked. And the answers which some of His disciples gave indicate how widespread was the idea of reincarnation at that time; for one said that some people thought that Jesus was John the Baptist returned, while others said that He was regarded as the reincarnation either of Elias or of Jeremias, both of whom had been dead for centuries. In short, the conviction was present that in the person of Jesus, "One of the old prophets is risen again."

It is significant that nowhere does Jesus deny the truth of reincarnation, in fact he affirms it, when questioned whether John the Baptist was Elijah or Elias reborn, in that well-known, but little understood statement: "But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, and have done unto him whatsoever they listed." And Jesus follows up the statement with the significant words: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Then in later Jewish tradition the idea is known, and the Talmud mentions several cases of reincarnation. The strange fact is that reincarnation is found everywhere as a belief. We hear of it in Australia, and there is a story on record of an Australian aborigine who went cheerfully to the gallows, and replied on being questioned as to his levity: "Tumble down black fellow,

jump up white fellow, and have lots of sixpences to spend."

It was taught by the druids of ancient Gaul, and Julius Caesar tells us how young Gauls were taught reincarnation, and that as a consequence they had no fear of death. Greek philosophers knew of it; we have Pythagoras telling his pupils that in a past life he had been a warrior at the siege of Troy.

But it is in the Orient that the teaching has spread most widely and exerted the greatest influence. It is the basic teaching of most of the religious and philosophical systems in India, and today throughout the Orient some six hundred and fifty millions of human beings accept the truth of reincarnation as a great, natural and inevitable law.

Obviously then, reincarnation is one of the fundamental religious ideas of mankind. It is a teaching of such vast antiquity that the origin of the idea is unknown, and it is surmised that a knowledge of the doctrine antedates all known history. But, due perhaps to its very antiquity, it is unfortunately nearly always associated with misconceptions and superstitions, and so great discredit has been cast on the philosophical value of the central idea itself.

How often we hear people remark that they do not want to be born again as a monkey or a fly! But these erroneous ideas only arise from ignorance of the Laws of the Universe, and back of all the fancies clustering round the belief in the rebirth of the soul there must surely be a vital truth or else the idea of reincarnation could not have endured for so many thousands of years, nor could it have attracted so many able thinkers.

For even in these modern times many thoughtful people have come to regard reincarnation with favour, and it has been prophesied that it is surely destined to be the Great Idea of this century—even as the idea of evolution transformed the conceptions of the last. And when that prophesy is fulfilled then indeed will there be a new heaven and a new earth, for among the many ideas that have lightened the burden of men one of the most serviceable has been that of reincarnation, as it has a rare value in explaining the most baffling of human problems.

Reincarnation implies that man is a spiritual being, clothed in bodies made of matter; the man, then, is the spiritual intelligence, the bodies are only a garment. So man's natural

dwelling place is in the higher and spiritual regions. Just as a bird soaring in the air may dive down into the water to catch his prey, and then rise again to his own habitat, so it is with the Spirit which is man; his home is in the heavenly worlds, but he has to learn to master matter by long experience and by many lessons.

So he plunges down to earth, taking a body which is prepared for him, and when he has gained experience he carries it to his heavenly home for assimilation into innate capacity and power. Then, having changed his experience into mental and moral capacities, man comes back to earth and enters a better body suitable to the more evolved spiritual condition which is himself.

This process is repeated life after life, man's past expressing itself as character and as conscience, the after-death life lengthening as he evolves. And so on, and on, and on, until he has climbed from the savage to the Perfect Man. At that stage, as an Adept or Master of the Wisdom, he is released from the wheel of births and deaths, for he has learned all that these worlds can teach, and he passes on to a magnificent superhuman evolution, in which His own unfolded consciousness scales inconceivable heights, until he reaches union with God himself.

The Law of Karma is inextricably woven with that of reincarnation. Karma is the Law in Nature which links together Causes and Effects. It is an accepted fact of Science that action and reaction are equal and opposite. So this Law of Karma means that when the equilibrium of nature is disturbed, that equilibrium tends to be restored.

This is a world of changeless law, which works not only in the physical world, but in the mental and moral as well. There is no such thing as blind chance. Justice rules the world, justice that demands the payment of a debt incurred. Thus this mighty Law of Karma decrees that every man always receives his just deserts, as is expressed so truly by an old Eastern proverb: "*The recompense of good and evil follows, as the shadow follows the figure.*"

This far-reaching law of action and reaction, and the fact that man is a divine being, are concepts basic to a true understanding of reincarnation. Pain and suffering, bereavement and

poverty, the greatest human misery can be borne with fortitude where there is understanding.

Look at a primeval savage, and try for a moment to realise what he is: imagine the aborigines of Australia, the Bushmen of the Kalahari. Try to realise him, mentally and morally; he is scarcely human, he has practically no mind. So low were these aborigines intellectually that, when the Australian Government gave them blankets, they would use them the first night and then barter them for other things in the morning when the sun was warm, not realising that night would come again.

Their moral development was equally low. They were quite prepared to take the most handy person for the next meal! Darwin recorded a case of a man who found his wife the most convenient thing for his dinner, and when a missionary tried to make him understand that it was the wrong thing to do, he answered, rubbing himself in satisfaction: "But she was very good." The missionary tried to make him understand that good eating and good morals were not identical, but failed. The moral sense was not yet evolved. Savages eat their parents, when they are no longer useful, and their children because they are not yet useful. They murder and they rob. There the savage is . . . God-made, all religions tell us. What are we going to do with him on the other side of death? What could you do with him in heaven? Yet it would be hardly fair to send him to hell, as he did not make himself. Is that narrow, brutal life *all* that the world has to give him, the world which to some of us is so fair and wonderful?

What can we do with him? If we seriously ask ourselves that question, it will bring us to consider reincarnation. Seen in the light of reincarnation, this savage, who has murdered his wife and friends, is yet not a criminal; he is only a-moral.

Let us suppose that he is knocked on the head by another savage and dies. But he is not really dead; only his body has been struck away, and he has passed into the intermediate world between heaven and earth; he discovers that the people he killed are living; he meets again all the people with whom he has had troubled relations. They are many, and he is only one; and they have not forgotten the past any more than he has, and so they give him rather an unpleasant welcome on the other side.

Thus he begins to learn certain lessons: that if you murder a man today, you will meet him tomorrow; that if you eat your wife today, she will be no pleasant mate when she meets you on the other side. I do not say he learns all his lessons in that one experience; he comes to earth-life and out of it over and over again, until at last the early lessons of life are woven into his Spirit, and he learns that it is not well to murder and to steal, and dimly begins to recognise a law which returns to every man exactly the result of his sowing.

But these are not his only after-death experiences. He will have had perhaps, for the woman who was his mate, some little touch of affection before the greater need of hunger overbore it. That little germ cannot die, for nothing dies in the Universe of Law. That little seed of good begins to grow, and makes him happy, and later on, when he carries more of good with him, he takes it on into the higher heavenly world, and there changes it into a moral quality, with which he returns to earth. So life after life he gathers the fruit of experience, growing ever more and more civilised as these experiences are wrought into his character.

The basic difference between the children of our race and that of the savage is that ours respond to moral ideas and the children of the savage do not. You say your child has a conscience when it understands a certain thing is wrong. True, but conscience is not a gift of God, but the outcome of experience; your child brings with him the harvest of his past, the sense of right and wrong. You have not to do with a new-born soul, but with one who has passed through many lives.

The child of the civilised man brings into the world a ready-formed character, as anyone who has had to do with children can observe. So character, which is the result of past experience, is the stock-in-trade with which each begins his present life.

When we ourselves pass over, what shall we take with us as harvest, to use in the other world? Certain errors will meet us on the other side, and will cause suffering. This is the basis of truth in all the terrible stories of hell. Then, when we have learned the lessons from our mistakes, we shall pass on into the heavenly world.

Hence the importance of the earthly life that gives the

material, for according to the richness of the sowing will be the harvest we shall reap.

You see how by the law of reincarnation comes the opportunity enabling a man to build himself; how the experiences are life after life stored up and transmuted into qualities; how at each new stage of his pilgrimage he grows, gathering and crystallising these experiences into faculties. Reincarnation is the Law which develops embryonic man until he becomes the triumphant Son of God.

If we deny reincarnation there are two other possibilities. One is special creation by God, in which most Christians believe. The other is heredity. Both of these leave man paralysed and helpless in the grip of a destiny he is powerless to influence. In considering the possibilities we must realise the fact which I mentioned before, the fact that when a child is born into the world, he is not born with a mind like a blank sheet of paper on which one may write what one will. The child comes into the world as a living being with his character<sup>al</sup> ready formed.

If special creation be true, where is the justice, to say nothing of love? Why is one child born a congenital idiot, another a genius; one a cripple, another strong; one grasping and greedy, another magnanimous and generous? These differences are apparent in the nursery. Who made the differences? God? That implies injustice enthroned over the universe; it implies the helplessness and therefore hopelessness of man. If it were more generally realised what Special Creation implies, then people would see the absurdity of the doctrine.

Special Creation teaches that each human soul comes straight from the hands of God. Just imagine what that means when we apply this idea to the inhabitants of the terrible slums, the shanty towns and the locations, where the misery of human life is almost unbelievable.

There we find children congenitally diseased and mentally and morally criminal. Whence come such children? Why are they born amongst us? Let us imagine ourselves in one of our poorest districts, where the houses are rotten with age and ingrained with filth. In the corner of a dingy room, where the air is heavy and foul, a woman is lying on a heap of filthy rags. She has just given birth to a man-child. The child has no fore-

head, the brain slopes back from the eyebrows to the back of the head, which comes up to an almost acute angle. The child is a congenital criminal; he is doomed to crime and misery throughout the span of his unhappy life on earth. He is a poor wretched little mortal with a human Spirit; fresh made, they tell us, from the hands of God. The mother? a harlot of the streets; the father? Who knows? From infancy this child only hears foul language and curses. He is brought up on blows and kicks, sent out to steal, and sent supperless to bed, writhing in pain if he does not steal enough to pay for the evening meal. He knows the law only as an enemy, not as a helper. No one teaches him; every man's hand is against him; it is inevitable that he goes from bad to worse, committing crime after crime, until at last in some moment of passion he strikes too hard and kills one of his companions... The law grips him for the last time, dumbly he hears the evidence against him, confused and miserable he is led back to the condemned cell, and then from the condemned cell to the gallows. And then? What happens to him? He is obviously too foul for heaven, nor would he be happy there, and yet justice cannot send him to everlasting hell—a man who never had a chance. That is the story not of one, but of many, in all civilised lands.

But that is not the best work that comes from the creative hands. Into another home in that same city a man-child is born with every advantage, amid pure surroundings, and welcomed by tender parental love; his head is marked for the indwelling of genius, with well-modelled skull, with delicately chiselled features that tell of sensitive emotions and high ideals. He is watched over with scrupulous care. He is given the best education which civilisation can offer; he goes from joy to joy, from achievement to achievement; he is as much favoured by the Supreme as the other was made an outcast by Him; and he dies after a life of glory, as the other after a life of crime, amid a nation's mourning, with his name written in the roll of great men illuminating the nation's history.

Can God have made especially both the congenital criminal and the genius? If not both, then neither. According to re-incarnation there is no difficulty, for it easily explains the differences in capacity. Each one of us is an evolving Intelligence,



growing from life to life, as a seed grows up into a tree season after season.

The criminal is a young not yet evolved spirit, a savage; the genius is a spirit, aged in experience; but both are divine, both are the results of their own past, self-created from within.

It is a question of time, not of injustice; there is a later date for the perfection of one than for that of the other; but perfection is the destiny of each, and endless time in which to attain it stretches in front. Thus is made clear to us that ancient injunction of the Master Jesus: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

A question which is often asked is: "Supposing that re-incarnation does account for these differences in human evolution, is it always the case that the child born of parents of a low type is itself entirely low? And will the highly developed child always be born of highly evolved parents?" No, it is not always the case, there are exceptions. From time to time a great soul, sacrificing himself, will be born into a degraded position in order that he may uplift the degraded, that he may encourage them by his example, and thus stimulate them to rise to a higher level.

One remarkable soul who made this great sacrifice was that well-known Negro, Booker Washington. He was developed to a high point of intellectual and moral greatness, and was not a soul suited to a Negro body. But he was so moved by compassion that he deliberately willed to enter that type of body, in order to help a degraded and despised class.

We know what magnificent work he did for these poor outcasts. Would that he were among the African people here today!

Some of the greatest saints of Southern India were born among the Pariahs, and these are revered everywhere as men so saintly and so spiritual that the proudest Brahmin is willing to recognise them as saints and devotees, though they were born in the lowest class.

Such incarnations of a great soul into a low type of body are however exceptions; as is also the case when what is called a "black sheep" is born into a good and noble family. The latter can be explained by the law of Karma, which brings together in the present those who have made links in the past.

Another question which often arises is: "How would the theory of reincarnation explain the case of the new-born babe who dies shortly after birth?" The explanation from the standpoint of reincarnation is that in the past such an Ego has become indebted to the Law by causing the death of someone through an act of carelessness. When a man earns the Karma of having taken life carelessly, his re-entry into incarnation may be delayed or rendered more difficult, and a false start is often his lot. He suffers by being still-born, or dying in early infancy. But for the most part it is the Karma of the parents which is the chief cause of such a birth, and a soul is chosen for their child who owes such a debt, in order that the parents' heavier Karma may be paid off. So both destinies are worked out in the death of the child.

In the case of the parents there is real suffering. They might have owed this debt to nature through lack of love or active cruelty to a relative's child in a former life. The debt is demanded in the body of their own child, who is dear to their hearts, and they pay the debt, and thus learn greater tenderness and kindness to other children. Thus wisely does nature, which is God, teach His children how to grow in love and sympathy.

Why are some people born deformed, dwarfed or crippled? Reincarnation has an answer. It may be the result of cruelties inflicted upon others. The inquisitors of old, the vivisectors of the present day, schoolmasters who rule by fear instead of by love, all who are cruel will similarly reap the results. Cruelty is one of the worst crimes, because it is against the Law of Love.

Another question which is puzzling to many is, why do we experience those sudden likes and dislikes over which we have no control? This is easily explained by reincarnation; it is because of our relationships with people in past lines. Some think that reincarnation will involve separation from those they love. That is not so. First of all, in the long heavenly life—lasting sometimes for hundreds of years—the whole of that time is spent with people we loved upon earth, and when we come back to earth we tend to come back in groups, together with those we loved before.

Nothing in heaven or earth can slay love or break its tie. Where there is love a link is formed between souls, and it cannot

be broken by the icy hand of death, nor by rebirth. Back we come, old friends together; old enemies together too. Have you not often felt when you met a person for the first time that you knew him? So a belief in reincarnation changes our attitude to the people around us. With our friends we have a closer tie, for everyone we know as a friend comes out of our past, spirit hailing spirit across the blinding veil of the material body. And understanding this Law, we realise that our enemies are people whom we have wronged in the past, and so they come forward to claim the debt we owe them. The payments set us free from old debts, so why should we feel anger or resentment? We can only feel gratitude to those who take from us the payment of an ancient debt, and leave us free to go along our road; thus most of the sting disappears when we acquiesce in the finding of the Law.

Reincarnation gives a permanency to friendship which nothing else can give, we know we need never lose our friends. And the knowledge of this law is a great comfort when someone we dearly love does not love us. The one who knows the law of reincarnation realises that his strong love has its root in the past, and if it is not answered, it is due to some past injury inflicted on his friend. So, instead of feeling bitter and resentful he continually sends his friend thoughts of love, thus paying him back in benediction and goodwill for the ancient wrong. In this way, ultimately, he will earn the love of his friend again. So a belief in reincarnation makes us strong, able to bear and to endure.

These then are some of the logical arguments in favour of reincarnation. There is, however, one objection that can be brought against reincarnation, and it lies in the question: "If we have lived on earth before, why do we not remember our past lives?"

First let us note the fact that we seem to forget much more of the present life than we remember. If we go back to our childhood, how much of it do we remember? Very little! But while only a few things stand out, we have not really forgotten the events of our childhood; they are submerged, not destroyed, and may be drawn from the depths of memory, may be recovered from the subconsciousness by methods known to

psychologists.

Nothing is ever lost, the many past things fall into the background and are hidden by the more vivid memories of later events, but in the trance state the whole memory comes back. This has been proved over and over again. The same thing happens sometimes in a fever. This is all very interesting when we come to deal with the problem of memory. Why do we remember when our brain is thus thrown out of order? For that is what happens both in delirium and in trance. Because the memory of a past event has been pushed into the background by a succeeding one, and it has sunk just below the threshold of consciousness.

We do not remember learning to read, but the fact that we can read proves the learning. And the fact that we have a character and a conscience shows that we have a past where these were formed and built up. But we do not remember these experiences. If this forgetfulness be true of experiences encountered in our present body, how should we expect our present brain to remember experiences in which that brain and body had no share at all? For we are not living now in the same brain, desire-nature and mind in which we lived in the past.

We can recover the memory if we choose, by inward-turned meditation, by living in the higher instead of in the lower, by living in the Spirit instead of in the mind, the desire-nature or the body. Only when we realise the Soul as the Self, can we remember. Many know this to be true, because they have done it. But memory uncovers anguish as well as delight, so we are by providence protected from memory until we are ready.

You may recall what Goethe said when he was approaching his death-hour—he believed of course in reincarnation: "What a comfort it is to think that I shall come back fresh-bathed," meaning, the past washed away.

It is truly well, we are not ready for remembrance so long as we are influenced by the memories of the past. Where, for instance, the memory is of a painful event, up to a certain point the past not only influences our present, but also our future, and in a harmful way; and so long as we have not gone beyond the sphere of influence of the past, our characters are weakened and

not strengthened by remembrance. For instance, many a criminal could go forward if he could forget, but the memory of his crime is a fetter on him, preventing his recovery and progress.

So not until we are strong enough to bear the memory of the present life without regret, remorse or anxiety, and above all without resentment or sense of grievance, should we desire to add to the burden of one life, the burden of a long, long past. And when we are strong enough to look serenely at our present life, merely as a lesson which we are learning, impersonally in perspective, as it were, like a judge who has no sense of identity with the facts before him for judgement, then we shall be strong enough to bear the memories of the past.

I shall close with these beautiful words of Mr. Jinarajadasa:

"As the evolutionist sees all nature linked in one ladder of life, the sky and sea testify to him of evolution, so do we see all men linked in one common purpose, and their hopes and fears, their self-sacrifice and their selfishness, testify to us of reincarnation."

## VI. FREEDOM—A CULTURAL NECESSITY

*Clifford Brooks*

IN STRIVING TO DISCOVER those trends within liberal religion which are moving towards a wider concept, towards a world faith, it is important to realise that the liberal ideas widely held at the beginning of this century are now no longer as popular. Since 1914, the people of the West have known crisis after crisis in which much that was called liberalism has been threatened and even, in some places, exterminated. The tragic events of our days have driven thought away from ideas so dear to our fathers and now there is a tendency towards crystallisation, conservatism even, a dogmatism which would have shocked the 19th century.

The liberal values freedom above all other values; freedom from dogma, from authority of most kinds, freedom from claims to wisdom, whether of ancient or modern vintage. People are justified within their theories, imprisoned in dogmatism, curtailed and restricted by lack of true awareness.

The role of the free man in the world today is to establish an intelligent and all-embracing religion. I believe in advancing liberal thought because liberal thought can nourish the spirit of man in these difficult times.

Despite orthodox teaching that human nature is depraved, redeemed only by grace, so that few will attain bliss whereas many are doomed to perdition, liberals maintain their faith in the essential goodness of man. A belief in man is not enough. A belief in freedom is not enough. To regard intellectual integrity and freedom as ends in themselves is to deny the fundamentals of religion. These fundamentals are found in the attitude of the individual himself towards his own inner light. The true inner release of a religion is that it makes demands

upon the individual which may be described as a continuous conversion, an abiding adventure in which the individual is continually renewed. This is the very core of the liberal outlook. The liberal faith enables one to feel more vividly the power of the divine running along the edges of the spirit.

Yet freedom is threatened today. The tradition which insists upon tolerance for all viewpoints, which insists that doubt must precede acceptance, stands at bay. Bitter and disillusioned, the liberal faces the taunt that his liberalism means but a lack of conviction.

We have need of the liberal outlook, of its special insight, because of its special message of tolerance, because it is non-partisan, because it does not defend any creed. You will remember that Dostoievsky, the Russian novelist, described the devil as a liberal, a charming gentleman whose one fault was that he was unable to make up his mind. Some say that the liberal is a weak-willed rationalist, a self-styled follower of truth, full of intellectual pride, and an escapist whose much vaunted detachment is an excuse for failure in action.

But let us for a moment examine some of the ideas which are prevalent today. In a thriller written by Brian Flynn, *Conspiracy of an Angel*, the old, irate Colonel explains how criminals should be treated. "Treat 'em," he said, "like Almighty God used to treat the tribes we read about in the Scriptures . . . Jehovah utterly destroyed various tribes. Yes Sir, destroyed them. No half measures. Exterminate them. No pandering to mushy and sickly sentimentality. The Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites and many others. Completely wiped out!"

The German philosopher Nietzsche said that God was killed by the essential honesty of man. That type of God deserved to be killed, and the death of that barbaric concept points the way to a new line of growth. From its seed-time in the East, the new growth blossomed amid the plains of Galilee, and recognised that "God is a spirit, and those who would worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." He who would know this must ascend the hill with clean hands and a pure heart, tolerant of others and without race consciousness or pride.

"There is no God but God," proclaims Islam, and "All religion is One." The Existentialist philosophy of our day

asserts that the human intellect is incapable of grasping reality, of encompassing the infinite. In this age, for the first time, man has become fully and thoroughly problematical to himself. We no longer know what we essentially are, but at the same time we know that we do not know, "so we jump into a recognition and an implicit acceptance of the reality and the existence of God."

The insistence upon some form of objective or purely logical proof fails entirely to come to grips with the realities of religious experience. We do not need to be mystics to realise the difference between faith and human reasoning. There is a complete contrast between an awakening to a wider and deeper perception of life on the one hand and the emotional upheaval of a revivalist meeting on the other; a complete contrast too between the absolute character of the inner-light, its uncompromising and piercing search for truth, and the easy self-satisfied complacent acceptance of a popular creed.

The Existentialist movement, which is attracting some of the best intelligences of Europe, embodies a startling return to orthodoxy, to a form of belief which is insistent upon the historical reality of Scripture. Viewed as a protest against the casual indifference of today, this may be understood, but its intolerance to other viewpoints denies the claim of the philosophy to be considered universal. In many ways it is contrary to that spirit of liberalism which prompted Voltaire to say:

"I do not agree with one word of what you say, but I would fight to the death for your right to say it."

The time must come when more and more people must recognise the beauties of the religious experience of others outside the Christian faith. There are as many mystics, probably more, among adherents of other religions than there are among the Christians.

The free man with his passion for that which is Universal makes an effort to escape from parochialism, whether it be Christian, Hindu or Buddhist, even from the delightful game of making assertions without any sense of responsibility or possibility of reasonable elucidation. Man is so constituted that in a very short time credal barriers assert themselves. The tendency to rely upon a revelation of wisdom, ancient or modern,



is a denial of that questing spirit which is prepared to doubt until a logical statement is found.

The search knows no barriers of time. The centuries, B.C. and A.D., roll by and Truth has come out of all of them. Socrates was one who would not accept the authority of anyone or of any idea except perhaps the promptings of his inner spirit or daemon, as he called it. His philosophy was based upon morality, and by morality he meant the balancing of ideas.

You may remember the story of two parsons, one liberal, one orthodox, arguing upon some theological uncertainty and finally agreeing that both were doing God's work. "Yes," said the orthodox parson, "that is so. You in your manner, and I in God's." So wide is the difference, you see, in the manner in which a problem is approached; so wide there is room for much misunderstanding. A dear old lady recognised this possibility very clearly when asked why at her age she was learning Greek. She replied that as she was nearing her end she desired a knowledge of Greek so that she could address God in his own language!

"Only a good tree can bring forth good fruit" . . . "By their fruits ye shall know them." These were the comments of a very wise man! It surely matters what a person believes, for as a person believes, so will that person act. But action only follows naturally upon the belief which is urgent, compelling and true. When a man has a vision, a faith and a belief, then there is no sanction for a priest, a Mass or Church. Any deep spiritual experience which is of permanent worth must depend in the ultimate upon the personal experience of the individual.

Thinking people try to find a harmony between what they discover about the world in which they live and the claims of the various religious groups. "All roads lead to Rome," so they say—and true it is, provided it is to Rome that all are journeying. "All paths lead to me," said the Buddha. The inner light has been found at all times and in all places by those who earnestly have searched for it.

"Authentic tidings of invisible things, of ebb and flow and ever-enduring power, the central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation."—*Wordsworth*.

We may need no very great gift to find this peace in nature;

we need no passport to the freedom of the mind. The only indispensable need is a humble and receptive mind. We must go softly if we are not to disturb the harmony of confidence; we must walk humbly if we are to ask for an interpretation of the dream of God.

Is this quality of humility the one great pearl for which so many have searched? Or is it merely that Scrooge-like attitude that pays obeisance to all that it fears? To turn the other cheek may be an admirable quality, particularly when the attacker is the stronger, but humility is not a sign of weakness; it is, in truth, that dynamic force which refuses to retaliate, refuses to accept and so deflects the point of attack. It is a quality which, like mercy, is twice blessed, blessing in power those who have sufficient self-mastery thus to exercise control, and blessing those who perceive that here, in reality, is a deep and spiritual force.

These qualities of tolerance, morality and humility are strangely set in the whirlpool of life today, amid the torments of our modern age. We cannot individually allay the rush of modern life, but we can learn to seek the inner light which leads us to the quiet places of our own minds.

Few deny that the core of religious experience lies in mystical awareness, yet few will pay the price of this knowledge. The unseen has retreated so far from most of us that its tracks are no longer visible on the sands. The outward life, the life of the world, drives the inner light into seclusion, even if not into complete isolation. Yet another cause may be in the narrowness of sectarian belief. So it is that we do not know a truly sane and rational life.

Certain fundamental questions must be ventured. Why do we live? What is the cause of life? What its purpose? These questions in themselves embrace many of the lesser problems and it is a mistake to imagine that there can never be a satisfactory answer. We may never reach a final answer, for finality, surely, is at the end of the road. But always, for the earnest seeker, there is an answer which meets his immediate problems and gives release from uncertainty and irresolution. Thus an attitude of mind is attained which is capable of constant evolution and change. It is inseparable from the true religious

experience and may be translated into everyday life and living. Once the quest is engaged, the search is then on, and within the consciousness are developed those talents and faculties for perception and apprehension which serve still further to enlarge the scope and realm of experience. Why should we imagine that the lesser part of a man, the physical body, is the only part imbued with faculties of perception?

Here in our approach to the portals of wisdom, it dawns upon us that we are dual in nature. The dichotomy which underlies all phenomena, including ourselves, is apparent and needs no emphasis. We have a body and the inner light. This is axiomatic. Some believe that this knowledge alone is sufficient light by which to walk the labyrinths of life. Others, the gifted ones, the more fortunate ones, press on until their world becomes filled with the light that never was on land or sea. Perhaps it is then that the voice of the Psalmist rings out with such resounding clarity. "Be still and know that I am God." So simple and yet so difficult a command in a world which has lost the secret of stillness! Yet, the world's greatest discoveries have been made in the silence. There is no other way in which a real or lasting experience may be obtained. This discovery, true reality like the figures in Plato's cave, lies behind the seeming appearance, behind the screen of the objective world. The search for reality must be directed inwards. Religion is neither creed nor code, but an insight into reality which leads to a spiritual view of the Universe. In this search, as indeed in any other, discipline and self-control are necessary.

Discipline and self-control are necessary not only in the acquiring of the technique of the spiritual life, but as a means of discrimination, for among so many speculative theories and claims to historical accuracy, it is difficult to tread with any degree of sureness.

A study of conversion reveals that many more people experience this glimpse of the higher reality than are aware of the necessity for either control or discipline. Most of us demand that understanding shall precede acceptance of any belief. But understanding may be for many the reward of faith.

The inner experience may come slowly like the sunrise, or suddenly as light breaks abruptly from the thunder clouds, but

however it comes, this experience, this heightening of the normal consciousness, is essential if the religious life is to be of any significance.

Modern liberalism has perhaps placed too much emphasis upon logic and reason and has regarded nature as intrinsically rational. Modern culture has trusted too much in the power of Science to master the animal instincts of mankind and this has led to somewhat optimistic ideas of perfectibility. This "ism" or that "ism," this or that form of economic organisation is claimed as the panacea for all ills. These are but myths and illusions, for in reality the problem of our times is psychological, spiritual and emotional. The experience of this generation has been to destroy entirely the facetious idea that all is well with the world.

Less than a century ago there was no serious eagerness for a shared understanding between the East and the West, except perhaps in the minds of a few philosophers and broad-minded missionaries. Today a notable change is seen. The East has come to a realisation that for the preservation of its own values and for assuring them a broader and more stable basis, Western ideology must be mastered. The West begins to appreciate the wisdom of the East. The pathetic fact, however, about our Western peoples is that this is a generation without a sheet anchor: without the spiritual qualities which alone can challenge the atom bomb. So the Western world offers the false explanations of the catastrophies it experiences, or turns to easy credal faith, or to dogmatic assertions. We must retrace our steps to discover where the wrong path was taken, if there be time to embark again upon the right road.

The right road reveals that religion is no abstruse problem. The theological speculations with which the revelations of the inner light have been overlaid serve but to perplex and bewilder, involving the spirit struggling towards the light in a miasma of intolerance and superstition.

The search for truth which has always characterised the free mind has met with many adversaries; none more dangerous and objectionable than the good person with a fixed belief. The liberal spirit is amazed at the mists of human ignorance and human gullibility. The liberal spirit has staggered and wandered

on its devious way, despised, persecuted, maligned, but ever with arms outstretched to the fount of light.

Our old beliefs have been worn so long that they are thin now, even threadbare. They have been patched so clumsily. The threads are stained with intolerance and dogmatism. Another faith is demanded, nobler, never antagonistic, but rather supplementary to the clear message of the Galilean. This new faith shall synthesise East and West, the beliefs of the Christian and the Hindu shall focus interest on life and its many problems and concern itself little with theology and unproven cosmological questions of causation.

We must depart from dead formalism, from the lifeless liberalism of the past to a religion of truth, to the lovely teachings of the higher planes of spirit, where intolerance and superstition can find no resting place.

The building of a world philosophy will be a laborious task. It will be opposed by many good people who cannot see good in any other mode of thought than their own. The ideal must be a rich inclusiveness rather than narrow exclusiveness. We must preserve the distinctive differences and beauties of each and so link and co-ordinate them that they will blend like the instruments of a great orchestra, each playing their own and individual part to produce the symphony of the human race.

Here, in finer words than mine, is the liberal outlook defined:

“With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in.”—*Lincoln*.

## VII. ONE HUMANITY, MANY RACES

*H. L. Morris*

WE MAY PERHAPS, at some time, have wondered why there should be people of different colour and races in the world. And why some people and nations seem to be so favoured, living at a higher standard and under better conditions than others.

Maybe we have tried to reconcile all this with the teaching that there is one Divine Creator, one loving Father. From what we have seen in the various parts of the world we cannot reconcile it at all, but occultism will throw light on the apparent disparity.

Occultists have preserved the true history of the world and of human evolution.

A wonderful picture of the evolution of mankind is given in "Man, Whence How and Whither," by Dr. A. Besant and C. W. Leadbeater.

To understand something of the evolution of man we must realise that man is not exclusively a physical being, but as Plato taught, is a soul which inhabits and uses a body to gain experiences, and transfers from one body to another through the ages, having long rests before taking each new body. The various races of different colours and stages of development provide the means whereby the souls of man may develop and develop the various qualities peculiar to each race.

Nothing in nature springs into existence suddenly, evolution is gradual, and there is but one law of evolution governing the planetary systems of the lowest forms of life. Thus we see a planet is born, grows to maturity, and then dies. The same applies to plants, races, nations and individuals, but the life or soul goes on from one form to another.

The souls of men are not all on one level of development,

but range from the lowest, as might be found in the savage, to the highest as typified by such as Jesus, man made perfect.

Man first appeared on this globe some millions of years ago. Scientists are gradually coming nearer the truth in placing the coming of man further and further back, but as there is practically no trace of some of the earlier races their existence is denied.

Occultists tell of a cave hidden in the mountains of Thibet, which is a museum containing images of all the types and races of men who have inhabited the earth.

All evolution is under a septenary rule. There are seven globes in a system, the life wave passes round these globes seven times. As it passes from one to another, the life on the one becomes inactive, and it quickens on the next. Similarly, there are seven races during the life of a globe or planet, and each race has seven sub-races, and these also have branches. Man spends one life in each root race, as the main races are called, seven in each of the sub-races and others in the various branches. This gives us an idea of the slowness of development.

Each race is under the care and guidance of one who is known as a Master of the Wisdom, one who has already passed through all the stages of evolution, and who commands his physical, emotional and mental vehicles and has power to command nature. We may find it difficult to accept that there are such things, but as we see others so much less developed than ourselves, it stands to reason there must be others far beyond us. Working with the Manu who is concerned with the development of form, is another called a World Teacher, who guides intellectual progress, the arts, religions and education. Such were the Buddha and the Christ.

Each sub-race is again in its turn under the guidance of others, not quite so advanced as those guiding the root race. We see therefore, that evolution is not left to chance, but carefully watched. Nothing happens by chance.

These guardians of humanity are rarely seen in the world, but usually work behind the scenes influencing human leaders through thought and ideas. At the beginning of a new race, however, they do come into incarnation to mould the pattern of the new type. The Manu is therefore literally the Father of the race. The World Teachers usually come before a new sub-

race is born to point out the quality that is to be developed.

At the birth of a race more evolved souls incarnate into it until it is well-established and has developed the quality for which it was created, and then less evolved souls are permitted to enter to gain the experience it provides. Hence the reason for the decline of races.

The third great root race, known as the Lemurian, is the first of which we have much knowledge. Prior to that, human beings did not possess dense physical bodies as we understand them today. They were ethereal. The first physical forms were huge and ungainly, the skin was black and the hair tightly curled. This race provided the opportunity to develop the physical body.

Some of the least developed black peoples are remains of the third root race, but most have developed beyond that stage. The continents and oceans change also with each race, and the continent of the Lemurians covered much of what is now the Pacific Ocean and Australasia. The aborigines of Australia are the nearest to the Lemurians, but even they have some mixture of the later race.

The fourth great root race was located in the continent called by Plato, Atlantis, and was situated where the Atlantic Ocean now rolls. A new race usually commences about half way through the period of the previous race. We in the West are now more than half way in the fifth great root race, but the majority of the people in the world still belong to the fourth race. There were two different colourings in this race. The first three sub-races were red, of which the Red Indians are the remnants, and last four were yellow, such as the Chinese. Some of the population of India are fourth race, and some fourth and third mixed, and there are also fifth race people.

It is claimed that the North Pole area was once tropical and that the snow covers remains of a very ancient civilisation, the oldest of the fourth root race. These people had straight hair. The development of this race was the emotional, or the desire body, and it is interesting that an Australian major studying the psychology of the Japanese in the Burmese war area, found that quality most developed. He found they were motivated by impulse and emotion and not by reasoning.

These people migrated all over the world, and we shall see



the different aspects of the quality this race developed in the various sub-races.

The first sub-race were still giants, as were the third race men who were twenty to thirty feet in height. The colour of their skin was red, and the next sub-race were a reddish brown and were mountaineers. The third sub-race were great administrators, and were a copper-red colour, the colour of the Red Indians. These Atlanteans evolved an Autocratic State, the King being a very highly evolved person, far ahead of the other members of the race. Everyone had to do a certain amount of work (for which he did not receive any return), to provide revenue for the king and the Church. The king in his turn kept up the army and carried out all the public works. The church was responsible for all education (children then being educated until they were twenty years of age), the care of the sick, and their families if they needed support, and also people over forty-five years of age. The majority of people did not have to work after that age. Those employed in the administration of the country were chosen for their ability alone, and remained in office after they were forty-five years of age. The more intelligent can always stand more concentrated and longer effort than others.

Another sub-race were colonists and formed the great Chaldean civilisation. They were a yellow-skinned people. We find that a race divides into two; the first sub-races inhabiting one continent and the later ones another continent. The same thing has happened in our present race, the fifth. The earlier divisions of the race inhabit Europe, and now the race is developing in America and Australasia.

The Atlantean fifth sub-race were the Semites, almost white skinned, living in a colder part of the continent, and were a warrior type. The nucleus for our present Aryan race was taken from these people.

The fifth sub-race produced seafaring traders known as Akkadians, and the last, yellow-skinned, were farmers. They are the Mongolians, and we can very clearly see these in the Chinese today. Some of the older type of Chinese however, belonged to the earlier sub-race of colonists.

Let us compare the Toltec sub-race with that which formed the Chaldean civilisation and we see how different were the

opportunities provided. The Toltec as we have heard, had a very fine administration, but the religion was very simple, and did not take a prominent part in the life of the people. The Turanian or Chaldean however, was dominated by his religion which was the worship of the spirits of the planets as well as the sun, which alone was worshipped by the Toltecs.

In Chaldea, people born under different planets wore different coloured dress for the great festivals, and took different positions during the service, conforming to the position of their planet as compared to the sun. They were warned of the influence the planets would exert on their lives at different periods and would take the necessary precautions.

The careful planning by those responsible for the development of a race is instanced when the Manu of the present race, the fifth, chose various egos and watched them for nearly a million years before he brought them together to form the nucleus of the new race. This seems an incredibly long time, but when we remember that a soul or ego incarnates in each race, a number of times in each sub-race, in the branches, and spends much longer resting between incarnations than he spends on the earth, it may not seem so incredible.

There came a time in Atlantis when the great kings withdrew, as the time had come for the people who had now developed considerably, to take control. Pride and selfishness however, caused their downfall, and evil became so powerful, that all Atlantis was destroyed, save one large island.

Before this happened, those chosen to form the new race were taken by ship and plane—yes, planes are not a new discovery—across the Sahara, which was then a sea, and on to Egypt. Later they were taken to Arabia where they settled for a long period. Finally, some chosen specially moved East again and settled on the shores of a great sea, which is now the Gobi desert.

This fifth root race (or Aryan as it is called), provides the opportunity for the development of the mind. The great physical development of this race is the cerebro-spinal nervous system, which makes us far more sensitive to pain than members of earlier races.

After being nearly destroyed twice by the savage tribes

around them, they became a great empire, some migrating to Java and Australia.

Various groups were then kept apart in valleys to form the nucleus of the various sub-races. The first to depart to the West again, went to Arabia and are called the Arab, originally Semite. They are the second sub-race and their task was the establishing of the Aryan keynotes in the West. They were given a barren valley to settle in, which with their knowledge they soon converted into flourishing cultivated land. The chief of the country then became jealous of their prosperity and attacked them, but was easily beaten off and the new sub-race was in possession of the northern half of Arabia, the original inhabitants readily submitting to the new rule and prospering under it. The South might also have come under the rule of the Manu but for a religious fanatic who reminded his people that they were a chosen race and must not mix with the newcomers, who would not allow man (as he said) his birthright to kill his fellow men as he pleased.

Later however, the South was conquered and some of the fanatics left and settled in Somaliland. It was found that the leader had formed an attachment with a negress and he then excused it by saying the law as to the purity of race was only in respect of the gentiles. Some were not taken in by this and objected, and left Somaliland, finally reaching Egypt where the Pharaoh allowed them to settle in an outlying district. Later another pharaoh made such great demands on them that they departed and settled in Palestine, where we know them as Jews. It will be seen they had not been Aryanised, and are really Atlanteans. Those left in Somaliland were attacked by natives, and migrated back to Arabia again. Perhaps this explains the present feud between the Jews and Arabs.

The second sub-race flourished for thousands of years and penetrated most of Africa, down the East Coast and right down to the Cape of Good Hope, founding a great kingdom, from the Cape to Lourenco Marques. Maybe the present expeditions to the Kalahari may unearth some of the remains of this civilisation, They were unable to make any headway in Egypt, which was not seriously invaded until very much later.

During the time this was happening, the third sub-race left

its homeland and known as the Iranians formed the great Persian Empire.

These people were great merchants, and we can imagine how different were the opportunities for development in this race. They spread to Western Asia and penetrated the countries of the Mediterranean and held the islands of Cyprus and Crete for a time but they also made no headway in Egypt. This great civilisation lasted about 28,000 years, until about 2,000 B.C.

The fourth and fifth sub-races were being developed by the Manu at the same time in different valleys on the shores of that great inland sea in Central Asia from which the previous sub-races emigrated.

For the fourth he chose the most refined people he could find, for imagination and artistic sensibility were to be awakened in them and they were trained to be enthusiastic and to be devoted to their leaders. Physical beauty was also a marked characteristic of these people who were known as the Keltic sub-race. When the type was sufficiently developed about 20,000 B.C. they also travelled westward, passing through Persia and settling in Georgia, in Russia. Later they held nearly all Asia Minor and the Caucasus and remained there for nearly 10,000 years before resuming their march westward, when one of the tribes formed the glorious civilisation of the ancient Greeks. Here the subtle influence of the sun, sea and land were utilised to further the development of the Keltic temperament.

Different environments we see are used to assist the development of the qualities of the various groups.

This ancient Greek civilisation is not the Greek of our history books of a few hundred years B.C. This later one, which is so great to us, fades into insignificance compared with its predecessor, and yet even the later one gives a striking example of the opportunities given to those incarnating in a race or sub-race. What art it produced—such beauty as has not been surpassed, of drama, sculpture, poetry, architecture, painting and rhetoric.

When Atlantis sank, a large island named Poseidonis remained, and one Emperor was very ambitious and conquered the coasts of Portugal, Spain and Italy, and was about to attack Egypt which was not a naval power, when the Greeks decided

to take a hand. Their ships were much smaller, which however made them easier to handle, and of course they knew the waters very well, and the coast, and helped by nature, the wind turning in their favour, the great Emperor was vanquished and had to flee for his life. This was very similar to the conquest by the British of the Spanish Armada, ages later.

Other tribes of this Keltic sub-race travelled to Italy, France, Belgium and Germany, west of the Rhine, Western Switzerland. Some inhabited the Spanish peninsula, and only 2,000 years ago the Milesian invaders from Spain invaded Ireland, introducing curious forms of magic.

Prior to this however, another tribe from Asia Minor passed through Scandinavia where they mixed with some members of the fifth sub-race who had developed quite a different quality as we shall see later, and they entered Ireland from the north. We can see therefore, the difference in the Irish of the North, whose ancestors were looked on as gods, and those of the South, who are pure Keltic.

Now let us look at the fifth or Teutonic sub-race which was developed at the same time as the fourth. We shall see that Teutonic is used in a wider sense than we commonly understand it today, and covers all the branches of the fifth sub-race and not just the Germans. This is the sub-race which is dominating the world today. Those specially chosen for this race were tall and fair, a strong and vigorous type. With them were mixed some of the best of the Persians and Arabs. How different they were from the Keltic. They were not of the artistic type, but of the business, practical type and were blunt and plain spoken, caring more for facts than for poetry. The result of the development of the Teutonic quality is individuality and separateness.

These people also passed through Persia at the same time as the Kelts, but moved farther on to the north of the Caucasus. Thousands of years later, when the swamps of Europe were drying up, they moved on to what is now Poland and settled there.

Various offshoots then moved farther afield, becoming the Slavs, Russians, Croats, Servs, Prussians, Teutons, Goths, Scandinavians, British and Americans. Here we see the sub-race again divided into branches and offshoots as we did in the

Keltic. This Teutonic sub-race has still to unite and build a world Empire like its predecessors, when it will rise to even greater glory than they.

This first sub-race has not yet been mentioned. The people remaining in Central Asia after the various sub-races had left were taken down into India before the terrible cataclysm which was to change the face of many parts of the world. Some stayed in the north and others passed on to the south. They were known as the Hindu sub-race and found in India at that time a very highly-cultured Atlantean people, who were aryanised by this invasion, which was mainly peaceful. In the north, there was some danger of the new race being completely absorbed by the Atlanteans and so the caste system was introduced. There were only three castes at first, the highest were pure Aryan, the Brahmans, the next was a mixture of Aryan and Toltec, and the third, a mixture of Aryan and Mongolian.

Some years before the arrival of the new sub-race in the then great kingdom of Southern India the high priest there told the king that the strangers were coming at the command of the gods, and the king welcomed them and settled them in his kingdom.

Many years later, an important mission went out from this South Indian Aryan Kingdom to Egypt, to Aryanise that country, and the same high priest, now reincarnated in Egypt, also as the high priest, prepared their reception in exactly the same way.

Sometime after the last of the root stock had left Central Asia, the island of Poseidonis, the last remnant of the Atlantic continent, sank, and the terrific tidal wave this caused destroyed the settlements along the Mediterranean, the Sahara became a desert, the Alps were formed, and the great inland sea in Central Asia became a desert, which we know as the Gobi Desert. A geologist has now confirmed that this desert was once an inland sea of the area described by C. W. Leadbeater and Dr. Besant.

The virile Greeks were the first to recover after this cataclysm, and set to work to rebuild the ships which had all been destroyed, and were soon trading again.

Let us now look at the next sub-race which is coming into being. It is rather different from the previous ones, which were carefully nurtured in isolation, and the reason may be that its

keynote is co-operation and unity. Types of this sub-race are quite noticeable in America, which as we know, is composed of peoples from most races in the world. We note the difference from the fifth sub-race, which developed individualism and separateness. The new sub-race people are rather taller, with long legs and slim bodies and they are very intuitive. They do not have to reason things out mentally step by step, but see in a flash the answer. So much is this in evidence among some children in America that special schools have been opened for them.

The light then which occultism throws on the different races and colours is that no race or sub-race, or branch or offshoot is better or more important than another, but that each provides the experience required to enable men to make progress on the ladder of evolution, which leads to perfection.

When a new quality is developed by a section of the people they go out among other peoples in the world to pass it on to them. Have we ever considered I wonder, why we or our forefathers were brought to this country? It may be rather a shock to us to learn that we have been brought from all parts of the world, not for our own good, but to bring to the less evolved peoples here the opportunity to develop the qualities we have gained that they may progress.

If we do not pass our knowledge on, let us have no doubts but that others will be sent to do the work we have failed to do. Less evolved peoples are helped most, we are told, by coming into close contact with the vibrations of those more highly developed. Each of us has a responsibility in this matter for those less evolved than ourselves.

The mental quality of the fifth race is also developed by education, and mental concentration. We can see therefore, how important is education in the world to day for the evolution of humanity. America as we know is helping considerably in this way with backward peoples in different parts of the world.

The evolution of humanity is like a great river rolling ever onward. Obstacles cannot hold up its progress, it just finds a way round them or flows over them. Those who go with the current, who help in the work of evolution will advance rapidly, while any who try to retard it, or are just indifferent, will only

retard their own progress as they would by trying to swim against the current.

As an example of the care taken that no quality required for the evolution of humanity shall be lost, we find that when India, which as we have seen received the root stock of the Aryan race, was in danger of becoming completely westernised in every way and losing her own quality, when the wisdom of her maturer philosophers and scientists, and the grand faith of Hinduism, given for the helping of the whole world, was looked upon as ignorant babblings, then the Manu took steps to save her.

Theosophy was sent to India and she was made to realise the wonderful treasure she had, and that it was from her that the others had sprung. Many of the West were of course, greatly incensed at this, many writers maintaining that the West was the original source of wisdom and religion. The Eastern ideals were thus preserved for the future helping of the world. North, South, East and West shall all contribute to the perfect harmony of ages to come, when there shall be a mighty federation of the world, and a Great Peace, with the blessing of the Supreme.

We can see the faint beginning of this appearing in the world today. The League of Nations was the first poor attempt, UNO is slightly better, improvements will be gradually made on these efforts until in ages to come the ideal is reached.

C. W. Leadbeater once said that the future is with those who will strive for unity and break down barriers of distrust and hatred between class and class and nation and nation. This is the work of the unseen guardians of Humanity, work in which it is the greatest privilege to join, to whatever small extent and capacity.



## VIII. THE MYSTERY TRADITION OF AFRICA

*Eleanor Stakesby-Lewis*

*(A lecture given at Adyar, India, at the 76th Anniversary of the Theosophical Society)*

AFRICA HAS BEEN CALLED a test-tube in the laboratory of humanity, and rightly so, for here we find all constituents of the human family thrown together in a setting in which Nature still plays an important part. Theosophists living in Africa feel that they have a special *dharma* to fulfil, and are therefore very anxious to know a little more about Africa's place in the Plan of Evolution, especially in connection with the function and destiny of the various races in this Plan.

Recently well-known palaeontologists, such as the late Dr. Broom and our member John Robinson, have discovered skeletons of the very earliest specimen of humanity, which may confirm that in Africa the so-called *missing link* has been found. And so in Africa the story of the human race can be traced to its very beginnings, and it is here that we still find descendents of the first physical men of the Lemurian race. Here we find Egos of the kindergarten, of the junior and senior schools of life, living side by side. With such a mixed population one cannot wonder that there are tremendous difficulties. While the various different nations of the world, widely separated geographically, can hardly avoid serious clashes, we find, in Africa, the same wide differences between people living on the same soil. The inhabitants of Africa are separated by aeons of evolution and so one cannot but expect a certain amount of friction.

Seen in the light of the Plan, conflict does not always seem to be a disadvantage. Opposition is a karmic link which will

eventually lead to Unity. Does it not happen in every school that the big boy bullies the little one? Yet in time to come the big bully may become quite fond of his younger schoolmate and out of the childish fights great friendship may grow when they are older. In the same way we may take it that there is a great karmic link between the races of Africa. Separateness is unthinkable until the karmic balance has been restored.

A survey of the historical background of Africa helps us to understand the present position and the need for awakening the dormant potentialities of the original Lemurian and dark Atlantean tribes. So it must have been in the scheme of things that settlers from Europe arrived until the settlement extended right into Northern Rhodesia. Yet, in less habitable places the primitive races still live their old life, untouched by the trend of modern times. There is no evolution without change, and so such new impacts seem necessary, as an incentive.

Although this vast continent has been called "Dark Africa" it has known great civilisations. Parts of Africa are still full of the relics of ancient cultures, and the strong magical influences which pervade such monuments as the Pyramids, the Sphinx, and the Zimbabwe ruins, still stress the great Mystery of Life, a mystery which speaks even more loudly in the solitude of the vast regions as yet untouched by man. What secrets are hidden by the sands of the desert, which once was a sea which engulfed parts of old Atlantis, we never may know. There are still legends told by the native people of old cities covered by the Kalahari desert, and only a few months ago a new expedition went out in search of further evidence.

The records of archeology speak of times immensely remote and ancient, times when even the map of the world would look strange to us. We have all heard about the Great Flood, in which the mighty Atlantean Empire perished. It flooded part of Egypt, while an Aryan contingent of its people had been safely led to Arabia. After this catastrophe of 75,000 B.C. the swampy grounds were temporarily inhabited by Negroid people, who left behind them stone flints and other primitive tools marking their occupation.

Then followed the second Atlantean Empire, with a great dynasty of Divine Kings. This Atlantean Empire lasted until

about 13,500 B.C. when the Aryans came from Southern India and established an Empire of the Aryan root-stock. These Aryanised Egyptians were a profoundly religious people and extremely psychic. To them the worlds of higher being were a reality. It was to these people that a very great Teacher came as Tehuti or Thoth, later named Hermes by the Greeks. He brought the Religion of Light. He taught them that the Light which was God dwelt in the heart of every man. To the Pharaoh He gave the motto, *Look for the Light*; for He said that only inasmuch as a Ruler could see the Light in every man would he rule well. To the people he gave the motto, *Thou art the Light, let the Light shine*; and this sentence was carved on the pylon of a great Temple. It was inscribed over the doors of the houses and repeated daily by thousands. This was a joyous period in the history of Egypt, and students were attracted from all nations to learn the Wisdom of the Egyptians.

Not long after, a band of Arabs—Aryans of the second sub-race—settled in Somaliland and gradually migrated over Africa along the East coast as far as the Cape of Good Hope. They founded a kingdom, which included all Matabeleland, the Transvaal and the Lourenco Marques district. Some of the Egos then in incarnation as the Rulers of that great Empire, are known to us as Annie Besant and her great Teacher and several others of the same faithful Band of Servers, who, through the ages, in many and varied settings, had worked together for the evolution of mankind.

In that time (about 40,000 B.C.) great cities were built, and huge Temples of a massive type were erected. The ruins of ancient cities in Mashonaland even now baffle scientists. Then, even as now, it seems that the gulf between those Arab conquerors and the native Africans was too wide to be spanned and the Africans remained labourers and servants.

About 30,000 years later, a second great catastrophe changed the map of Africa. It was the great flood caused by the sinking of Posiedonis, then an island in the Atlantic ocean. The Sahara Sea then became a desert and the African coast-line, as we now know it, was formed.

In the North new immigrants of Aryan blood settled among the descendants of the Atlantean race and the Berbers and

Moors. Still later, we hear of the great Aryan Dynasty of Pharaohs who ruled Egypt, and new blood was introduced into several East African tribes, which for thousands of years had made almost no progress. While Egypt was successfully aryanised by several migrations, Central and South Africa are yet ninety per cent populated by descendants of Lemurian and Atlantean races, and as before, the Aryan races on the whole are keeping aloof, unwilling to span the gulf.

In speaking of the old mystery schools of Africa, we must not forget the Alexandrian School with its great sage, Plotinus. After studying in Alexandria, then the cultural centre of the world, Plotinus became the great leader of a school of philosophy in Rome. He is one of the greatest mystics of our era, and his philosophy, based on intimate personal experience, still has a message for us today.

In the dark Middle Ages science and philosophy, persecuted or neglected elsewhere, found a refuge among the Berbers and Moors of North Africa. And in our own time Africa has produced that great philosopher and statesman the late General Smuts, who in his philosophy of "Holism" expounded in his own way a conception of the Divine Will and Purpose of Life.

It seems to the sensitive observer as if in Africa the unseen forces are of far greater significance than the seen. Outside the cities one at once contacts the charm of solitude, and Nature's wide expanses give one an almost intoxicating sense of liberation from human bonds. One feels the presence of great unseen powers, an influence which lifts one out of the regions of the tangible and visible into an intensely vivid Beyond. Perhaps it is no coincidence then that the Egyptian civilisation, with its profound insight into the mysteries of Life and Death, flourished on African soil and that here the Alexandrian School of Philosophy, so intensely conscious of the Real behind the Unreal, succeeded in bridging over the gap between East and West.

Africa then, as we have seen, has had its great and enlightened periods, and has, like other parts of the world, its message, and this message may be summed up in one word: *Mystery*.

But where there is light there we also find shadow, and so it is not surprising to know that witchcraft is still rife. Recently

an English doctor, Frederick Kaigh, now practising in London, who spent years of research in the heart of Africa, published a most revealing book, *Witchcraft and Magic in Africa*. He lived for years among native tribes and discovered many of their secret cults. Some of the stories are hair-raising!

African tribal life is greatly influenced by the "witch-doctors" whose magic powers are based on ancient occult traditions. Their cult is very secret and although we would not consider some of their practices very "white" from our point of view, they have their own moral code and are the only people who have the power to combat the evil witches. They are consulted for exorcising evil spirits, for making charms and for fortune-telling. Their medicines, usually concocted from magical formulae, are often very effective.

In the affairs of tribal life animal and even human sacrifices are sometimes deemed necessary for the good of the community. At the root of such beliefs lies fear, fear of the unknown forces of Nature, and such fear fosters the worship of spirits who, from time to time, have to be appeased in ways very repugnant to us. Whenever true faith in the Divine wanes, one finds a false priesthood exploiting the people, and there is no limit to the extravagance of their demands. This also seems to have been the case in the later days of Zimbabwe, when terrible black magical rites were performed, and according to a recent book, mediumistically received, these unfortunate souls now haunt the place.

The Zimbabwe Ruins present, apart from the Pyramids, perhaps the greatest mystery to the archaeologist. Bent, in his book, *Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*, states that the Temple worship must originally have been a form of Sun-worship. Many details point to a highly developed astronomical knowledge, which finds its like only in Egypt, Chaldea and Assyria. The most remarkable feature of the Temple is the cone-shaped tower at the south-eastern end, a symbol of worship much akin to those of the Phoenicians. We find a replica of the same tower on the coins of Byblos. Then there are reports that the city was King Solomon's gold-mine. Later the place has been occupied and re-occupied by native chiefs, and it is said that "Zimbabwe" means "the residence of a king."

A most interesting relic of African Mystery-teaching came to us not so long ago by means of a book by P. G. Bowen entitled *The Sayings of the Ancient One*. The fragments in this book, so says the author, are translations of chapters from a volume of mystic writings held by the Berber philosopher Mehlo Moya. This volume is written in Izinzu, an archaic Bantu tongue. In its turn this Izinzu manuscript is a translation of some very ancient records found, according to Mehlo Moya, in a subterranean chamber in one of the ruined cities of Southern Africa, probably belonging to the same cycle of civilisation as the Zimbabwe. The original records are written in veiled symbols on tablets of ivory or stone. A few selected portions of these ancient records have now been published.

There are some hints which point to the age and origin of these teachings, and these refer to many generations of Builders and to the Mighty Altar that guards the meeting of the North River and the North Sea. If we take these to be the Nile and the Mediterranean Sea then this Mighty Altar is probably the Great Pyramid. From the number of generations counted, we may deduce that the Builder's City was founded about 2,040 years before the completion of the Pyramids, and evacuated after nearly 4,000 years. Now the generally accepted date for the completion of the Pyramid is about 3,350 B.C., but according to the Secret Doctrine it is much older. Based on the description of astronomical facts it has been worked out to be over 31,000 years old. Reckoning from this, the Builders must have lived near the time of the great Aryan Empire in Africa. Whatever it be, it appears that there exist records of great antiquity, preserved and partly disclosed, which contain a most interesting version of the Ancient Wisdom, in a form divinely inspired by the Great Teachers who then lived so much closer to mankind.

The final entries speak of the coming of "wild dark warriors from the North," which may refer to the early incursions of Bantu warrior tribes into Southern Africa, and if so, the entries are of comparatively modern date, being approximately the middle of the seventeenth century. The report states that the *Builders*, when they went, left behind them a family of *Wise Ones* who acted as teachers and priests. Eventually the cities were destroyed and the *Wise Ones* were compelled to retreat

Eastward and Northward, having first made secret their records which they could not safely remove.

There is a close resemblance between much of the *Sayings of the Ancient One* and portions of *Light on the Path*, and few will doubt that both versions must come from the same Egyptian origin. If this is so then we have here another very interesting approach to the great Mystery Tradition of Africa.

As this version is unknown to most Theosophists, I would like to quote some passages. The "Ancient One" here referred to is the voice of the Universal Wisdom speaking through this particular school, and the "Learner" is any man in whom a desire to follow the Path has arisen.

In the first chapter the Ancient One says:

"There are three questions that the *many* ask, but only the *few* can answer. These are: Whence comest thou thither?—What doest thou here?—Whither goest thou hence? *Life* asks those questions, but only *life* can answer them, for Wisdom and Life are two names for one thing.

"*'What art thou?'* Man asks of Life. Life answers: *'I am all that thou dost know. I am all that thou hast known, but thinkest thou hast forgotten. I am all that thou hast yet to learn. Without me thou art not, for I am thy Self.'* And then Life says: *'Take heed to my story, O Learners, for it is your own. I know its beginning, its middle and its end; but you know its middle only, and that but dimly; therefore take heed and learn.'*" And then follows a very beautiful account of the pilgrimage of the Soul through its various stages of evolution. Another chapter deals with the problems of the Candidate who has entered the Path of Holiness. I have selected a few passages from the many exquisite pages:

"The Ancient One said: *'You travel on an endless road, O Learner, when you walk according to the way of men; for you look back and see that it has no beginning, and forward and see that it has no end. Therefore look neither backward nor forward, but fix your eyes on each step as you take it: then you will see that the length of the Road is only the length of the Step. Men walk the way of Time, O Child, and they mourn the past and fear the future: blot out all thought of Past and Future, and suffering exists no more for you.'*"

The next chapter takes again a symbolical form and describes the Seeker climbing the steps of a brilliantly lit Temple in the East. When he comes near the Inner Sanctuary, a Voice asks him:

“‘*What dost thou seek, O man?*’ and he answers: ‘*I seek grain for those that hunger and Life for those that perish.*’”

Then the Voice says:

“‘*Know, O Seeker, that thou alone art Life, and that the Life is held by thee alone.*’ But the Echo within the Seeker answered and said: ‘*All that I am I share with those who long for life, and all that I hold I yield to those that hunger.*’ And I knew that the words I uttered were I, but were not mine; and I bowed my head . . .”

Is it not the same as in all true occult teachings—this test when the Disciple who has found the source of Power is tempted to have it for his own, but the Soul, grown strong in Love, turns back to share its newly-found secret with his fellow-men?

Then follows a lovely description of the meeting of the earthly man and the eternal Soul—a favourite theme! And every meeting holds a test—first the earthly man shows his unreadiness for the eternal Union, for Love has not grown strong enough, and so the Soul, sorrowful, turns away. Only after many meetings does the earthly man pray, not for himself, but for the Light to dispel the darkness of the land in which he dwells. And to this end he offers his whole being in sacrifice. And from the earth he takes up a “Tattered cloak” and wraps it around his “robes of spotless white” and returns to the troubled Land of Night as a Light-bringer, until the Two meet again and merge into one single unit, for they had never been two but always only one, “*The Shining One and His Shadow.*” Time does not permit further quotations from this beautiful translation of an ancient African record, which I hope you will read for yourselves.

The question has been put forward as to the place that Africa holds in the evolution of mankind. That place, it has been indicated, lies in a far future, as it is connected with the preparations for the Seventh Root Race, which will live on a new continent that will include present South Africa. So it may be that all who now work for the spiritual needs of Africa, will thereby link their destinies to that glorious age when the



harvest of an evolutionary cycle, stretching over seven Root Races, will be gathered. Those who link themselves now with the cause of our youngest brethren in this great experiment of nation-building begin a *dharma* which may bring to them a trail of opportunities to serve.

"*Together—differently*," was the great slogan of Dr. Arundale, and it could well be adopted as a slogan for Africa. If the Theosophical Society can succeed in transmuting a chaotic public opinion into understanding and tolerance it will have fulfilled a *dharma* to which it is pledged by its Objects.

It takes the Alchemy of a Manu to mould the future, but here we have some excellent race-qualities: take from the Bantu his simplicity and joy, from the Indian his spirituality, from the Coloured and the Malay their vitality and from the Europeans their activity and imagine each quality grown to perfection. Would not the Great Alchemist be able to draw some pure gold out of the present crucible? Also in Africa "*God is working His purpose out*."

Trying to find among the remnants of the African Mystery Tradition some eternal values, one sees a vast field ahead, of which I have but touched the fringes.

There is only one way to penetrate into the heart of things and that is the way of Love. If we wish to penetrate into the mighty secrets of Africa, of its peoples, of its meaning in God's Plan, we must make ourselves part of it, and seek the underlying Unity. In that continent of *Dark Africa* let us look once more for the *Light* so splendidly revealed in the teachings of Tehuti, also called Hermes, and say: "*I am the Light, that Light am I*." And in this great continent over which the Sphinx still gazes, guarding the eternal Mystery of Life, may the flame within the hearts of its varied peoples be lit, so that once again from African soil may resound the old message:

"*Thou art the Light, let that Light shine!*"

## IX. THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING

*Shirley Young*

**D**O WE REALISE the importance of living, and have we ever pondered over the major part Fear plays in limiting the full joyousness that could be experienced in life?

Here is a true story. There were two young women who were very fortunate, judged from the material point of view, showered with plenty of this world's goods, and with time and opportunity to direct their energies along channels of their own choosing. On reaching adulthood they were confronted with a decision—to choose either to lead a carefree, meaningless social life, or to avail themselves of the great opportunity that lay before them, of contributing to the happiness of the community in which they lived by being of service to their fellow man, rich or poor, white or black. These two had enough insight to recognise which path to take—they realised they were their brother's keeper, and as a result their daily lives were brimming over with interest and joy. In reality they were unconsciously playing the roles of ambassadors, for in their contacts with all types—from the bored, selfish, useless social being to the embittered youth who hated life, they were able to give hope and a realisation of the meaning of living to many who would perhaps have struggled on blindly, causing unhappiness in their wake. In Goethe's words: "It is not enough to know, one must also apply. It is not enough to will to do, one must also do."

Man is a composite being, functioning on three distinct planes of consciousness—physical, mental and spiritual, and is equipped to render himself fit to perform the tasks which he is called upon to execute to the degree of perfection required, if, knowing that he has the power within, he will but use that power.

The reality of God's existence, or the existence of a greater power behind everything that is, must be firmly established to build our temple of life on lasting foundations. As we all know, this cosmic power lies in the minutest speck—manifested in everything that is. When we fully realise the magnitude of this power behind all things we shall find our daily lives fuller and the life force will be ours to command for creative purposes.

Life is important—the uninformed and negative thinker will say: "Why is it important, it surely is ours to do what we like with." Mankind has been given free will, and his life is his to use as he wishes, but man cannot stand alone, he is part of the whole and unless he endeavours to become a perfect part, through co-operation and understanding, there will be no perfect whole. Life has a meaning that must be discovered; no progress can take place on the ladder of evolution if it is not realised that out of the sorrow and suffering we experience we must emerge as beings with a greater love and understanding of all life. Our daily lives are made up of a series of duties, pleasures and experiences, all of which mould and shape our characters. Each duty, pleasure and experience must be understood and recognised as a part of the plan—when this fact is grasped life on this earth plane will naturally be of interest and joy—each experience as it comes will eliminate all unnecessary regrets and desires, and the bitter-sweet moments will then cease to be.

These words are familiar words—we all have heard them before, and deep down are aware of this great truth, but the difficulty that confronts us is but a reflection of the inward state of humanity—full of anxiety, uneasiness and discord. Man is in a rush, so the world is in a rush—is it surprising? Why all this turmoil—where is the calm?

There seems to be the one word *fear* underlying it all—*anxiety, apprehension and dread*. How tragic this all sounds, and how true it is! The importance of living surely means the joy of living, and what joy can there be when fear forever rears its head? We find Fear in the individual and therefore in the masses—fear of loss, fear of insecurity, fear of life and the future, fear of inability, fear of the self and even fear of public opinion. What an ugly master it is, for fear breeds jealousy, envy, greed, hate and revenge in the individual, the home and the nation, and

its final outlet is in the terrible onslaught of war. It is a blight which blots out all beauty, a scourge which causes limitation of expression and creation and checks the natural flow of love and understanding. When there is this limitation complication sets in, and the true meaning of life is lost.

What is the cause of this desire to avoid and escape the real issues confronting us?—this antagonistic front we put up? It seems that Man through long habit has become the victim of wrong thinking—he has neglected to contemplate things as they really are. Through ignorance and lack of self-knowledge life has become an irksome necessity, for what purpose Man does not know! And so the vicious circle goes on, and in its wake follow unrest and unhappiness.

Through continuous habit Fear is the hardest thing to eliminated, but when it is once eradicated life becomes easy. The question is how to erase this doubt of the glory of living. The Aquarian Gospel quotes these words:

“When man comes to himself and comprehends the fact that he is the Son of God, and knows that in himself lies all the powers of God, he is a Master Man, and all the elements will hear his voice and gladly do his will.

“Two sturdy asses bind the will of man—their names are Fear and Unbelief. When these are caught and turned aside the will of man will know no bounds, then man has but to speak and it is done.”

There lies the answer—when this great power of faith is accepted into our lives without question, the way of life will cease to be complicated and confusing. We shall listen to the voice within, our powers of discretion and discrimination will come to our aid whenever called upon. Life's difficulties will smooth out, and all experiences will be welcomed as golden opportunities, for we shall have self-knowledge and be unafraid. The mother who fears for her child will become calm and poised, knowing full well that her acknowledgement of the Divine Power will open the way for protection and guidance at all times.

And so the dreaded future will give way to the ever present—the importance of living will become a clarified fact—the day will begin with great hope and a joyous note will ring in

every moment—the individual will love his neighbour, acknowledge his brother's qualities, proud of his achievements through self-awareness. Those who have the knowledge of the meaning of life will use their hours to serve humanity, to promote right thinking and joy in the child, the adult and the unbeliever. For it is through right thinking that happiness can be won—life will be a series of Todays, the Yesterdays and Yesteryears having gracefully made their exit. The time used in living fearfully will be taken up building a world from which a radiant joyousness will forever emanate.

As Milton said:

“To know that which before us lies in Daily Life is the Prime Wisdom.”

## X. THE PHENOMENON OF SLEEP

*R. E. Hartig*

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED in bats. The little mammals travel like ghosts through the night, consuming thousands of dangerous germ-carrying mosquitoes; they protect the health of human beings.

Scientific research has shown that in winter-time they hibernate. In Northern Canada, for example, they select caves where the temperature does not fall below  $33^{\circ}\text{F}$ . and by crowding very close together they are able to maintain their own temperature of  $33.5^{\circ}\text{F}$ . The hibernating bats reduce their breathing to an absolute minimum, thus conserving their food consumption. If the temperature of the caves sinks lower, approaching freezing point, which no warmblooded animal can survive, these little animals awake to a most lively consciousness. Immediately active, they seek a more suitable cave and a warmer place, where they sleep again until Spring comes with insect life and an awakening of new interest for the bats.

Now the question arises, "from whence comes this super-conscious urge, which awakens the bats just in time to save their lives?"

Let us consider what actually takes place when we fall asleep. In 1940, Dr. Crile demonstrated before a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science that the tissues of the body are electrically negative with the exception of the brain tissues which are positive. It is perhaps possible that an accumulation of assimilated products, leading to an acid reaction, might change the electrically positive brain into an electrically negative organ, thus permitting electrically positive cosmic rays to enter the body.

Perhaps the brain acts as a switchboard which automatically

forces the body to rest when tired until such time as there has been a sufficient intake of positive rays to rejuvenate all the cells and to permit the brain to take over the command of the millions of the body cells.

This explains the importance of undisturbed sleep, why sleep comes slowly and gradually deepens, and yet why even a short rest gives us fresh vigour and energy.

Swami Yoganandas has said:

“The rejuvenating effects of sleep are due to man’s temporary unawareness of body and breathing. The sleeping man becomes a Yogi each night, he unconsciously performs the Yoga rite of releasing himself from bodily identification and of merging the life force with healing currents in the main brain region and the six sub-dynamos of his spinal centres. The sleeper thus dips unknowingly into the reservoir of cosmic energy which sustains all life.”

And Rudolf Steiner adds:

“When the body rests, the individual lives in surroundings which are just as real as those in his daily waking life.” These two great masters of psychic research both agree in their evaluation of sleep as an entrance to higher planes and we can understand that, consciously or not, messages of vital importance find their way to the brain during sleep.

In our time, when religion and science have drawn a little nearer together and science begins to understand some of the miracles of old times, any door which permits the average man to enter spheres hitherto closed to him is welcomed indeed.

For me, at least, the phenomenon of sleep brought new knowledge.

Sometimes, late in the afternoon, tired after a hard day in my practice, I rested awhile in my shaded study, scarcely able to control my longing for sleep. I yet managed to avoid actually falling asleep. I then observed a strange phenomenon. I heard voices talking, their words meaningless, rather as if one were listening on a party telephone, understanding the language but not grasping the sense of the dialogue.

It seemed to me that in the more superficial sleep, nearby sound waves may be received by the consciousness; from this I argued that the deeper the sleep the more distant the waves

which might be received.

Our dream life reflects, often enough, pictures of the astral plane, and we know that by strict control and training of our thoughts, induced by meditation, we eventually succeed in bringing dream consciousness to waking consciousness. A scientifically trained mind may sometimes even be able to make an objective observation. The facts of clairvoyance and clair-audience cannot be denied.

As an illustration of an objective observation here is a fact out of my own life. In 1924, I was living in a country house near Umbilo, Natal. At this time, aeroplanes were still a rarity. At breakfast, I told a friend, staying with me, about a strange dream. I saw two aeroplanes crashing together in the air, falling down, men rushing to the place of the accident. Next day we found cabled news in the Natal newspaper giving a full description of the accident in Aldershot, England.

I experienced an example of clairauidience at the time of the entry of the Russians into Berlin during the second World War. Awakening in the early morning, I heard a voice speaking a combination of English and Afrikaans and telling me: "You may not judge." I immediately recorded the matter in my diary, realising that it was important but not at all understanding its meaning.

A sad fact was soon confirmed by letter. My sister, very near to my heart, had to commit suicide when the Red Army approached. Obviously she wanted me not to condemn her suicide.

These two reports, the one of the air accident involving persons entirely unknown to me, the other dealing with a close relative, have both to do with death. Death obviously causes the strongest and most far-reaching waves. Perhaps death, birth and generation cause vibrations of a particular length and strength, vibrations which touch our inner life, strong enough to pass the filter which divides sleep from the waking consciousness; strong enough, as in the two examples from my own life to produce a sudden awakening and to remind us of our little bats upon whom approaching death has obviously the same effect.

Sleep then is the entrance to a room in which we may



receive messages from a world otherwise closed to us; messages from a source far from the noise and activity of everyday, drowned by modern life but still there for all who will train themselves to listen and to feel the great Oneness of all living souls.

## XI. THE END OF THE BEGINNING

*R. K. Stocks*

THE BEGINNING OF THE BEGINNING is when man first asks himself the meaning of being.

The next stage is the beginning itself, which may be a long period when he searches gullibly, and laps up greedily, many and varied doctrines. Some he rejects, others he accepts for they are "in his mouth as sweet as honey." These doctrines remain sweet for just so long as he keeps them merely in the superficial layers of understanding. But one sad day it will dawn upon our pilgrim that he has done nothing more than rest awhile in emotional satisfaction, which leads—if persisted in—not to enlightened activity, but to a supercilious disdain of the limited, materialistic activities of struggling humanity.

Wherein has he failed? Why has he been unable to apply and to bring into everyday experience the high ideals which he feels to be correct? Perhaps at this stage the answer might flash into his awareness that it is because the deeper levels of his consciousness are cluttered up with false beliefs which he had not even realised he harboured. False belief in the deeper layers of the mind is the instigator of retrogressive behaviour tendencies. Deep-seated belief is creative. Behaviour in thought and in deed faithfully follows its lead. Superficial understanding is not creative. It merely gives rise to emotional upheaval when it finds itself at variance with instinctive behaviour.

How, then, is our pilgrim to transform his superficial emotional understanding into deep-seated, creative knowingness? How is he to become a master of circumstance instead of being dashed around like flotsam by the waves of every external influence? He wishes to help humanity in its evolutionary

journey, but now he realises that he is not entitled to do so until he has prepared himself to become a teacher, lest, through ignorance, he hinders rather than assists.

"Oh Ignorance, thou dark deceiver, secret presence, subtle weaver! How am I to root you from my being?"

With these words, our pilgrim, at last seeing himself face to face, reaches the halfway mark on the road of the beginning. Now, for the first time, he has found himself able to examine a little way below the surface of his consciousness, and there, to his horror, he finds distorting ignorance crytallised into inflexible belief. The words which previously were in his mouth "as sweet as honey" have now "made his belly bitter." He has quaffed a purging draught which has opened his stopped mind, sharpened his analytical instrument of reason, and cleansed the furred lenses of his insight. Now he is prepared.

He pushes along a stony path. Many times he falls over undetected stumbling blocks, but each time he rises again, thankful to discover that the stumbling blocks themselves are really tutors and signposts pointing ever onward.

At long last he sees, in the distance, the end of the beginning, and this is what he humbly has to tell, hoping that his experience may stimulate a questing spirit in which reason and emotion work in balanced partnership to transform clouded relative truths into dynamic being.

This paper is not intended as a complete philosophical analysis. If it stimulates the exercise of reason its purpose is fulfilled. Exercise of reason assisted by the higher faculty of insight is the method of destroying false belief and replacing it with illuminated knowingness.

The Universe is either in a state of equilibrium or in a controlled state of disequilibrium. Action and reaction, cause and effect, reveal this. Definite result follows action in order to maintain this stage of control. Happenings are controlled by law, and the very word "control" implies intelligence. Any investigator knows that the results of an experiment cannot be wrong, only his understanding of the circumstances which led to these results can be wrong. Hence, by studying results, he endeavours to master circumstances in order to provide progressive results.

A state of equilibrium or a controlled state of disequilibrium existing means that there cannot be any superfluity nor any deficiency in the universe. From a wide point of view, all things, whether animate or, apparently, inanimate, play their part in maintaining this state of control. Truly we can say, when we see an ignorant, disease-ridden beggar, or a shining Master of Wisdom, "Thank God for you both, for without you both universal chaos would reign."

Both these extremes are emitting divergent influences which, in the end, affect the whole of humanity. Should either the beggar or the Master of Wisdom suddenly become non-existent it would be equivalent to a numerical digit missing in a mathematical series. If this were to happen, mathematics would collapse and the universe with it. Nothing is so unimportant that it is not essential.

If everything is found to be, in the ultimate analysis, under the one control of perfect intelligence, it means that nothing can happen by chance. Furthermore, everything which is under the same control must be connected. In one fell swoop it is discovered that chance and separation are deep-seated false beliefs of man.

The perfect controlling intelligence has a plan, and, as it says in the little book *At the Feet of the Master*, that plan is evolution. It is a law that a limited degree of life shall evolve to life unlimited. A cursory glance at nature reveals this direction. We see growth and decay, construction and destruction, but the immaterial element of progressiveness which is the residuum of decay and destruction lives on to flower again in a less relative degree of existence.

Three points have now emerged:

- (a) Perfect intelligent control.
- (b) Chancelessness.
- (c) Evolution.

These three reveal that the circumstances in which man finds himself are the ideal ones designed for his evolutionary growth. The next essential lesson is contained in the present circumstances. Man is inclined to resist his present surroundings instead of learning from them. Beliefs of separation and the non-essentiality of others guide his behaviour. This is seen in

the individual, and collectively in groups and nations. It results in a gradual building-up of antagonism and dissatisfaction which eventually leads to destruction and decay, but out of such collapse emerges the information necessary for less contrary activity. Certainly this is learning the hard way, but, if man cannot accept the gifts of perfect intelligence, it is an evolutionary law that he be re-moulded until he can do so.

Free will, if used with a wide open, enquiring mind, is another instrument of progress. Its exercise leads to many mistakes, but mistakes are more powerful tutors than successes. In engineering there is a saying that the man who never made a mistake never made anything. This could be enlarged by adding "nor has he gained any experience except in ineffectiveness."

What is experience? It is the ability to recognise that which is progressive and that which is retrogressive. It is practical knowledge arising out of personal endeavour. Thus, as far as possible, others should be given freedom to make mistakes their own way. Man learns more from personal experience than from the acceptance or imposition of the experience of others.

It has been shewn that perfect intelligence controls all things. Everything is secondary to it. Free will is secondary to it for perfect intelligence controls the results of free will. All man-instigated activity and all man-made things are expressions of free will in action. All manifestation, humanity included, is an expression of the Divine Will in action. Man's will is apprenticed to its cosmic superior which spares no effort in revealing that which is progressive and that which is retrogressive. Divine Will is ever moulding its apprentice, free will, to enable it to accept God's gifts. This in a nutshell is "karma."

The statement was made that everything which is controlled by one controlling force must be connected. Another approach to this is through an analysis of the observer and his observation. The observer is defined here as the person which knows or is aware. The observation is defined as all which man knows, whether the information is gained through the media of the five major senses, or through the process of pure thought.

Einstein's theory of relativity states that the observer plays a part in his observation. Here the statement is made more definite by stating that the observer and his observation is one indivisible entity in being. Remove the observer and the observation ceases to exist. Remove the observation and the observer is annihilated. An objection will be anticipated here. It might be said: "If I am annihilated, it does not mean that all things external to me will be annihilated at the same time." This is a legitimate objection, but the scope of this paper forbids it to be analysed now. It will be stated, however, that the real relationship between man's knowingness of things and the things themselves can be discovered by analytical reasoning. All are advised to tackle this analysis. The answer to it is surprising and enlightening.

The relationship can be unearthed from an analysis of everyday waking experience, sleep and dreams, and also from an enquiry into how perception arises through the activity of the senses. However, in this paper the observer-observation relationship is being viewed from a purely individual standpoint.

All things, people and circumstances, whether we like or dislike them, whether we deem them essential or non-essential, whether we feel we dominate them or are ourselves dominated by them, are elements of our own consciousness for they are our observation—they are our awareness, and our awareness is our evolving self. Where lies separation now, when it is seen that everything is a part of self?

It would appear that, although man's evolving consciousness is one, it consists of many phases, each phase influencing and modifying the others and also the whole. Each phase is essential. The centre of the growing consciousness is the free will centre or, in other words, the personal awareness centre. Should man fail to recognise that all things and beings, apparently external to himself, are really elements of his own consciousness, he condemns himself to live as narrowly, isolated and ineffectively as an unrealised ignoramus who has shunned worldly activity to live in critical solitude.

The Biblical injunction, "Love the Lord thy God and thy neighbour as thyself", takes on a new meaning. The Lord thy God is the deepest creative centre of consciousness, and thy

neighbour is all the, apparently, external phases of consciousness. Thus the Lord thy God and thy neighbour are both parts of the evolving self. The Biblical command, then, is to recognise with dynamic intensity the whole of self.

Twice during this paper the perfect gifts of God have been referred to. What are these gifts, and what form do they take on the relative plane of being on which we find ourselves? Again let us turn to the Bible. There we can find a statement which we can develop, and then examine to see whether it is reasonable or not. In Revelations, Chapter 22: 1-2, it says:

“ . . . and he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river was there a tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruit, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

We might interpret this by saying that absolute life manifests as perfect relative degrees of that life, and will be experienced as such if its twelve radiating qualities are harmoniously balanced, realised and applied by bringing them into dynamic awareness. If this could be done, anything which is not of their nature could find no place to reside.

Life on the relative planes, in order to be experienced as relatively perfect, must be a synthesis of the following:

- (a) Good exists.
- (b) Knowing good exists.
- (c) Doing the good.
- (d) Enjoying the good.

*Good existing*, from the standpoint which we have taken, is the controlling law and order which our analysis of equilibrium, cause and effect, demonstrated as ever present. We could sub-divide *Good exists* into Peace, Harmony, Intelligence. These three qualities, it should be remembered, lie behind manifested being. The other three, Knowing, Doing and Enjoying the Good, refer more to evolving awareness.

*Knowing Good Exists* might be sub-divided into Freedom, which is freedom from distortion and false belief, into Faith, by which is meant an illuminated knowingness, and, lastly, Simplicity, which is the residuum from the death of complexity.

Complexity, it might be added, is ignorance in action, although it is often mistaken for intellectual cleverness as the following graph (Fig. 1) indicates:

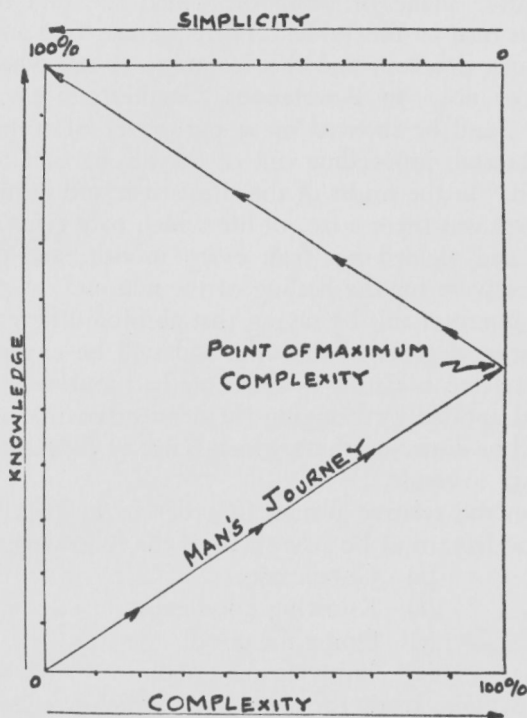


Fig. 1

*Doing Good* we will separate into Wisdom, Will and Activity.

*Enjoying Good* could be a synthesis of Beauty, Love and Happiness.

The following diagram (Fig. 2) will help us to concentrate our thoughts along the lines which these qualities indicate.





Fig. 2

An extreme case of undeveloped spiritual awareness would experience these qualities as their opposites, thus:

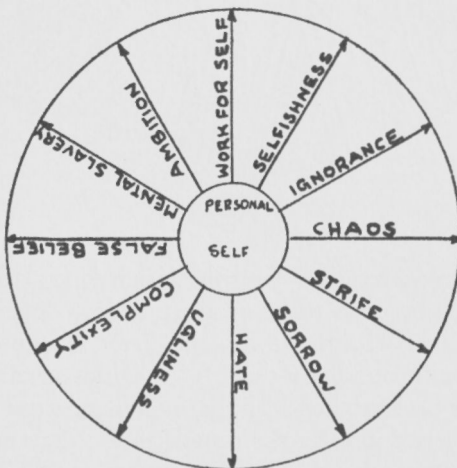


Fig. 3

Now, man's evolutionary journey consists in transforming these opposites into their undistorted reality. By combining these two diagrams, we could plot the point to which we have travelled on our evolutionary path.

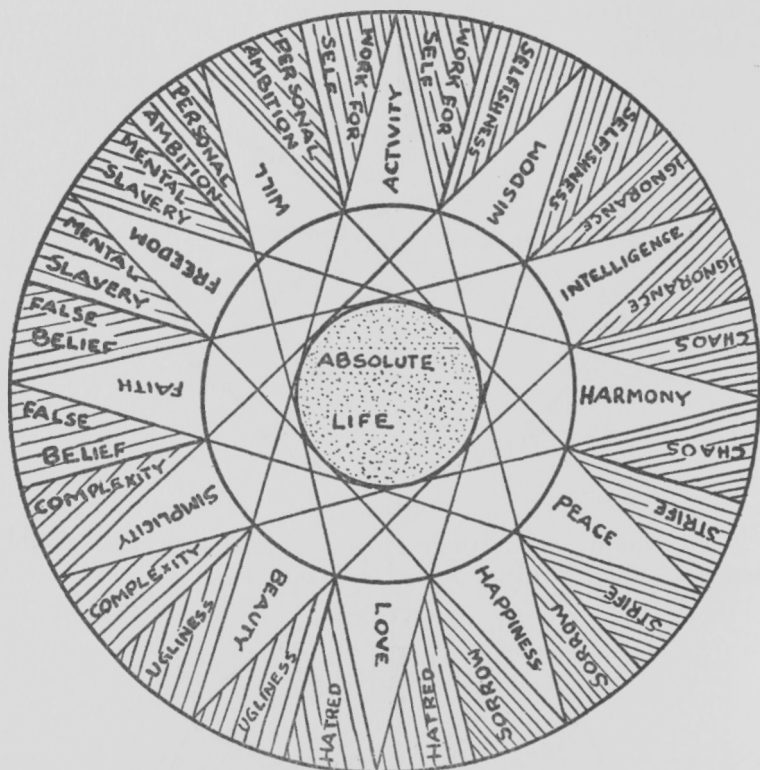


Fig. 4

True progress requires the spherical balance of all of these qualities. Each requires to be proportionately developed. The opposites of the qualities shewn—the “Not Is” qualities—form an essential background for the “Is” qualities, even as darkness is the essential background of light, and silence the background of music. Do not despise the opposites for they are our great tutors. It is these which teach by experience. The separate effects which occur in their realm are signposts pointing to the relatively perfect qualities. When, however, they are overcome, their part is played and they then lie in a similar relationship as does darkness to light during the scintillating brilliance of a clear, sunny day.

In conclusion is suggested a meditation based on the diagram which has been developed:

"I know with a growing, intellectual understanding and an emotional certainty, that the control of Peace, Harmony and Intelligence enfolds all things and beings. As my faith develops into an illuminated knowingness, I find Freedom from the distortions of false belief, and, as my intelligence unfolds, complex pride gives way to the understanding and humility of true Simplicity. With my understanding now pervaded with the realisation of the essentiality and oneness of all things, Love enters into my awareness. This Love element combining with Intelligence, gives birth to Wisdom. Wisdom to know Thy Will, Oh God, and the Will to do it. I see now the course of Activity—to be an efficient instrument in Thy hands, active to resolve separation into synthesised unity. Even as Thou art ever doing, Oh Lord, mould me that I might learn to be truly active within the sphere you have chosen for me, that I might reveal Thy Love, Thy Beauty and Happiness to all beings individualised yet unified in self. When I am thus prepared, surely will I have reached the end of the beginning."

## XII. THE POWER OF WORDS

*Ethel Dougall*

IN THE LONG, LONG HISTORY of our planet and its inhabitants there was probably never a period when so many words were used as is the case today. Shouted, muttered, reproduced by mechanical means, spoken or sung or chanted in tones which give very varying degrees of pleasure to their hearers, and printed in every conceivable form and on every available space, millions upon millions of words are daily, almost hourly, added to the Akashic records which preserve them for the future blessing or bane of humanity.

Yet we seldom pause to consider the power of words and our use or misuse of this power. What has occult science to tell us?

Although modern history can penetrate a mere 5,000 or 7,000 years back, the story of man on earth is immensely longer than this; and almost every year fresh discoveries are made by geologists, archaeologists, explorers and occult researchers which strengthen the cyclic view of history, bringing fresh evidence to bear upon the occult theory that ours is the fifth great Root Race to occupy this planet, and that in ages yet to come, two further Root Races will arise, each with its special contribution to the powers of humanity, to the *senses* by which men can contact their fellow-men and their environment and so approach nearer to a comprehension of the One Life which is in all created things.

Occult theory, as made available to the world by the great Theosophical leaders, tells us that the First Root Race, the earliest humanity, who lived in bodies composed of that etheric material which is now being re-discovered by science,

developed the power of *hearing*. Normally this power precedes and leads on to that of speaking, as we can prove so easily by observing the growth of a normal child during the first two years of its life. The Second Root Race, living in bodies which were becoming more dense and therefore more tangible, developed the power of *touch*. Already its members could hear and speak to each other, and Dr. Besant, in *The Pedigree of Man*, describes these Second Root Race folk as "drifting, gliding, climbing, crying to each other in flute-like notes." They lived in the dense heavy atmosphere of the splendid tropical forests which at that time covered the areas of our globe now occupied by the coldest regions of Northern Europe. The Third Root Race evolved the power of *sight*, the Fourth the power of *taste*, and our own, the Fifth, that of *smell*, as was proved by Van Riebeeck, one of its members, when he described the Hottentots (a mingling of Third and Fourth Root Race folk, who rubbed their bodies with mutton fat) as "stinkende," a word which needs no translation! The two remaining senses, to be developed by humanity in ages yet to come, are telepathy and the twin powers of clairvoyance and clairaudience. When thoughts are communicated from mind direct to mind, and when distance is no barrier to hearing or to sight, immensely fewer words will be needed than are used today.

Let us however, pass to our narrower subject—the value and the power of words.

Words are an infinite blessing. Our daily contacts with our fellow men depend largely upon them, as also does our comprehension of the past. We think of the Rosetta stone, which has given to the world so much knowledge of ancient Egypt; we remember that at this present time, scholars are struggling to read the ancient language of the great Atlantean Sea-Kings of Crete. Words are absorbed by us both through the ear and through the eye, and for the helping of those in whom the First Root-Race faculty of hearing has failed, special schools are provided, so that deaf children may learn to hear and speak by means of the Second Root-Race faculty of touch. Those who cannot see are helped to master the written word by the development of a system invented by the blind Louis Braille, of writing in raised dots; while the tremendous drive for literacy throughout

the world, sponsored by UNESCO, shows the importance of comprehending the written word.

Here is testimony to the power of words from a book called *Astral Projection*, by Oliver Fox, published by Rider.

Mr. Fox, who, if he is still on the physical plane, must be a man in the sixties, possessed as a child and a young man an etheric body of the "loose" type, and he stumbled by accident upon the possibility of leaving his physical body in full consciousness. He became a contributor to the *Occult Review*, and his book was published earlier than the better-known works of Sylvan Muldoon and Hereward Carrington. His experiences extended over a number of years, during which he kept records, though he admits that it is difficult, after returning from an astral journey, to awaken the physical body sufficiently to make it sit up and use the paper and pencil lying on the bedside table. His adventures on the inner planes were of many kinds: he saw unpleasant entities on the lower astral planes and beheld glorious beings of the higher regions; he travelled on foot while out of the body, and also by the gliding method so familiar to many people; and he trained his will to project his astral body upwards at tremendous speed. All these experiences were as real to him as the daily walk to his office. Yet at the end of his book he writes these words:

"I have gone further than many people along a certain path. I have talked with Masters in another world. I have seen—though from afar—Celestial Beings, great shapes of dazzling flame, whose beauty filled the soul with anguished longing. And yet were it not for my records, the blessed written words—which ensure *permanence*, even though they veil and distort and make untrue—were it not for these, there are times when I should doubt *everything*; yes, even the reality of my Master. So hard it is to kill the sceptic in me, nor do I want to altogether; for scepticism is very useful as an aid to mental equilibrium."

You will notice at once the important words in this passage—"The blessed written words, even though they veil and distort and make untrue, which ensure permanence."

It is not surprising that words, which have the power to be a blessing, have also the power to be a curse. It is natural law,

that a force in itself is neither good nor evil, but can be either or both according to the use which we make of it. This is equally true of the "four elements" of the ancients—earth, air, fire and water; it is true of the great cosmic energies which we call electricity and atomic power. And unless our life on the physical plane is to be fraught with dangers and possibly ended in an unpleasant manner, we have to practise discrimination in our contacts with and in our use of these forces. Water, as St. Francis says, is our "little sister, humble and precious and pure." Yet it can drown us in the bathtub, and our children in the fish-pond. We know this, and if we are wise we take our precautions. Why then should we be so careless, so indiscriminating, in our daily use of *words*, which, as the Christ told us, have the power to bless or to blast? "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of the torment."

St. John, whose Gospel gives so much more *esoteric* teaching than do the other Gospels, begins with the sentence, "In the beginning was the Word," and among the many meanings which attach to this passage, hidden layer within layer, we may discern a hint of the creative power of speech. In the Hebrew language, every letter of the alphabet has also a numerical value, and the student of the Kabbalah will recognise how much additional power is given to Hebrew talismanic words by the fact that they have been worked out in terms of number. The creative power behind a word must obviously depend upon the power of the thought behind it, as well as upon its own intrinsic value—something which lies hidden from us in the little-understood science of acoustics.

From these rather involved considerations let us turn to the simple and practical—to our daily use of words. And let us begin with the child, for all human life begins with the baby and the growing child. We must all have wondered very often what guides (or misguides) parents in their choice of names for the new baby—a matter which is going to affect the child all through its life. Personal associations, family traditions, the claims of grandparents and godparents and personal taste must all play their part in this matter. It is common in this country, as in others, to give a family surname to a boy, or to call him after some national hero of the past; among families of

Huguenot descent, the seventeenth century French names persist, generation after generation. But students of occultism must deplore the modern tendency of some parents to invent fanciful and often very ugly names; and it is certainly unkind to name a daughter according to some contemporary event, which is equivalent to hanging a year-of-birth certificate around the child's neck. And how many boys, their individuality sacrificed to the pride of *pater familias*, have been pushed down the road to mediocrity by the name Septimus, Octavius or Decimus! Names such as Dawn, Winsome and Cherry, while possibly charming during babyhood, are inappropriate in later life. And all that has been said of given names applies of course to nick-names and pet names. Psychologists and neurologists, who so often recommend new occupations and hobbies, might well consider *new names* as a means of changing a morbid outlook on life.

When the child has its names and has established its hold on its new body, there comes a time of learning to recognise words and then of imitating the sounds heard. How many children have been quite unjustly punished for using "bad words" caught from father or from a servant! How many young, growing astral bodies have been damaged by the effect of mother's shrill and angry scolding of the washerwoman or, worse, of the child itself. Is it not significant that when small children play at tea-parties, house-house or school, their dolls are nearly always so "naughty"?

This is the positive side of the damage which may be done by the use of undesirable words or tones in the presence of children, but there is a negative side, often found in institutions where children are supposed to be receiving love and care. This negative side is expressed in cold, indifferent, disapproving tones, which restrain the impulsive, affectionate child nature and thrust its loving impulses back upon themselves.

It is obvious that kind words alone, although Tennyson says they are "more than coronets," will not deceive a child; the words of affection and liking must spring from a loving heart. But so often we are told that a human being is possessed of greater warmth of heart, greater tolerance and understanding, than his words would lead us to believe. "His bark is worse



than his bite" does not always or indeed usually apply to dogs; "she doesn't mean half she says" may or may not bring comfort when some cruel speech has caused pain or fear. But Masfield says,

"The brave word that I failed to speak  
Will brand me dastard on the cheek."

One of the best gifts which can be given to growing children is the power to express themselves in fine and beautiful words, well-spoken words. A pleasing and well-modulated voice is surely as great an asset as a handsome appearance, and its cultivation should not be restricted to those young people (usually girls) whose parents can afford to give them private elocution lessons. A "voice test" is given to would-be radio announcers, and could be given to teachers if these were not already in such short supply that the sifting-out of applicants would be frowned on by any educational authority in the world. But we cannot choose future parents according to voice-tests and vocabulary. We can only urge upon them the value of setting a fine example in these matters to the young folk in their homes.

We do not care for the saleslady who says to us, "O.K.," and "Ta very much." But do we take the trouble to compile mental lists of words which should not be commonly used in our homes? Or which should be used only in their right context and not as lazy-minded substitutes for others, more appropriate? Students of occultism tell us that certain words create vibrations which are harmful, and, quite apart from the so-called swearing which is banned by so many, especially by Protestant Christians, there are many others in common use which our own instincts tell us to be unsuitable or even harmful, especially to young people. At random one might suggest the following: dirty, hideous, filthy, sis, lousy, voetsak; and all the powerful adjectives such as "awful" and "terrible" which are so often used away from their proper context. But there is one word—too often heard—which we should avoid, or which we must try to neutralise whenever it is heard; this is the word "hate". It is not necessary to labour this point—we are all too familiar with the various manifestations of separateness which occur so often in this difficult, fascinating, and problem-filled

land of ours. Let us try to teach our young folk a better understanding of man and beast; the danger of this word lies not only in its acoustical vibrations but in the emotional intensity which is almost always directing its use and abuse.

There are the kind, good, friendly words: home, friend, fireside, supper, holiday, table, armchair, meeting and greeting, harmony, song, light, joy; all made dear to us by their happy associations. They should be often on our lips. And there are the rich, majestic words of the poets and the great prose writers.

If I seem to be spending too much time on the very ordinary subject of daily speech, I do so because occult study must be applied above all to the ordinary things of life, and of these things, speech is our most common method of contacting our fellow men. The special vibration of each human voice is a very personal thing, and no two people speak exactly alike. As we make progress on the occult path, as we grow in the power to express our thoughts, not only through the words which we choose to utter but also in the power which informs and vivifies those words, so we find increasingly that people remember what we say, that they are deeply affected, perhaps, by our words. And this is true of the written as well as the spoken word. There is power in the handwriting of the strong personality and of the occultist—a power which is visible to the eye and which speaks to the mind, and this fact is worth remembering in an age which has almost lost the art of penmanship.

The opposite pole of speech is silence. Those who would cultivate a forceful use of words must also learn the value of silence. We are told that in the school of Pythagoras the neophytes had to maintain an unbroken silence over a period of years, listening, but refraining from speech. The Catholic orders of monks and nuns enjoin stated periods of silence upon their members, including the meal periods. What a blessed dispensation! Should the time ever come when members of the Theosophical Society learn to practise some of the elementary rules of occultism, and should they decide that meals at Conventions shall be taken in silence, it will be found that fatigue is lessened and energy conserved to a degree which will surprise those who have never previously practised this discipline. The sound of many voices in an enclosed space, each voice rising

louder and louder and higher and higher in an effort to make itself heard, is intensely fatiguing even to the physical ear, while the nerves and brain soon become utterly exhausted by it.

Children can be trained to practise and enjoy periods of silence, and these are of the greatest benefit to the growing bodies, but instead of giving them this training and encouraging them to speak thoughtfully and beautifully, this modern civilisation of ours allows, urges and teaches them to shout themselves hoarse, at play, at sporting events, at cinemas and even in their homes. Vocal chords are strained, often beyond repair, and any sensitive persons who may be present are shocked and exhausted, but any suggestion that the noise should be restrained is looked upon as unnatural, as a wish to "spoil the sport."

The endurance of the noise of shouting is part of the price we have to pay for living in the over-populated world of today, with its herding of too many people into cities, where they fill too often the role of noisy spectators instead of that of happy, absorbed participants in the various activities falsely described as leisure occupations!

If we practise periods of silence, we shall find that our words have more power behind them, that our physical fatigue is lessened and that our bodies will be more in harmony with each other. It is hardly necessary to add that the silence must be self-chosen, or at least willingly accepted as a discipline. It must be used to deepen the power of thought, not to accumulate a supply of gossip and *trivia* to be unloaded at the first opportunity. I remember well an occasion when a friend whose house I was visiting, and who had not spoken for perhaps fifteen minutes, slowly raised his eyes to mine and asked a simple four-word question: "Do you like meditation?" The power behind those words was so great that I was literally unable to reply. But if the silence be maintained involuntarily, under protest, as in the case of the housewife who has no companions to talk to whilst her husband is at business and her children at school, the result of this undesired repression may be a torrent of aimless talk which will overwhelm the next person she meets.

Here I would like to suggest one or two questions, to which I do not know the answers. How far does the radio, which is so often kept playing for hours on end by those whose minds

are undisciplined, relieve this unacknowledged, unrecognised need for "someone to talk to?" Should the length of local telephone calls be restricted? What steps can the serious-minded or the naturally silent person take, consistent with courtesy and friendliness, to protect himself against the flood of talk—it is not conversation—directed towards and over him by the garrulous?

From the topic of daily contacts by means of the spoken or written word, we must pass on to consider the set form of words used for some particular purpose.

Each of the senses developed in turn by the great Root Races of humanity is ordinarily used to perceive what happens to be *there* to be perceived, though perhaps the Fourth Root Race power of taste is something of an exception to this general rule. Most of us select the foods which seem to us to be beneficial or pleasing. We usually accept the smells inseparable from city life—the smell of smoke, of the lift, of the neighbours' supper frying, though in certain cases we may try to remove smells which are objectionable to us if this is within our power. And with regard to the Third Root Race power of sight, it is obvious that we cannot choose to any great extent the form and colour of the objects upon which our eyes must rest. This is true also of hearing, the power developed by the First Root Race, but in this case we may, if we choose, develop a defensive mechanism, whereby sounds which we do not wish to hear are not communicated to the brain. There is an old proverb which says, "There are none so deaf as those who won't hear," and although this is probably intended metaphorically rather than literally, we can prove its truth, for intense concentration can render us insensitive to most noises going on around us, unless emotional factors are involved.

But the powers of the senses can also be used scientifically, to produce specific results; and thus we have today the beginnings of a revived interest in the science of perfumes chosen for a definite object, and of colours for healing, while the psychiatrist bases some of his conclusions upon the forms, known as mandalas, produced by the unconscious mind of his patient. The science which deliberately makes use of chosen words to bring about desired results has probably been known and used

continuously for most if not all of human history, and it is by no means always an esoteric science, for we may teach Fido to "die for his country." When used esoterically, however, it is called in the East, Mantra Yoga, that is, the approach to union with the One Life by means of ordered and selected sounds. This is known through the oft-repeated sacred phrases of the Buddhists, and, to us in the West, through all the ordered prayers and phrases used in temples and churches which practise ritual of any kind.

Such *mantras* are believed to act in two ways—upon the minds of those who hear and use them, and upon the Powers to Whom they are directed. The first result—that of steadying, calming and aligning the astral and mental bodies of the user, is beyond all doubt effective, though the *degree* to which it works must depend upon the emotional, mental and, still higher up the scale, the spiritual development of the person using the words. The formula recommended by M. Coue, that "every day in every way I am getting better and better"; the Our Fathers and Hail Marys repeated many times daily by the devout Catholic; all such repetitions have their value, though they are not necessarily the highest form of aspiration nor the most powerful forms of appeal to the eternal law. I have been astonished many times by the *immediate* response which follows an appeal to Saint Christopher to protect the traveller, or to Saint Anthony to find that which is lost; and although in many cases we may dismiss the result with the conclusion that the prayer aroused the subconscious mind of the user, this somewhat superficial explanation does not by any means fit all cases. If we are of simple faith, we may like to believe that the Saint—or perhaps even the Deity Himself—felt and answered the call; if we are students of the Ancient Wisdom, we may recall C. W. Leadbeater's "*Invisible Helpers*," and conclude that one of them chanced to hear the appeal and was able to respond to it. These things are to some extent a great mystery, but the *effects* are undeniable.

At what point does the automatic repetition of prayers and phrases degenerate into mere superstition? Mathematically, I think the answer would be—never! For however much the wine of concentration be diluted with the water of habit, it remains wine. We who have studied the power of thought and

its control must realise with Tennyson that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

So we pass on to consider the spiritual giants, who have so disciplined their minds by lives of endeavour that by the power of the word they can contact great natural forces. I will give three examples, at least one of which will probably be known to you by personal experience: a Catholic High Mass, sung with the assistance of a trained choir by an experienced priest, and using all the additional ritual of colour and incense; a great Masonic ceremony, about which no more can be said; an evening round the camp-fire at Ommen, in the years when many thousands of people from all over the world made their pilgrimage thither to contact Mr. Krishnamurti, who has undoubtedly powerful contacts with the Deva or angelic world. With regard to the first two of these examples, it seems rather striking that the intelligentsia of the French nation, who are perhaps the most intelligent people on earth at present, seem to divide sharply into Catholics or Freemasons. This suggests that the two lines of ceremonial are mutually unsympathetic. Few people can follow two paths at the same time, and though some try to do this, it is unwise and may have unfortunate results.

Once again we must look at the opposite side of all this. A power which can be used for good can be used also for evil. This fact is usually carefully concealed by those who teach the ignorant and the simple, and also by the exponents of what is rather vaguely called New Thought, but it is nevertheless a fact in natural law. If the priest of good can bless, then the priest of evil can curse, and his results, unless neutralised by a magic more powerful than his own, will naturally be in proportion to his power. Modern writers of occult novels have exploited this theme, and among them are Talbot Mundy and Dennis Wheatley, whose books contain much food for thought. It must be remembered that the spoken word, when used for magical purposes, is usually reinforced by appropriate ceremonial; the "bell, book and candle" are not found *only* in mediaeval legends, as students of the Kabbalah will know. This ritual serves the double purpose of assisting the concentration of the operator and attracting the attention of those entities whose aid is invoked. There are a number of magical words in common

use, some remembered in the race-consciousness, others drawn from folk-tale and legend, for example, Open Sesame, Rumpelstiltskin, and others seeping through from unwary use by the initiated—and these words are potent if directed by the trained will of the operator, under the right conditions; but are, perhaps fortunately, powerless or nearly so when used by the untrained and the uncomprehending person. I myself have never found the spells and jargon of Shakespeare's witches at all convincing, and the Witch scenes from Macbeth, as usually acted, are merely a childish playing at witchcraft; but I believe that the author of Macbeth and of The Tempest was far too great an occultist to reveal genuine words of power to all and sundry, and that he deliberately created these unconvincing scenes and speeches to remind his audiences and readers of the *existence* of magic, both white and black, while concealing the genuine words and signs with which he was no doubt familiar. I suspect, though without evidence, that the same technique has been followed by certain members of the Theosophical Society, who have created so-called "white magic" ceremonies which can certainly do no harm, but which seem to have no conceivable value or power. They give a hint that genuine words of magic and power do exist, but they reveal nothing, like a small handbook of "magic"—in inverted commas, please! which I once possessed, and which gave elaborate descriptions of rituals and magical equipment, while *omitting all the necessary words*; the author stated that these words could only be given "from mouth to ear." Whether he knew them or not must remain a matter of speculation. As the most interesting and instructive novel based on the possible existence of magic in the everyday world of wartime London, I recommend Ethel Mannin's *Lucifer and the Child*. It is fascinating, thought-provoking and quite inscrutable.

And so I must pass on to the last section of my subject, the theme which might conceivably have filled the whole paper. The moral and ethical value of words is something so obvious, so overwhelming, that I can do little save mention it, for the mental content of each of us who are present here tonight will be different, and for each of us there is beyond doubt a mighty collection of words, sayings, quotations, prayers maybe or potent phrases which are part of our individual uniqueness. The words



spoken to us by another, in some moment of crisis or delight; the words we have read, re-read, and remembered; the words which we ourselves have written or spoken, perhaps under the inspiration of the Higher Self or even of some other entity—these words form the background of our thinking and of our actions to an extent and in a manner which it is impossible for us to communicate to any other being. Returning for a moment only to my original theme of the sense developed by each Root Race, I would like to hazard the guess (for it is little more) that these senses have been developed in the order of their importance to the human race, and that each Root Race has carried on the further development of those senses developed by previous Root Races. Thus, the Third Root Race power of *sight* has been extended by later Root Races to include magnification and diminution; it is already extended beyond physical matter by certain individuals and in a future Root Race, which will be clairvoyant, it will be similarly extended by all. By analogy, then, it would seem that the powers of hearing and speech were developed first because they were to be man's most important means of growth towards that perfection of which the great Initiate, Saint Paul, spoke when he said, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." We who believe that we have grasped some part at least of the purpose of life know that the words we speak have great creative power, both in our own life and in the lives of others; and that these words are directed by our thoughts, which in turn have been formed to a great extent by words spoken to us or read by us.

This is an age of science, and it is common to scoff at and deride "classical" education which was considered to be the most important training alike for statesmen and administrator, for soldier and priest, from the days of the Renaissance until the late nineteenth century. Yet the study of the writings of the Golden Age of Greece and of the great days of the late Republican and early Imperial Rome could and did produce the high virtues of the flower of humanity during those five centuries from the sixteenth to the twentieth, the centuries which built our modern world and made possible the great achievements of that very scientific outlook which is today apt to scorn its origins. The genius of statesmen such as Walpole, Richelieu, Colbert, the



two Pitts, and the nineteenth century giants was inspired by just such a classical education as is often nowadays considered to be fitted only for the scholar in his ivory tower; and to the same source we may trace the vision of the explorers and empire-builders who carried civilisation to the remote lands of the south and far west of our globe; the courage and courtesy of the French aristocracy in the face of the proletarian revolution which, admittedly, their own conduct had helped to provoke; the magnificent humanitarianism of the early nineteenth century social reformers. It is noteworthy that the study of the classic writings is known by the term, the "humanities," and we moderns, who encourage our children to read their classic novels stepped down into the comic strips which may be seen at any corner shop, might do well to remember the value of mental discipline and of high aspiration acquired through the reading of great literature. I believe that the student of Plato's Republic is able to take with courage and humour all "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," and that one who has been well grounded in the Utopia of Thomas More—another Initiate—is perhaps more fitted to tackle modern social problems than is the holder of a diploma in social science from a modern "cram-quick" university. (It is fully acknowledged that the two lines of study are not mutually incompatible.)

It is not given to all of us to produce great masterpieces of literature, though for some of us here tonight that achievement may be awaiting us in a future life. Fortunately, we can enjoy and benefit from that which we cannot ourselves accomplish. To all of us, however, is given the necessity to use words, and heavily on the conscience of most of us lies the memory of the cruel, critical and unkind words which we have spoken, the brave, encouraging and loving words which we have failed to speak. Robert Louis Stevenson says, "Keep us from unkind words and unkind silences." The English philosopher, Locke, wrote:

"The business of education is not to perfect a learner in all or any of the sciences, but to give his mind that freedom, that disposition and those habits that may enable him to obtain any part of knowledge he shall apply himself to, or stand in need of, in the future course of his life."

We who are students of the wisdom of life know that education is not a matter of a few years in school and college, but a lifelong process, and in our search for progress and towards perfection we should remember the priceless tool given to the humanity of the First Root Race—the power of words.

### XIII. SHAKESPEARE, BACON AND THE RENNAISSANCE

*Arnold S. Banks*

HOW INTERESTING IT WOULD BE to be able by direct vision to see the future, or the past, with reliability. This faculty belongs not to ordinary humanity but perhaps to some few who have been privileged, after great pains and trouble, to develop it. They are those perfected ones we call the Masters of Wisdom; and perhaps even among Them, the faculty belongs more especially to certain great Officials of the Hierarchy, one of Whom is particularly concerned with culture and civilisation, and of Whom it has been said that to Him "the future lay like an open page."

But apart from such special and direct methods, it should be possible to forecast the future by study and understanding of records of the past, from types manifest in the past to look, as it were, up to their archetypes, and thence down again to types in the future. Even as regards records of the past, those normally accessible are not always completely reliable. History relates some part, but history books are destructible, as also are records graven in stone: and deliberate misrepresentation of historical fact to suit some "ology" is not unknown.

As to other records, the past is stored in the "memory of Nature," that quasi-photographic record of events which has been called the akashic record. And we have been told of caves and temples known in fact only to those accounted worthy, where models and charts are stored in the care of the Hierarchy, indestructible records of the past. One of the most fascinating thoughts is that in some future life there may await us the privilege of being admitted to consult such charts, with the necessary instruction in how to decipher them. This would offer the

student a panorama of fascinating events and characters. How interesting to be able to find out what really happened to one's favourite character in history; how interesting not only to see the events in detail, but even more so to perceive the hidden causes of these events: causes set going perhaps centuries earlier than the events we study.

Francis Bacon wrote an unfinished book called *The New Atlantis*, a Utopian dream describing or forecasting an imaginary civilisation. In this book he mentioned "the knowledge of causes and secret motions of things, and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible." Francis Bacon was a great occultist and philosopher, and it would seem by the phrase "the knowledge of causes" that he implied the teaching of karma, and that "the secret motions of things" indicates awareness of hidden influences.

The much-quoted phrase "history repeats itself" is a popular way of saying that nature is permeated by cycles and sub-cycles, crossing, coinciding, modifying, reinforcing each other in a continual kaleidoscopic interplay. Theosophists are familiar with the teaching as to planes and sub-planes, root-races and sub-races. The study of historical cycles with their sub-cycles, rhythms and sub-rhythms, notes and harmonics, may be a parallel. (This was indicated by means of a diagram.)

Madame Blavatsky has stated in one of her books that, in the Middle Ages, a command was issued by a high official of the great Hierarchy, that an effort should be made to enlighten the world every hundred years. This enlightenment has been understood to take place in the last quarter of each century. Theosophists were not slow to recognise 1875, the year in which the Society was founded, as the date of the effort made in the nineteenth century to bring Eastern knowledge to the Western world.

Looking backward to 1775, we find a number of individuals putting forth strange new doctrines, with M. le Comte de St. Germain at the centre of the group. He was engaged in secret work, much of it concerned with the establishment and practice of Freemasonry. He tried to influence the attitude of the French Court and aristocracy just before the French revolution, in an effort to counteract the danger of mob violence. They failed to

respond; the results were explosive.

Looking forward to 1975, what will it bring? It is only twenty-five years ahead of us. Much can happen in twenty-five years, and undoubtedly much *will* happen. With atomic warfare as a reality much can happen even in twenty-five hours. But this is idle speculation.

The command, by one of the Hierarchy and quoted by Madame Blavatsky, was believed to have been given in the year 1375. We may think that that command originated the hundred-year cycle, but this is improbable. Occultism takes advantage of existing favourable conditions. The true occultist has "knowledge of causes and the secret motion of things," he knows the cyclic periodicity and it is probable that this hundred-year cycle is of very great antiquity, and was merely taken as a basis for the effort.

It was in the year 1575 that a most significant event happened. A great messenger of the Hierarchy, known as Francis Bacon, left Cambridge University at the age of fourteen and entered across the threshold of an adult life of great richness and importance. Even at that early date he was fired with the idea of a "Reformation of the Whole Wide World through Education and Ethics." The tides of Life were swiftly rising to the flood of the Renaissance. Doubtless he had instinctively within him the "knowledge of causes and the secret motions of things." Not long afterwards, "William Shake-Speare," believed by many to have been Bacon, was to write: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." He also said that the world was a stage upon which "Man hath his exits and his entrances." But man has not these at haphazard, not when he thinks to come and go. In modern phrase, he must keep to the script and follow the stage directions.

So—to some thoughts on Cyclic laws and their working, and later we shall return to Bacon and the Renaissance.

A few modern writers have concerned themselves with these Cyclic laws. In 1790 Dupuis wrote a monumental *Origine de tous les Cultes*. But another French writer, Gaston Georgel, published in 1947 a book called *Les Rythmes dans l'Histoire*. As far as is known, Georgel was not an occultist; he seems to be unaware of Theosophical theory but his book is a

detailed examination of cycles, of a series of events in one age, repeated or reflected by a series of similar events in later time. (The lecturer then analysed some cyclic periods described by this French writer.)

Gaston Georgel came to certain very interesting conclusions. He perceived that modern French and Italian culture follows a pattern, or is a cycle, which repeats that of Greece; while that of Rome recurs in the Anglo-Saxon. It may be recalled that Dr. Besant came to a similar conclusion from perhaps different premises. Georgel observed that the French-Italian culture is based on the periodicity of the number six, while the Anglo-Saxon is based on the number seven.

The Renaissance, which was primarily the rebirth in Europe of Greek learning and literature, really commenced with the sack of Constantinople in 1453. This closed the Middle Ages and was the physical cause which led to the beginning of the Renaissance, circa 1470. But in the super-physical sense there can be seen the termination of the 2,160 years cycle from the high-water mark of Greek culture; and  $2,160 \times 60 \times 6 \times 6$ . It seems that we are concerned with the working of a cultural cycle. Georgel, commenting on the Renaissance, sees in it the cyclic repetition of that period in the history of ancient Greece which had known the poetess Sappho and the Seven Sages; the period of the great legislators Thales, Solon and, later, Pythagoras. He is impressed with the close resemblance between Montaigne and Solon, both from the literary and philosophical point of view and from the political.

(The lecturer then referred to an article by J. R. Wilkinson in *The Theosophist* of June, 1930, and to his diagram which showed seven cycles, each of seven hundred years, and each subdivided into seven sub-cycles of one hundred years each. He particularly called attention to fourth-ray Greece with the emphasis on Beauty (925 B.C.); to fifth-ray Rome with the emphasis on Mind and the Law (225 A.D.); and to sixth-ray mediaeval Europe ruled by the Church, dominated by faith and devotion (775 A.D.) and to the seventh-ray period of individualism which began in 1175 with the first faint beginnings of democracy.)

The Renaissance truly began in 1475 in Italy and found there its earliest expression in the world of art. The central

messenger of the Hierarchy during that period is not known with any certainty, but may it not have been Leonardo da Vinci, who had so many outstanding accomplishments besides those of a great artist?

By 1575 the Renaissance was affecting France and England, and there the rebirth of knowledge was expressing itself in literature, philosophy and the beginnings of modern science. It was as though the great galaxy of the age of Pericles was beginning to return. A modern writer, Marvin, in a book called *The Living Past*, says that,

"The characteristic note of the Renaissance was the proclamation of the supremacy of the God-like reason. It is a note which comes from a past two thousand years away, and when we hear it, the famous chorus of the *Antigone* rings again."

Later he says,

"Shakespeare summed up for us the spirit of the Renaissance at its height; Shakespeare's greatest English contemporary is the best herald of the coming age. For Bacon too stands exactly on the dividing line between the centuries."

Marvin evidently regarded Shakespeare and Bacon as two different men, significantly coinciding in time; Shakespeare the flowering of the past and Bacon the foreshadowing of that modern science which was to develop in the future. Francis Bacon, as *scientist*, is not well enough remembered today, but he was in fact concerned in the founding of the Royal Society. Many believe that Bacon and Shakespeare were two names for the same man, and that man a high Initiate indeed, but in that life not yet of the grade of Master. He had come several times from the year 1175 to 1775; as Roger Bacon, Christian Rosenkreutz, Francis Bacon and Francis Rakoczy, of whom the best-known alias was St. Germain.

We are now concerned with a study of his life as Francis Bacon, in the time of Queen Elizabeth and James I. This was the life in which probably he endured the trials of an Arhat to which he perhaps alludes in the character of Hamlet. The Arhat figuratively must cross the desert, must find himself in an abyss of great darkness, he must meet "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" and himself decide "whether 'tis nobler

in the mind to suffer . . . , or to take arms against troubles . . . and . . . end them."

Francis Bacon, leaving the University at the early age of fifteen, was possessed of an immense knowledge, energy, application, vision and maturity. As a boy he had dreamed of a "reformation of the whole wide world." Already he seems to have been conscious of his mission, an awareness brought doubtless from the Past.

Heredity gave him the temperament and ability which karmically he deserved. His learning and education he derived from his foster-parents, Sir Michael and Lady Anne Bacon, both of them great scholars and persons of outstandingly fine character. Lady Anne Bacon, in common with other Elizabethan aristocrats, spoke fluent and colloquial Latin and Greek. But what of his heredity? His real parents were Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and Queen Elizabeth, a Tudor of the Tudors. From the Tudors and the Dudleys he derived his energy, forceful personality and vigorous temperament. It seems that the knowledge of his royal parentage was kept from him, but that soon after returning from Cambridge he discovered the truth accidentally through overhearing gossip. He was not in fact illegitimate, for Elizabeth had secretly married the Earl of Leicester, though only three months before the birth of Francis. But she was then, and remained always, unwilling to acknowledge him as her son and as heir to the throne. For many years he petitioned for recognition but in the end came to realise that it was hopeless; the "slings and arrows" he must accept. There is today quite a literature to show that Francis Bacon was in fact the son of Elizabeth Tudor although this historical fact was kept secret, or at least unacknowledged, for centuries.

In 1576, at the age of sixteen, Bacon was sent to Paris to live with the Ambassador. It is significant that it was the Queen who sent him, and not his foster-parents. He was a frequent guest at the French Courts. He visited various Italian cities, places which were subsequently described in the plays of William Shakespeare. There is no record of William Shakespeare of Stratford ever having left England and it is therefore difficult to imagine how he could have described these foreign scenes with such accuracy.



The young Francis Bacon was exposed to many new influences during those years in Paris; he met poets and literary men who were enriching the French language and literature as he was afterwards to do to the English culture. And he fell in love with the Princess Marguerite de Valois. Francis Bacon was a Protestant and was therefore regarded as an heretic by the Catholic Church; Roman Catholicism was the accepted faith of the French Court and the French Nation. The Church had repressed the mystery schools of the day, notably the Albigenses and the Knights Templars. There is little doubt that Francis Bacon could have made contact with these movements; an heretic himself by contemporary French standards, this would not present any great difficulty. There is much to show that Freemasonry and the Rosicrucian movement were founded by Francis Bacon, doubtless upon the basis of his contacts with members of these mystery schools.

During his time in Paris, Bacon became greatly interested in codes and cyphers. Subsequently he wrote a book on this absorbing subject and sometimes his letters from Paris to his foster-parents were in code.

In 1579, Sir Nicholas Bacon died and Francis returned to England. It is of the greatest significance that he did not inherit any part of his foster-father's estate. Indeed Sir Nicholas made no provision whatever for the young Francis as he did for his "brother" Anthony. If Francis had been truly his son, surely one would expect to find that his father had recognised him in his will.

A year later Francis Bacon was entered at Grays Inn as a law student and in due course he qualified as a barrister. His literary ability and interests flourished in those days and with his fellow law students he formed two literary societies. Each had a most meaningful title; one was called "The Knights of the Helmet," the other "The Rosicrosse Literary Society." Bacon wrote at this time several masques which were performed by the law students.

In 1584, when he was still a young man, just twenty-five years of age, Francis Bacon was a Member of Parliament and made an outstandingly brilliant speech.

Two years later, 1586, William Shakspear (note the spelling)

arrived in London. In 1589 the first of the plays was written. This was *Love's Labour's Lost*. It will be recalled that the scene is set in the Court of France and in Navarre. Marguerite de Valois was, of course, a Princess of Navarre. These and other facts are pointers to Francis Bacon as the author rather than Shakspear, a countryman newly arrived from a very small town in the heart of the English Midlands. More subtle evidence rests on the fact that there are obscure but nevertheless definite allusions to Freemasonry in the first play.

A modern author, Mr. Alfred Dodd, one of the greatest authorities on the Baconian controversy, has said that by the age of thirty, Bacon was approaching "the zenith of his powers, full of literary energy and a glutton for work, yet he had written nothing openly. But the great English Renaissance was obviously being guided by some great and powerful mind, secretly creating not only educational text-books, but getting them printed and developing an English reading public out of the common fold as distinct from those who read the language of culture, Latin."

Bacon made a profound karmic choice when he wrote in 1592, to Lord Burleigh, abandoning the suit by means of which he had long sought to obtain recognition as being of the Blood Royal. He said "I have taken *all knowledge* to be my province . . . This Philanthropia is so *fixed in my mind as it cannot be removed*."

Here was another Judgement of Paris, the acceptance not of Aphrodite as in the earlier Greek myth, but of the Wisdom of Pallas Athene, or of learning to be devoted to the service of Mankind.

We should note, *en passant*, that by renouncing his petition to the Queen for recognition, Bacon had of necessity to renounce Marguerite de Valois, as there could be no possibility of his marrying a Royal lady, unless he himself were recognised as of royal blood.

"The Judgement of Paris!" Bacon knew the significance of that myth. He had called his literary society at Gray's Inn "The Knights of the Helmet," a direct reference to the Helmet worn by the Goddess of Wisdom, Pallas Athene. And as Pallas brandished the spear, so were her devotees, young Francis and his fellows, to shake the spear of Wisdom in the face of

ignorance. He had chosen his path by the time he was thirty-two years old; perhaps he had recognised himself as we have come to recognise him, as the messenger of the Seventh Ray, and of the Renaissance.

By 1594 Shakspear of Stratford had been in London for eight years, but nothing is known of him at this time except that he was employed as an ostler and as a call-boy at the theatre.

In 1597 three plays were published anonymously. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II*, and *Richard III*. *Richard III* was regarded as seditious and caused a great storm. Elizabeth was enraged and demanded that the anonymous author be found. At this time William Shakspear re-appeared in Stratford-on-Avon, a rich man for those days, for he had £1,000 and freedom to live in the largest house there in his home town. It is significant however that he did not possess the title deeds of this house until six years later. Somebody had struck a bargain with Shakspear. He had agreed to let it appear that he was the author of these controversial plays. In return he was given money and a comfortable home, but in order to keep a hold on him, the unknown benefactor clung tightly to the title deeds.

Why was William Shakspear so selected? He was an uneducated yokel who had been, for a few years only, associated in small and humble ways with the theatre. But his name so very closely resembled the pen-name which Bacon had adopted when he founded "The Knights of the Helmet." Under this pseudonym of Shake-speare (the Pallas Athene Symbol) the early poems *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* had been written.

The plays of the future were to be signed William Shakespeare; their true author had purchased the use of the identity of an insignificant actor who had agreed to go away and live quietly in the heart of the country.

What of this William Shakspear of Stratford? The official biographies tell us very little, and much is surmise. He died in 1616 and left a Will dealing with the paraphernalia of his household. He says nothing about any manuscripts nor the acting rights of plays.

Seven years after the death of Shakspear in Stratford-on-Avon, there was published the famous Shake-speare Folio of thirty-six plays, a number of them now finding mention for the

first time. It was edited by Ben Jonson; another famous poet of the day and a friend of Francis Bacon. Indeed at the time of the publication of the folio, Ben Jonson was living with Bacon at Gorhambury.

Ben Jonson had earlier written an epigram about Shakspear, published at the time of the latter's death in Stratford. One line gives us a clue:—

“Poor poet-ape, that would be thought our Chief”

In 1626, Francis Bacon passed from the scene. Did he die or did he deliberately disappear? The historians have it that he met his end as a result of his enthusiasm for scientific experiments. It is stated that he went out collecting snow with which to stuff a chicken, in order to experiment with cold-storage, and so contracted pneumonia and died. Maybe; but there are not wanting considerations which point to a withdrawal from the scene to anonymous seclusion in Holland and Germany and to recondite spiritual work.

Francis Bacon stands clearly revealed as the Messenger of the Hierarchy in the last quarter of the 16th Century; his the chief responsibility for conducting the English Renaissance, an important part of the Plan of the Hierarchy. This great resurgence of learning enlightened the whole civilised world. In England Bacon himself created a new language of culture and permanently enriched our vocabulary. The works attributed to Bacon—Shakespeare are full of new, vivid and lovely words.

Bacon's life story marks him as an Arhat. He endured defamation, quite undeserved and yet so deep and overwhelming as to be, in truth, a martyrdom. Enemies in high positions attacked him. He had a good defence for the charges levelled against him when he was Lord Chancellor, but King James ordered him not to defend himself, fearing the repercussions upon himself and his favourite, Buckingham. The modern historian, Alfred Dodd, throws new light on a picture which Macauley had painted so darkly. There is much fascinating evidence to support the argument that Bacon was the real author of the plays. There is, in the British Museum, a Commonplace Book, the *Promus Elegantiarum*, written in Bacon's own hand. A Commonplace Book is a collection of proverbs, with sayings, odd phrases and quotations. If this collection represented

Bacon's favourite literary "tit-bits" so to say, one would expect to find them quoted in his published writings. And so one does—yet not in the works signed by Bacon. It has been claimed that four thousand and four quotations from the *Commonplace Book* occur in the Shakespeare plays!

In 1867, a most valuable collection of manuscripts was discovered. This is known as the Northumberland Manuscript and it was not made available to scholars until 1904. The collection comprises a number of odd sheets, loosely bundled together in a cover—the Elizabethan equivalent of a modern file. But on the cover a number of jottings and notes have been written in the script of old time and in no particular order. Some of them are titles of works by Francis Bacon, others of speeches he made: there are headings from the *Masques*, titles of the famous essays, and all are mixed up with the names of the Shake-speare plays.

Sometimes an author is indicated: we read

"By Mr. ffranncis Bacon, Wlm. Sh, Wlm Shak, William Shakespeare."

Scholars agree that the cover was written in 1595-6 and obviously refers to manuscripts preserved in it. There are signs of "doodling" on this cover: authors of those days cut their own pens from goose quills and tried out the new-trimmed point much as we would try a nib in a shop. We write our own names, or something uppermost in the mind. Bacon—or was it some secretary of his?—obviously did this too. A famous Shakespearean line appears there:—

"Revealing day through every cranny peepes."

And the names of two plays, *which had not at that time been published*, are inscribed on this cover, with no indication as to their authorship.

It has been claimed, in denial of the theory that Bacon and Shakespeare were the same person, that their literary styles were so different, and also that there is no evidence that Bacon wrote poetry. Shelley, incidentally, claimed that Bacon's work marks him quite clearly as a poet.

Francis Bacon was so accomplished an author that he wrote in a wide variety of styles and was always experimenting with new forms; legal work, State papers, political and scientific

treatises and literary essays came from his pen; brilliant speeches and classical myths, and always a rich vocabulary, much of it the language today of the whole English-speaking world.

One curious literary peculiarity occurs very often both in Bacon's works and Shakespeare's plays. Both authors, if they *were* two—use the triple phrase, or threefold group of words, sometimes threefold sentences. Here are four examples:—

- (1) "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."

Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*.

- (2) "Certainly it is Heaven upon Earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence and turn upon the poles of truth."

Bacon's Essays, *Of Truth*.

- (3) "It is the wisdom of rats, that will be sure to leave a house somewhat before it fall. It is the wisdom of the fox, that thrusts out the badger, who digged and made room for him. It is the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears, when they would devour."

Bacon's Essays, *Of Wisdom for a Man's Self*.

Lastly to be mentioned we find Shakespeare in the play *Julius Caesar* putting these lines into the mouth of Brutus:—

- (4) "Romans, Countrymen and Lovers!

Hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear.

Believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe,

Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses that you may the better judge."

Examples such as these may be multiplied many times over, showing that both authors—if they *were* two—were intensely preoccupied with the threefold rhythm of phrase. Also the same peculiarity is found many times in writings alleged to be by Bacon though issued in names other than as just mentioned.

(Most intriguing evidence is offered by Baconians, based upon codes and cyphers; but time prevented the lecturer from dealing with this aspect.)

The twentieth century Theosophist can see the purpose of Francis Bacon's life: we have the key to this strange story: his identity has been revealed to us and we are privileged to

know his present lofty position.

How far was Bacon himself aware of his own significance? What was the opinion of his close friends and fellow workers?

Certainly he was possessed of a sense of his own high purpose: preoccupied with the advancement of learning, and concerned, even in his extreme youth, to reform "The whole wide world."

In 1670, Dr. Rawley, his confidential friend, Chaplain and secretary, wrote of him:—

"I have been induced to think that if there were a beam of knowledge derived from God upon any man in these modern times, it was upon him; for though he was a great reader of books, yet he had not his knowledge from books, but from some grounds and notions within himself."

Bacon, revealing his own life's work said:—

"I have made a beginning, a beginning as I hope, not unimportant; the fortune of the human race will give the issue. Such an issue, it may be, cannot easily be conceived or imagined.

"God forbid that we should give out a dream of our own imagination for a pattern of the world; rather may He graciously grant us to write an apocalypse or true vision of "*The Footsteps of the Creator imprinted on His Creatures.*"

This last phrase is an obvious pointer to the concept of "As above, so below," an awareness of Archetypal pattern in the universe.

This lovely passage ends with a memorable oblation:—

"Therefore do Thou, O Father, who gavest the visible Light as the first-fruits of creation, and didst breathe into the face of man the Intellectual Light as the Crown and Consummation thereof, guard and protect this work, which coming from Thy Goodness returneth to Thy Glory."

## XIV. ON INSPIRATION, TRUE AND FALSE

*Pamela Mitford-Barberton*

ONE OF THE COMMONEST of human failings is the readiness with which even the most ordinary mortal accepts the idea that he is "not as other men." There seems to be an incurable vanity at the heart of us all which responds instantly to the slightest suggestion that we are "chosen" or "inspired" or have a unique message to give to the world.

It is an idea which does not die with death, as we recognise from the numerous examples of people "from the other side" who have messages to impart through the medium of the Spiritualistic Seance.

It is the reason for millions of cults and teachers and for most of their numerous followers. The lure of spiritual pride is stronger even than the more ordinary recognisable variety.

The moment one becomes a victim to it, a curious change comes over the individual. He seems to develop a blind spot where he himself is concerned, and loses his sense of proportion and his humour. Everything too, takes on a new significance almost cosmic in importance, and strange meanings are read into the most trivial happenings.

This most dangerous of diseases must be strenuously combatted by Theosophists. Nothing could do more harm to our Society than such an attitude, which brings deserved ridicule on those who suffer from it but quite unmerited and reprehensible derision on our Society, the custodian of the splendid truths of the Ancient Wisdom.

Now why should men fall prey to this strange delusion?

It seems to me that the chief reason lies in the fact that it has an element of Truth in it. We are greater than we seem and we *can* contact pure Wisdom. The danger comes when we



identify that larger Self with its shadow in the mental, astral and physical worlds. We feel we are not appreciated in the outer world. It would help a great deal if we could but realise that this feeling is not unique—everyone feels it at one time or another—but the more advanced a man is the less he cares!

How are we to know if our revelation be authentic or not? How may we be sure that we have a genuine message or are really being “used” to help others?

All occult teachers are unanimous in declaring that first of all such communications must be examined by the standard of commonsense, which means—since the quality is far from common—as unbiassed and reasonable a judgement as we can muster. Then, too, we may be justly cautious if in any way our message exalts us personally. No true spiritual teacher was ever conscious of his own goodness or his superiority over his fellow men. Rather, the characteristic which surrounds them all is their identification with those they would help, a deep sympathy born of the realisation of their common humanity. It is said that the Christ consorted with publicans and sinners. Be sure that if He had done so in a superior manner as one who stoops to save the poor wretches, He would assuredly have been thrown out from their midst. No, He shared a common manhood with them and His purity and utter humility called forth their Godhood from them. No message by word of mouth could be as effective.

If we have a true message it will surely be heard—but never if bestowed as a favour. If we feel hurt that others do not listen, that they think little of us or do not believe in our divine inspiration, then we may well doubt it ourselves. For only our lower self can suffer hurt.

And if others praise and acclaim, let us be doubly careful lest we stain the purity of the Truth we have been privileged to utter with the murky shadows of self-glorification and personal pride.

## XV. THE GARMENT OF GOD

*Cynthia Pizzighelli*

WE SOUTH AFRICANS live in a wonderful country; it is Nature's own, and Man and his civilisation have made relatively little impression upon it. Our great statesman, Field Marshal Smuts, was one of her most devoted sons. He understood South Africa as it is given to but few to do; few, particularly, amongst our men of affairs, and he interpreted her to those who are unable to see and hear for themselves. In almost every public speech that he made there was some reference to the spiritual quality in our land. He spoke often and at length of the "magic" in our natural surroundings. What is the quality which endows this country with a certain distinction?

A study of Theosophy reveals that this subtle "something" which men of the world have such difficulty in defining, is due to the presence of those denizens of the unseen worlds who have such a potent effect upon man. That their influence should be most powerful in the wide spaces and mountainous districts with which this country is so generously supplied is not surprising, for they do not like the works of man, and prefer to carry on the activities for which they are responsible as far from man's vitiating presence as possible. For they are responsible for the weaving and the decoration of the Garment of God, the manifestation of the Divine Mind in matter.

We all know the effect Nature has upon those who are sensitive to her; who, by their patient study of all living things, have come very close to unveiling the hidden mysteries of the universe. These people, led by a love of animals, of growing things, even of rocks, develop a strong sense of the unseen, and an intuitive knowledge of the working of natural laws. But

the great problem for most people is how to become intimate with Nature and learn her lessons, for they feel like strangers and tourists when in her domain. If we can regard Nature as the outer covering, the cloak of God, the essential intimacy should follow naturally.

There are times when we feel an intense joy in the life of Nature, and at these times this appreciation of beauty can be developed far more naturally than by a deliberate scientific investigation into all the intricate details of botany and zoology. Both will lead us ultimately to an appreciation of Nature as a composite whole; a wonderful work of art and an incredible feat of scientific ingenuity. Nature becomes a fascinating book, wherein the mind of man may read many a wondrous tale of the mysteries of life, and come thereby to that inner realisation of Nature as a revelation of the Eternal.

In the contemplation of Nature man can witness the amazing complexity and comprehensiveness of the evolving ladder of life. Through his studies and his silent communion he will slowly come to regard Nature as the Garment of God. But we cannot even approach this great Idea until we realise that we are all minute cells in that Divine Garment, that Nature is not, indeed, something apart from ourselves, to be admired in due season, but verily a part of ourselves.

The ancient Greeks lived natural, graceful lives. They worshipped Pan, the embodiment of Nature, and that they all understood his universality is indicated by the very name, Pan, which means ALL. They demanded of all things that they should be good, and true, and beautiful.

We, in our complex modern civilisation, are not so wise. There is not much beauty in our lives, what there is of good is at a discount, and truth is very nearly non-existent, for the universal fashion is meretricious and insincere in the extreme. That is, I think, because the people of our time are unacquainted with nature and her ways. We shall not know how to live truly, wisely and justly, until we learn how to live beautifully also. It should be so easy to learn—if only we would open our eyes and see. Our teacher is there, waiting; but the inward urge to learn is not.

I find it tragic to think how eager nature is to help man

on his upward climb, and how, perverse and foolish, man rejects the proffered aid. But is it not ever thus? Was not a great World Teacher referred to as "the scorned and rejected of men"?

This is a dismal picture indeed, but fortunately it has its reverse side. There are those who recognise in nature the best of teachers, and glory in her. "There is," says Mr. Jinarajadasa, "no greater help towards spiritual growth than to recognise a something greater than ourselves, and to follow it with all the strength of which we are capable."

Wherever we are striving to understand the Wisdom of the Universe we are assisted by the wisdom which is in our surroundings, and particularly in living influences like the grass and the trees. One eternal question vexes humanity—how to live, and how to die. Some solution is propounded by every religious teaching and every philosophy that the world has known but it is contained equally in great works of art, and in nature. The works of men, the Parthenon, the Pyramids and the Taj Mahal, each states its own answer; so does the soaring majesty and sublime grandeur of Mount Everest and the tumultuous waters of the Victoria Falls; and a sunrise or a sunset to a listening heart may express a solution as true as anything in religion, philosophy or science.

Beauty is perhaps the greatest mystery of our universe. Reverting to the old Greek trinity of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, let us consider it for a moment. Applied to our modern life we find that the Good, though elusive, is at least comprehensible; the True, subtly inaccessible and inextricably interwoven with the Beautiful, is still almost within the scope of our comprehension; but the Truly Beautiful is like a butterfly hovering always just beyond reach, and leading us on and on in a quest that seems to have no ultimate goal. And, since the eternal Truth is also inexpressibly Beautiful, it follows that those who would arrive at that Truth must solve the mystery of Beauty also. Every detail in nature sounds a note of the Divine Harmony, and will surely lead us to an understanding of the mysterious Unknown.

It was, I believe, Mr. Jinarajadasa who once remarked that one of the marks of advancing civilisation is the greater attention paid to the influences of nature. Whereas the savage is a mere

cypher in the pageant of nature, civilised man is conscious of his relation to her, and especially of her use to him. He has, however, yet to realise what is his use to her—*that* realisation is the mark of the spiritual man.

All nature is dimly aware of the Immanence of God. For the plant and animal kingdoms this knowledge results in their subservience to the Divine Will in nature. If we examine their lives we shall find at the root of them a great dedication and unselfishness. Men love beauty solely for beauty's sake, and revel in it for their own enjoyment, but in the life of plant and animal any thought of their own individual growth, if at all present, is strictly subservient to a divine purpose. The plant blossoms and the bird shows off its lovely plumage not for their own sakes, but that they may propagate the species, and so carry out the Divine Will.

While plants and animals are only dimly conscious of the Divine Immanence, man can be fully conscious of it. Imagine, therefore, how much more fully he can perform his share in the task. He can stand forth as Nature's High Priest, uttering clearly what nature feels only as dim instincts. The individual plant or animal knows of the fierce struggle for existence, and to it the world is a place of infinite difficulty and danger. But man, with his divine gift of mind, can learn the relation of the species to each other in an ever-evolving stream of life; and when he realises through occult study that the life is indestructible, he understands the inner meaning of the constant warfare in nature, which is not to destroy the forms, but rather to unfold the possibilities of that indestructible life.

Because of this knowledge man can unify nature. For example, if he is instructed in the general evolutionary plan, whenever he observes a plant or animal he sees all that has led up to that particular form, and also its possibilities in the future. This intellectual knowledge, especially if it is combined with a deep sympathy for the tiny current of life, enables a man by his mere presence near plant or animal to explain to them, as it were, the deep purpose of life.

Another way of assisting nature is through art. Nature knows her diversity and dimly senses a unity such as an artist is able to portray in a "composition." A painter looking at a

scene composes; that is to say, with his imagination he welds all the multifarious details into one complete whole; and largely by this means reveals in nature a hidden beauty. But the ability to compose is not limited to the painter alone. Each one of us may continually be composing as we observe nature. When we select a particular vantage point from which to enjoy a glorious view we are composing, and for the time being synthesising and unifying nature, giving expression through our own aesthetic sense to her dim aspirations.

Yet another way in which man can help is by making himself nature's mouthpiece and voicing what she can only express wordlessly for herself. When the clouds sail leisurely by, or serenity surrounds some pool or lake, nature knows their true meaning but cannot express them otherwise; but a sensitive poet or musician can translate the hidden offering into terms of words or melodies. A poet of this type was Wordsworth, and we have inherited some of the wonderful lessons he deduced from nature's beauties as they reflected themselves in his purified understanding. We all know this poem:

"I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils,  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

And he, in his sensitivity, goes on to say:

"A Poet could not but be gay  
In such a jocund company!  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:  
"For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils."

And these lines of his from *The Banks of Wye* might almost be said to set forth the creed of a nature-mystic, one who finds his own inmost self only through the diversity which is nature:

“ . . . Therefore am I still  
A lover of the meadows and the woods  
And mountains; and of all that we behold  
From this green earth; and of all the mighty world  
Of eye, and ear—both what they half create,  
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise  
In nature and the language of the sense  
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
The guide, the guardian of my heart and soul  
Of all my moral being.”

Thus the artist in his various fields. But what of those who approach life from a more scientific angle? They, too, can assist nature to find her future. The horticulturists who introduce new species do a great work. Luther Burbank, the American who hybridised over fifty new types of garden blooms, and who was continually striving to find new types in nature, became a channel to nature of those higher possibilities of life and form which will be realities to her in the years to come. The men and women who work with plants and animals in this way speed up the process of evolution enormously and render nature a very great service indeed.

If we endeavour to purify and discipline our understanding we can commune with nature through many parts of our complex personality. If we look at a flower and know it as one rung on the great ladder of life, our intellect comes into play; if we admire it in terms of colour and form, our emotional nature gives its own contribution; and if, in addition, we feel profoundly that that flower is a reflection of the great Divine Beauty, an intuitional element manifests itself. And sometimes we may look at a flower and see in it a link with a great ideal—as when a lover associates a flower with his beloved. The word “understanding” is thus seen to include not only the physical senses and the mind, but also the emotions and the intuition.

The last step of man’s understanding of nature is to train himself to look at nature as part of himself. Usually we preserve so rigidly the limits of our personal consciousness that we are careful to make a distinction between what is ourselves and what is not ourselves. But there must come a time when we can look at nature as a part of ourselves, something like a wide

fringe to our own consciousness. Nature is One, and each one of us an integral part of that vast unity.

We have dealt so far with the somewhat limited consciousness of the plant and the animal kingdoms, and what man can do if he will in the way of helping them upward. What of the vibrant life and consciousness of the angelic hosts who flood our world with their pulsing, thrilling influence? In the old days before intellectual achievement had expelled so-called "superstition," the peasants of Europe were as familiar with the little people, the dryads, the fairies, undines, sylphs, salamanders and gnomes as the simple folk of Asia are with their Oriental counterparts.

These creatures, invisible to our dull sight, and consequently considered non-existent by the many, are present in their countless hosts wherever nature is manifested, and they vary in power and scope as a mouse differs from a man. There are tiny exquisite creatures who hover about attending to the needs of a blossom and all the little growing things, but there are also great angelic intelligences who brood over and control large tracts of land: forests, mountains, plains or rivers. And between the two extremes are innumerable other classes, graded each according to its capacities and powers. Wherever there is beauty in nature the *devas* use the opportunity it presents to work with us just as we try to work with our younger brethren in the kingdoms of plant and animal. Just as you might remove an obstacle from before an ant in a kindly but impersonal way, so the *devas*, the shining ones, try to help us, to raise the key-note of our being, to open our consciousness to a slightly higher level of response.

A sense of admiration, a sense of gratitude, will help you to co-operate with the work of the *devas*. It is the poets, those sensitive souls who can feel the pulse of nature beating strongly, who manage to express in words something of what more ordinary mortals can only feel wordlessly in their hearts. These are the words of George MacDonald:

"O all wide places, far from ferrous towns!

Great shining seas! pine forests! mountains wild!

Rock-bosomed shores! rough heaths! and sheep-cropt downs!

Vast pallid clouds! blue spaces undefiled!

Room! give me room! give loneliness and air!



Free things and pleuteons in your regions fair.  
 "O God of mountains, stars and boundless places!  
 O God of freedom and of joyous hearts!  
 When Thy Face looketh forth from all men's faces  
 There will be room enough in crowded marts;  
 Brood Thou around me and the noise is o'er,  
 Thy universe my closet with shut door."

If we can only get away from man and go to nature! Nature is the mother of us all, and our re-actions to her can teach us more than we can learn in any other way. When you are troubled, when you cannot solve a problem, or when you are out of harmony with yourself and those around you, get away from man. Go to nature, not seeking solace, but in love and silence. It may be that if your mind and emotions are still the *devas* response may be poured out, and you will find what you need to know. Your intuition will be awakened, and your re-actions to nature will help you to discover great spiritual truths.

Do you recall this prayer of Socrates':

"Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul; and may the outward and the inward man be at-one."

Socrates, being wise, realised that the only beauty that brings man lasting happiness is the beauty that he develops within himself. This, then, must be the ultimate aim of our nature-worship. If, by working with and for nature we can attain to unity within ourselves, if the higher and the lower selves, the "inward" and the "outward" man can be harmonised and attuned to each other we will indeed be fortunate—blessed among men and women, and a greater help to nature than before. This is expressed subtly but fully in *The Voice of the Silence*:

"Help nature and work with her; and nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.

"And she will open wide before thee the portals of her secret chambers; lay bare before thy gaze the treasures hidden in the very depth of her pure virgin bosom. Unsullied by the hand of matter, she shows her treasures only to the eye of spirit—the eye which never closes, the eye for which there is no veil in all her kingdoms."

It is interesting to note that one of the great religions of the world, Buddhism, is fundamentally based and founded on nature-mysticism. The Divine Mind is not visualised in any personification; it is, to a Buddhist, the great Law, which is irresistible and imperishable. The Law is not God's revelation or will, it is the statement of the true relationship between things as they eternally are. Yet it is not an abstraction; it is a mighty power that permeates the whole universe, and "the heart of it is Love, the end of it is Peace and Consummation sweet." It states the relation between dense material bodies and we call it the Laws of Motion. It states the relation between souls in the words of the Lord Buddha, "Hatred does not cease by hatred; hatred ceases only by love." From which we can see the reason for the supreme emphasis laid by the Lord Buddha on the Law as the Criterion, the Refuge and the Way of Salvation.

Another great exponent of the mysticism of nature was Plato, for whom each object as a particular thing is related to a general concept, whose essence is an Idea in the Divine Mind. The theme of the Divine Mind in nature appears throughout all Plato's philosophy, but one aspect is of particular interest, and that is his doctrine of Beauty. What we find beautiful in any thing or in any event is but the mirrored Beauty of the Divine Mind. Therefore, if we cultivate our sense of beauty sufficiently, we pass from one vision of beauty to another until we are eventually able to see the ultimate Beauty, God Himself.

The road to union for the nature-mystic lies in the contemplation of all the wonders he sees around him. Not for him the vigorous exercises of yoga. His is a still pursuit. May I here quote Mr. Jinarajadasa on the subject of nature-mysticism:

"Man need but cast out the self, and see things 'as they are,' apart from any relation to himself, and he sees them in their harmony and beauty, with Plato; or he sees them, with the Buddha, as a vast Becoming . . . This contemplation may be attained stage by stage, in ascending grades of intensity of spiritual realisation; or it may be induced by a passionate response to the beauties of nature. In the former case man separates himself from 'the world as will,' and identifies himself with the 'world as idea,' and becomes himself the Law *Dhamma*; in the latter he becomes for a time one of those

‘ . . . organic harps divinely framed,  
That trembles into thought, as o’er them sweeps  
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,  
At once the soul of each, and God of all.’ ”

And the fruits of his endeavours cannot better be expressed than in these words of Wordsworth, as he describes:

“ . . . that blessed mood  
In which the burthen of the mystery,  
In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world,  
Is lightened: that serene and blessed mood,  
In which the affections gently lead us on,  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul:  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things.”

Or, more briefly expressed by the same poet:

“To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

Nature mystics love knowledge. Ignorance and superstition are the dragons they set out to slay, and they feel that to know more is to see more. The mind must be made clear and luminous, the better to mirror reflections from the Divine Mind. They desire more *truth* of feeling than its intensity, and for them the clearer the intellect, the purer the feeling. In Buddhism the great obstacle to spiritual progress is ignorance, *Avidya*, the last and final fetter which must be cast off before attaining Perfection; and in Platonism the training of the mind by philosophy and science, and of the feeling by art, is an integral part of the building of character.

It is interesting to observe that wherever this form of mysticism develops into a religious worship, sunlight is a necessity for the rituals. In the temples one will find nothing akin to the awe-inspiring gloom of Hindu temples, with their sanctuary in almost total darkness; nor to the dim mystic softness of Christian churches and cathedrals radiating devotion. On

the contrary, as in the Buddhist temples today, and in the Greek temples of long ago, there will be sunlight and open air, and the Holy of Holies approachable by every worshipper.

The ideal of the nature mystic is the Philosopher, the Friend of Wisdom. And wisdom is not merely a knowledge of facts and events gathered and accumulated by the mind; it is the combined power of the purified heart and mind; it is a reflection in co-ordinated human thought and feeling of the Divine Mind. Quoting Mr. Jinarajadasa once again:

"Many are the paths to the casting off of ignorance and coming to Wisdom. In Buddhism it is by rigid self-analysis, by detachment and by a compassion for all that lives; in Platonism by a contemplation of the 'Ideas,' the things-in-themselves, the thought-forms of the Demiourgos (the Creator of the world). The nature-mystic is ever the idealist, and so long as the conditions surrounding his earthly embodiment fall short of his ideal, he feels a stranger in a strange land, and so strives to mould his environment to his ideal. Blake is the typical nature-mystic when he sings:

" 'I will not cease from mental strife,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
Within this green and pleasant land!'

"And not less typical of the nature-mystic are these words of Patrick Geddes as he calls for volunteers to build the City Beautiful: 'People volunteer for war; it is a strange and dark superstition that they will not volunteer for peace.'"

The nature-mystic is, therefore, a reformer who longs for the new forms because his intuition has seen them. He is the visionary who proclaims the ideal, not the executive who brings about the changes. He longs to make all things orderly and sunlit and beautiful. Foulness, disease and all uncleanness, base passion and delusion, ugliness and crudity, insularity and prejudice, commercialism and leanness of soul—these are for him the enemy—breeders of ignorance and superstition.

In the ranks of the nature mystics are Emerson and Carlyle, William Morris, Matthew Arnold and Ruskin, our great South African naturalist Eugene Marais, Frank Smythe the mountaineer, General Smuts, and all those whose path to God lies through

Wisdom and Beauty.

Each of us is fashioning his stitch for the Garment of God. Let us remember Plotinus, who said:

"Oftentimes when I wake out of the slumber of the body and come to a realising sense of myself, and retiring from the world outside, give myself up to inward contemplation, I behold a wonderful beauty. I believe then that I verily belong to a higher and better world, and strive to develop within me a glorious life, and become one with the Godhead. And by this means I receive such an energy of life that I rise far above all other things, even the intelligible world . . . And this, therefore, is the life of gods, and of divine and happy men, a liberation from all earthly concerns, a life unaccompanied with human pleasures, and the flight of the alone to the alone."

*The Voice of the Silence*, the scripture of the nature mystic tells us that all nature responds in sympathy to a Being who attains this Divine stature:

"Know, Conqueror of Sins, once that a Sowani has crossed the seventh Path, all nature thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued. The silver star now twinkles out the news to the night-blossoms, the streamlet to the pebbles ripples out the tale; the dark ocean waves will roar it to the rocks surf-bound, scent-laden breezes sing it to the vales, and stately pines mysteriously whisper:

'A MASTER HAS ARISEN, A MASTER OF THE DAY'."

## XVI. TRUTH, LIBERTY AND SERVICE

### An Appreciation of the life of Dr. Annie Besant

*Phyllis S. Lean*

#### Four Pictures

IT IS MY PRIVILEGE to have seen and heard Dr. Besant in her last years and when I think of her in England in the 1930's, four pictures stand out, vivid and everfresh in my memory.

She is standing at the foot of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, her bare head as leonine as the famous animals which guard the column. The day is wet and overcast; Dr. Besant is dressed in a shabby macintosh; grouped about her are the leading left-wing politicians of the day. What is it all about? I was too young to know more than that I was in the presence of greatness. That was Annie Besant, socialist.

We are sitting in the Essex Hall, an unpretentious building in the Strand. It is a shabby room, crowded with young men, mostly Indian students from the University of London. The atmosphere is tense with political struggle. The little old lady arrives leaning on the arm of a tall Hindu who already is earning a reputation in London for pungent speech and trenchant writing. He is V. K. Krishnamenon, the present High Commissioner for India in London. I remember much of Krishnamenon's early days, not least that it was he who taught me an English proverb, "Fair words butter no parsnips." It was a favourite saying of his and he and Dr. Besant together strove, time and again, to convince the British Government that their fair words would no longer butter the Indian parsnip. This was almost, I think, Mrs. Besant's last public appearance in London. That was Annie Besant, servant of India.

I see her in Ommen. Ommen is in the North of Holland,

not far from the German frontier. The flat lush pastureland begins to give place to rising, sandy ground and all the air is sweet with the scent of pines. It is evening, the long slow twilight of the northern hemisphere, and the great crowd assembles around the campfire. Dr. Besant, a gracious and lovely figure, clad all in white appears, again on the arm of a Hindu, this time J. Krishnamurti, then in the prime of his young manhood. He was an amazingly handsome man; I think the most beautiful human being I have ever seen. I cannot remember that Mrs. Besant spoke that night. The vast audience was there for Krishnaji. She had done so much to give him to the world; to make the world ready for his message; one felt that he was her son. That was Annie Besant the mother.

The Queen's Hall, London's great concert hall until German bombs wrecked it in the 1940's: a place purified by noble music and used each summer for many years as Dr. Besant's lecture forum. The people have been assembling for the last hour and the vast auditorium is full. The great organ swells, then dies away. The orchestra platform alone is deserted: no table, no chairman, nothing save the conductor's rostrum, its brass rail bound with some bright crimson material. In the hushed hall, the tiny white-clad figure appears; with great dignity she takes her place on the rostrum; softly she says, "My brothers," and in those two words has embraced us all and has incidentally, found the precise pitch of the hall so that her next words swell and fill the auditorium. There is no preamble. Supreme master of her subject, Dr. Besant states her theme at once, outlining some vast concept, some mighty thesis, which she will develop for the next hour, without a note, without one false word or pause or hesitation, in English so perfect that *verbatim* reports of those lectures read as polished essays. Once heard, that wonderful voice, so rich, so mellow can never be forgotten. That was Annie Besant the orator.

### **An Age of Great Women**

Born on 1st October, 1847, Annie Wood grew up, a social revolution in herself, within the framework of the astonishing social revolution of the second half of the nineteenth century. She was born in the days when Queen Victoria, a young monarch,

was sending her famous notes to Benjamin Disraeli; Darwin was writing his "Origin of Species" which was to shatter the complacency of the theologians of the day and Karl Marx, in exile, wandered between Hampstead and the Reading Room of the British Museum formulating his political theory, pondering "Das Kapital." In Parliament, the reactionary members debated, in fear, the implications of the Reform Bill which had extended the limited franchise of the day. Women were to wait until the twentieth century was well established before they were enfranchised; Annie Besant herself was out of the political arena and immersed in Theosophy before "Votes for Women" became an issue; yet, already, in her youth, John Stuart Mill was thinking and writing about the subjection of women, and in 1866 presented to Parliament a petition for Woman Suffrage.

Annie Besant was a great woman in an age of great women; in an age, too, when it was difficult for a woman to accomplish anything at all beyond the daily round of a cumbersome household. Elizabeth Garratt Anderson (1836—1917) established a woman's right to qualify and practice in medicine; Josephine Butler (1828—1906) and Octavia Hill (1838—1912) were pioneer social reformers whose names are honoured still. The principles they enunciated are of basic significance in twentieth century sociology. Dame Ethel Smythe was born in 1858 and after an uphill struggle for an adequate musical education came to be recognised as a great composer, her famous Mass being performed in 1893. Beatrice Webb was another great woman of the period; Annie Besant was destined to meet her in the brilliant circle of the Fabian Society.

### **Her Family and Childhood**

Annie Besant herself has given us many details of her early youth in her autobiography. She was born of Irish Protestant stock and of good family. The habit of reading came early to her; there is a delightful story of the little girl curled up in the folds of a red velvet curtain, hidden away and reading avidly at the age of five. She had read *Paradise Lost* when she was but eight years old. Her father, William Wood, had trained as a doctor but never practised; a scholarly man and a good linguist, his pleasure was to read aloud to his wife from the



philosophers and the poets. Even although she must have been too young to understand, this habit of her father's perhaps impressed Annie with a love for the noble sounds of the English language; a love, which in adult life she was to turn to such superb account.

Although, as we have said, Dr. Wood did not practise medicine, he seems to have had an interest in the profession and one day assisted at the *post mortem* on a patient who had died of tuberculosis. Cutting his finger in the course of the dissection, Wood himself contracted tuberculosis and died very shortly afterwards when Annie was but five years old.

It is from Annie's own account of her father's funeral that we learn of her mother's psychic gifts. Mrs. Wood did not attend the funeral but sat sorrowing, in her home. She seems to have been aware of each stage of the ceremony, exclaiming dramatically, "It's all over now." Subsequently, Mrs. Wood visited the cemetery and unerringly found her husband's grave although she had never seen it before. The full significance of that feat will come home to those who know the vast forest of headstones and the labyrinth of paths which make up the London cemeteries.

Impoverished now, the Wood family removed to Harrow. Mrs. Wood ran a boarding establishment for Harrow boys in order to secure the advantages of education at this famous school for her son Henry. A description of the little Annie of this period shows her to have been a gay and lively creature with tawny eyes and tumbling black curls. Miss Marryat, sister of the famous novelist, Captain Marryat, became acquainted with the family and undertook to educate Annie. Miss Marryat's free and original teaching methods allowed that brilliant young mind to unfold, while journeys to the Continent gave the little girl a grasp of languages and a sympathy with men and women of other lands.

Always of a religious turn of mind, Annie came into contact with ritualistic churches and was greatly attracted by ceremonial worship. She left Miss Marryat when she was sixteen and returned home to face the idle life of the young lady of the period. Her piano and her books were her only outlets. It is on record that her favourite reading included *The Iliad* and

the works of Dante and Plato while she disliked Wordsworth and Cowper. It is not difficult to guess why Wordworth in his more pedestrian moods would irritate that swift-moving young mind, and Cowper, for all the limpid beauty of

"The poplars are felled.  
Farewell to the shade  
Of the whispering wind  
In the cool colonnade,"

was at heart a Calvinist, rigid and authoritarian, so utterly opposed in temperament to the character of the girl who soon was to break all bounds of conventional thinking.

### Marriage and Doubts

Dark, slim, remote and mysterious, a brilliant pianist, athletic and full of life, we find Annie at this time intensely interested in High Church activities—a proclivity which incurred her mother's disapproval. It was through her enthusiasm for the Church that Annie met the man she married. Rev. Frank Besant was a brother of Walter the well-known novelist. It seems that both Frank and Walter were destined for the Church but Walter escaped; rather than undergo ordination he took a teaching post in South Africa for seven years.

Frank too became a schoolmaster. In those days it was quite a common thing for young clergymen to take teaching posts and when Frank and Annie were married in 1867 he was teaching in Cheltenham. Their first home was in lodgings and for the young bride there was only boredom, the company of rather silly women, the conversation confined to domestic trivialities. Cheltenham was not then and is not now a town to encourage rebel spirits!

It was at this time that Annie wrote the only fiction ever to flow from her prolific pen. She was expecting her first baby, and during the months of waiting, wrote short stories which were published in *The Family Herald*. The first child was a boy, Arthur Digby: later his sister Mabel was born. This little daughter came near to death with pneumonia and it was during the long hours of nursing, watching her infant wracked with pain, that Annie came to question her faith in God. The eternal doubts reared their heads. "Can there be a God if such agony

is allowed to exist? if so small and innocent a child is allowed to suffer?" Annie's doubts and questionings led to misunderstanding with her husband: the rift widened. Thinking that perhaps parish duties would help her to regain her faith and give her husband a wider sphere of work than that provided by his teaching post, Annie secured for him, through the influence of relatives, the living of Sibsey in Lincolnshire. Ill-health and misery dogged her and on one occasion, while staying with her mother in London, recuperating, Annie met the Rev. Charles Voysey. Voysey had been an Anglican clergyman, now without benefice on account of his most unorthodox opinions. It is recorded that he "was charmed by this young and beautiful woman who quoted the Church fathers, ancient and modern, as fluently as a theological student primed for examination."

Through Voysey, Annie Besant met the fashionable intellectuals, the rebels and liberals of the day, including Bishop Colenso, one time Bishop of Natal. These contacts still further stirred her questioning mind. So much of orthodox Christianity had become unacceptable to her; what did it all mean: was God all-kind and all-good?

At this time Annie sought an interview with a famous divine, Dean Pusey in Oxford. He rebuked her for questioning the teachings of the Church and seemed quite incapable of giving her the explanations she sought, the advice she needed or the spiritual comfort for which she yearned. At the end of the interview, Annie Besant announced her intention of leaving the Church.

She kept her word and one cannot deny a grain of pity for poor Frank Besant, Vicar of a nineteenth century country parish, with a beautiful and accomplished wife who returns home only to abstain from the Communion. What scandalous talk and speculation there must have been in the village. One day in this time of great mental torment, Frank went off for the day and his young wife wandered into the empty church. Climbing into the pulpit she began to preach to the empty pews: on and on went the strong young voice, ringing in the hollow church. It was then that Annie made her great discovery: then that she came to know that the gift of speech was

hers and that she must use it in the service of man.

Her personal life was still desperately unhappy and although, in her pride and fair-mindedness, she permitted nothing to be said, it is apparent that her husband was indeed cruel to her. In the nineteenth century it was extremely difficult for a woman to obtain a legal separation except on grounds of cruelty, and the fact that Annie was legally separated in 1873, securing an allowance from her husband of £110 per annum and the custody of her daughter, would seem to indicate that legal opinion (rarely on the side of women in those days) had appreciated her sufferings.

Back in London, Annie Besant set to work to augment her allowance and to make a living for herself, her mother and her daughter.

### **Atheism and Socialism**

One day she saw a copy of a pamphlet written by Charles Bradlaugh, the well-known atheist. She bought it and, as a result of an announcement contained in it, applied for membership of the National Secular Society. A few days later Annie attended a meeting of this Society and heard Bradlaugh, himself a great orator, lecturing on Christ and Krishna; his thesis doubtless based on the fact that since the Gita and the Gospels have so much in common, then neither hero can be Divine. That lecture was not without significance in the future life of Annie Besant. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant became warm friends almost at once, and Bradlaugh employed her as writer on his paper. She chose as a pseudonym *Ajax*, the legendary hero who prayed for light, and ran a feature column called *Daybreak*.

Bradlaugh quickly discovered her remarkable oratorical powers and used her to the full in the interests of the National Secular Society. The first lecture she gave was on "The Political Status of Women;" another significant pointer to the future, although the official suffragette movement was never to claim Mrs. Besant, for the Theosophical Society got in first!

Annie Besant undertook long and exacting lecture tours for the Secularists, debating free-thought subjects with miners and mill workers in Britain's industrial North and doubtless finding them, in those days just as today, inspiring, intelligent

and responsive audiences.

At this time Annie was about twenty-seven years of age, a beautiful woman, with regular features, dark hair, a slim and elegant figure, her tiny waist emphasised by the full-skirted dresses of the day, the lovely column of her throat set off by the black velvet ribbon which was then the fashion.

Within nine months of joining the National Secular Society, Mrs. Besant became its Vice-President: an astonishing triumph for a young woman and evidence of her most unusual ability.

By 1877, Mrs. Besant and Charles Bradlaugh were involved in the Knowlton case. This complete story, concerned with the publication of a pamphlet on Family Limitation, has been very fully told by Mrs. Besant herself in her autobiography, and is only mentioned here in order to draw attention to certain factors which are sometimes overlooked in the dust storm of controversy which still rises whenever this subject is mentioned.

Mrs. Besant was, without question, sincerely interested in bringing to the notice of the poor, overburdened as they were with the cares of large families, some knowledge of family limitation. Further, her passion for truth urged her to establish the right to publish any information whatsoever, provided that the normal code of decency was observed. Much of the long and brilliant speech she delivered at the trial, a speech which has gone down into the history of British jurisprudence, was devoted to the establishment of this fundamental democratic right: the right to publish, which is as vital as the right to free speech.

Champion of rights, Mrs. Besant struck a blow for two in this matter: the right to publish and the right of a citizen to plead his own case in a court of law.

Incidentally *The Laws of Population* which Mrs. Besant subsequently wrote is regarded by many of her admirers, outside the Theosophical Society, as her greatest work.

The Knowlton case had one unfortunate personal issue for her. Her husband claimed that since his wife had become involved in so unsavoury a matter as birth control, she was not a fit person to have the care of their daughter, and his suit for the return of the little Mabel to his household was successful.

Science began to attract Mrs. Besant's eager intellect and a Dr. Aveling, an avowed Atheist, gave her formal instruction

in the sciences. Aveling had been dismissed from the Chair of Comparative Anatomy in the University of London on the ground that he was an Atheist. Annie responded swiftly and brilliantly to his teaching, obtaining first-class passes in no fewer than seven sciences. She was never able to take a degree, however, as the University authorities refused her admission to the practical examinations, again because of official abhorrence of those who were professed Atheists.

Karl Marx and his daughter Eleanor move into the picture at this point, Eleanor Marx and Aveling living together for many years, working for the political programme which today we call Communism. Mrs. Besant was attracted by the more brotherly tenets of nineteenth century Socialism and this led, in the end, to a break with Bradlaugh and the Secularists.

The Secularists and free-thinkers were intensely individualistic and it is perhaps permissible to surmise that Mrs. Besant ultimately found their creed an arid philosophy. "We do not accept the orthodox religious teachings," they said. "Religion is used to dope the people into acquiescence"—but the Socialists said, "How can we lift the people; how can we improve their lot?" It was that which called to the warm-hearted Annie Besant.

So she joined the Fabian Society, a brilliant group: Shaw was a young member; he would sometimes come home with Mrs. Besant and they would relax for a while over the fun of playing duets together! Sidney Webb, the famous economist, later to become a Cabinet Minister in two Governments: Lord Olivier, a future Secretary of State for India, these people were the heart of the Fabian Society. Still strikingly beautiful, Annie had at this time bobbed her hair, hitched up her skirts and had taken to wearing bright tam-o'-shanters and woollen scarves so that she should feel at one with the working-class women of the day.

In ten years (1874—1884) of intense work, for the Secularists and later for the Fabians, Mrs. Besant had yet found time to write no fewer than fifty-one books and pamphlets: nineteen on religious subjects, twelve on science and twenty on politics and social reform.

## Towards Theosophy

Her journalistic work brought her at this time into touch with W. T. Stead who founded a halfpenny weekly news sheet called *The Link* (incidentally the name of the present-day Theosophical magazine in Southern Africa). *The Link* was planned to bring together all those who worked for mankind and had, as its motto, this great challenge taken from the writings of Victor Hugo:

"The people are silence. I will be the advocate of the silence. I will speak for the dumb. I will speak of the small to the great and of the feeble to the strong. I will speak for all despairing ones. I will be the Word of the people."

Truly in the busy years ahead did Mrs. Besant live up to this challenge, ever vigilant in her service of the poor. She began the movement which today is almost universally accepted, the provision of school meals; she exposed the scandalous administration of the workhouses and drew attention to the misery of their inmates; she supported Charles Bradlaugh in his struggle to place the Truck Acts on the Statute Book and established Vigilance Circles: bands of good neighbours pledged to root out cases of cruelty to children and to focus the eye of authority on insanitary workshops and inhuman working conditions. Today, accustomed as we are to the long years of social legislation culminating in the creation of the Welfare State, it is difficult to realise that these battles were fought only seventy years ago. In our admiration for Annie Besant as a great Theosophist we are not always aware of her place in history, for truly was she one of the great social pioneers of the nineteenth century.

These years of activity culminated in her leadership of the Match Girls' Strike. Mrs. Besant uses this incident to point a profound truth for in a memorable passage in her autobiography she says:

"Two pale-faced girls came to me and said, 'it is time someone came and helped us,' and I asked 'Who will help?' Plenty of people wish well to any good cause but very few care to exert themselves to help it and still fewer will risk anything in its support. 'Someone ought to do it, but why

should I?' is the ever re-echoed phrase of weak-kneed amiability. 'Someone ought to do it, so why not I?' is the cry of some earnest servant of man . . . Between these two lie whole centuries of moral evolution."

Quite soon after the Bryant & May strike, Annie Besant joined the Theosophical Society and one of her first actions as a member was to persuade Madame Blavatsky to establish a clubroom for working girls.

### Theosophy

Those of us who knew Mrs. Besant as a great Theosophist, as one of the most advanced spiritual leaders of the day, have sometimes wondered how she made the great leap from the workaday world into those more lofty halls. The explanation lies in the fact that even while actively engaged in social reform, Annie Besant was living her own rich and profound inner life, pondering the new thought of her day, the findings of the hypnotists, the spiritualists and the mesmerists.

Knowing her interest in such unusual subjects and the depth of her thinking, W. T. Stead gave her *The Secret Doctrine* to review. Her witty comment when deep in this Herculean task has survived. She wrote to a friend:

"I am immersed in Madame Blavatsky. If I perish in the attempt to review her, you must write on my tomb, 'She has gone to investigate the Secret Doctrine at first hand'."

Annie Besant joined the Theosophical Society on 10th May, 1889. She was forty-two years of age. Two years later Helena Blavatsky passed on. Her great friend and co-worker, the first President of the Society, Colonel H. S. Olcott, remained. Shortly after his death in 1907, Annie Besant, now sixty years old, succeeded him. Sixty years old! Retiring age for men; for women fifty-five is suggested. For Annie Besant it was an entry into a new life of tireless energy, unbounded enthusiasm, triumph and growth. For twenty-six years she continued in office and between the two dates, June 1907 when she was elected President and September, 1933 when she died, the Theosophical Society was consolidated, expanded and established in an impregnable position in the vanguard of modern thought. Whether we realise it or not, Theosophy is a vital part of the



Renaissance of the twentieth century; modern as the hour, it presents anew the age-old thoughts of men and lifts a corner of the veil covering the Ancient Wisdom. Annie Besant was the great agent.

So we find her at the threshold of this new and fruitful life. Looking back we can see the threads which led her, inevitably, to this point. The shadow of her future lay across her childhood. The discovery of truth through the use of psychic or mediumistic powers would not seem strange to the daughter of a mother who had followed her husband's funeral without leaving her house. The study of ancient philosophies would not prove difficult for one who, in infancy, had listened to a father reading the poetry and philosophy of the Classical world and who had herself, in girlhood, delighted in Plato. The devoted pursuit of the Path accords with those deep, but hitherto unsatisfied religious instincts so clearly shown in the young and lovely Annie Wood.

The bitter road she trod through Atheism and Socialism demonstrated with the clarity of sun upon snow, the necessity for establishing the principle of the brotherhood of man.

Smaller threads, woven into the pattern of these earlier days, point just as clearly to her future. Charles Bradlaugh made one thing of his lecture on Christ and Krishna; Annie Besant was to make much more; her choice of the pen-name *Ajax* is significant for truly, in the end, she brought light to thousands. The problem of the emancipation of women was to find its solution in the Theosophical movement which recognises no distinction on the ground of sex and which teaches that the sex of the body is but incidental to the incarnation, for are we not all men now and women tomorrow, wives today and sons in a life to be?

Her scientific training under Dr. Aveling and others was an essential preparation for the wider science of occultism she was one day to teach. Her intimate contact with the finest brains of her day, with men of the calibre of Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb, gave her her measuring rod. Her campaign for the Secularists and the Socialists took hold of her native power of speech and moulded it in preparation for the phenomenal task ahead of her, for she was to become the greatest orator of

her day, with a power and a sweetness, a sincerity and a conviction of unbelievable beauty.

Nothing in life is ever wasted! that truism is not always so easily demonstrated as in the life of Annie Besant where we see the threads leading her on to the next great task: that of the expansion of the Theosophical Society.

She made her debut as a Theosophical lecturer at the opening of the lunch-club for working girls which she had persuaded Madame Blavatsky to establish. As far as is known the only record which survives of that day is the fact that H.P.B. and Oscar Wilde were both present, exchanging brilliant epigrams!

Annie Besant's facility as a journalist was soon turned to good account, for she became with Madame Blavatsky co-editor of *Lucifer*. Before the end of the year 1889 she was elected President of the Blavatsky Lodge in London. Four years later her reputation as a lecturer was so firmly established that she was chosen to accompany Mr. G. N. Chakravarti to the World's Fair in Chicago, there to speak on Theosophy in the World Parliament of Religions. By the end of 1895, six years after first meeting the Society, Annie Besant had enriched its permanent literature by the contribution of sixteen books and pamphlets.

Assuming the Presidency in 1907, it was not long before Mrs. Besant inaugurated the series of mammoth lecture tours which, more than anything else, were destined to consolidate Theosophical teaching.

In 1909 she spent sixty-three days in the United States, delivering no fewer than ninety-eight lectures. In Paris two years later she enthralled a vast audience of over four thousand people assembled in the Sorbonne, lecturing in French on the life of Giordano Bruno. In the fateful summer of 1914 she was in London, lecturing on Yoga, probably the first time that this subject had been chosen for a popular public lecture. If Yoga is widely studied and more fully understood in our day, then we salute Mrs. Besant's pioneer work. The Presidential lecture tours which continued year after year, save only when interrupted by the First World War and by the exigencies of her service in India, concluded in the grand manner in 1927 when a few weeks before her eightieth birthday, the President visited

every European section in twenty-one days, travelling by air and delighting in this new experience, giving fifty lectures in twelve different countries.

She was to come to Europe again, indeed several times more; to lecture in the Queen's Hall in London; to continue her ceaseless fight for India, and to grace the Ommen Camps with her presence, but never again to undertake so exacting a tour.

The constant travelling and writing never prevented Mrs. Besant from giving her fullest attention to the organisation of the Society. She increased the Adyar estate from the original twenty-one acres to two hundred and fifty-three acres, establishing gardens and schools, developing every activity at Adyar in a thoroughly businesslike manner. In ten years she doubled the membership of the Society, her oratory and her books made Theosophy available to everybody, everywhere.

### Mother of India

Before we consider the depth and brilliance of her permanent message to us and to the world, we must examine, albeit briefly, her work for India.

In 1893 Annie Besant made her home in Benares and there started a publishing company and a school on property given her by the Maharajah of Benares. From this ancient palace she began her attack on the highest illiteracy rate in the world, and from this beginning there grew the Central Hindu College, now, of course, the University of Benares. From these earliest days she worked for the women of India and never lost an opportunity to revive Indian pride and self-respect and to foster the ideal of a United India. She insisted that social reform was an essential preliminary to India's advance towards Commonwealth Status and in 1913 delivered a series of lectures entitled "Wake up, India." Purchasing the old *Madras Standard*, Mrs. Besant renamed the newspaper *New India* and used it as a vehicle for the advocacy of social reform and Home Rule for India. The rest is history; Gandhi was to appear upon the troubled stage to resist and to fast, to claim the adulation of millions, to die at the hand of an assassin.

One short scene must be recorded. In 1930, Dr. Annie Besant, Mother of India, eighty-three years old, came to London

and for over an hour pleaded India's cause before a great gathering of British Members of Parliament assembled in the Committee Room of the House of Commons.

### Personalities of the Day

Constantly, throughout her long life, Annie Besant's path crossed that of the leading men and women of her day. Right away back in 1894 she attracted the attention of William Ewart Gladstone who commented upon her adoption of Theosophy in a long article in the *Nineteenth Century Magazine* (Sept. 1894, p. 317).

She met Gandhi for the first time at Charles Bradlaugh's funeral in London. In 1915 the Mahatma visited her at Adyar and expressed his keen interest in the printing works. Gandhi himself was a good journalist, and the newspaper he founded at Phoenix in Natal (*Indian Opinion*) is still the voice of the South African Indian population.

In 1905, Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales, later to become King George V and Queen Mary, visited her at the Central Hindu College in Benares. The Princess asked Mrs. Besant for her autograph and in return sent her a signed portrait of Edward VII. When the Central Hindu College received University status, the first *honoris causa* degree was conferred upon another Prince of Wales (the present Duke of Windsor), the second degree being given to Annie Besant herself.

In the summer of 1925, Mrs. Besant was in London and attended a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. *The Times*, reporting the event said:

"The King took an early opportunity of talking to Mrs. Annie Besant, a striking figure with her uncovered white hair and white and gold robe."

A year earlier, in 1924, the jubilee of her entry into public life had been celebrated in London. Five hundred organisations were represented at the gathering; Dr. Besant had been actively associated with at least one hundred of these. Messages were received from Ramsay Macdonald and Viscount Willingdon, Viscount Haldane and Philip Snowden, Lord Baden-Powell and many another; George Lansbury, Margaret Bondfield, Earl

de la Warr and many eminent Indians spoke of the inspiration she had been to them. Inspiration she was to be to many of them again for in 1927 she attended great meetings organised by the Malthusian League, the Indian Commonwealth League and the World Fellowship of Faiths.

### Her Permanent Message

Margaret Cole has written:

"Annie Besant was in fact a saint. There are two kinds of saints; one kind keeps all the rules, is meek, pious, humble and obliging: the other kind is of enormous dynamic force, intense conviction having the power to move mountains, creating controversy, but when the shouting has died down is seen to be somebody quite out of the ordinary."

The author goes on to compare Dr. Besant with St. Theresa or Joan of Arc and says, "a cause which gained Annie Besant's support enlisted an army with banners."

Madame Blavatsky described her as "the soul of honour and uncompromisingly truthful."

In every account and every memory of her, her beauty and her talent, her generosity and her tireless capacity for hard work are revealed. In the fields of politics and as an orator she was a genius.

Her permanent message to Theosophists is enshrined in all her books, but there are some little gems, perhaps forgotten. Writing in Madras in 1913 Mrs. Besant reminded us of our social and civic responsibilities, saying:

"I have thought it well for the sake of the public repute of the Theosophical Society to enter more than I have hitherto done into the social life of Madras. Busy with other work I have shrunk from public functions and have refused private invitations . . . this is regarded as eccentric . . ."

She goes on to describe the important civic functions she has attended at which, we may be sure, she was not only an adornment but a source of enlightenment.

Here is a message she wrote in an autograph album:

"Work so that the world may be better for your living in it. Love all, but love most those who are unloving, for their need is greatest. Protect the weak and shelter the

homeless; forget not our younger brethren of the animal kingdom."

Most of us, on our birthdays, expect our friends to send us greetings. Dr. Besant celebrated her birthdays by sending lovely messages to the world. Here are two of them. On 1st October, 1922, her birthday greeting to members was:

"My birthday greeting to you, brothers all the world over, is written from amidst the encircling Himalayas. But not a vestige of them is visible, thick-shrouded as they are in earth-born clouds. Shall I then doubt that the mountains are there, that their green slopes, their mighty crags, their heaven-piercing peaks of snow are but dreams, imagination-fashioned? Nay, verily, for I have seen them, I have trodden them and I know. With equal certainty, with equal surety, I know the unmistakable truths of the Ancient Wisdom."

Another birthday message reads:

"Think of the one who is dearest to you on earth: one for whom sacrifice is joy. Then remember that such debt of limitless love, such joyful sacrifice, is what we owe to all human brothers."

Shortly before her death, a well-known member (Mr. Warrington), visited her and recorded in his diary "Saw Dr. Besant . . . evidently she feels we are in a dogmatic rut and wishes to see us universalists."

Loyal always to the ideals of the British Commonwealth, Mrs. Besant, abhorring war, yet saw its place in the scheme of things. In August, 1914 she wrote:

"The duty of the Theosophical Society is to work for peace and while war lasts to keep our sense of brotherhood unbroken, despite the clash of arms. While I constantly and habitually plead for the substitution of arbitration for war, of justice for might among nations as among individuals, I yet hold that war has its place in the evolution of humanity and that humanity is not yet evolved enough for its total disappearance."

A few weeks later a German member resident at Headquarters was interned. Dr. Besant commented:

"Into our peaceful Adyar the spectre of war has stalked. Our good and gentle Dr. Otto Schrader has been interned."

Writing in 1915 of the ghastly slaughter going on in France, of the ablest scientific brains of the day engaged in devising new ways of killing, she asked "What is the lesson that Humanity is to learn from this welter of horror and of death? Surely that intellect unilluminated by Love must ultimately bring a Race to naught . . . Knowledge without love has no compass for its guiding . . ."

Prophetic indeed were her words in 1917, stating not only the problem of the 1920's but the problem of the aftermath of the second World War. "When peace comes, as come it must some day, the countries will be fronting problems perhaps harder to solve than those of men and munitions. It is a *new world* that has to be created."

In 1928, the World Peace Union wrote to Dr. Besant, asking her for a message. In response she wrote her great prayer for peace:

"O Hidden Life of God, outside which nothing can exist, help us to see Thee in the face of our enemies and to love Thee in them. So shall Thy Peace spread over our world and Thy Will at last be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven."

Glimpses these of her recorded message; her whole life was dedicated to Truth, Liberty and Service; her way of living, her unrecorded message perhaps most challenging of all.

She learned to drive a car at sixty years of age and at seventy-five undertook quite commonly a day's work exacting enough to exhaust an athlete. Here is one such day recorded in timetable form.

*At Baroda in India*

5.30 a.m.	Arrived.
8 a.m.	Talk.
9.30 a.m.	Lodge Initiation Ceremony.
1 p.m.	Received deputation.
2 p.m.	Scout Rally.
4 p.m.	Visit to Girls' School.
4.20 p.m.	Meeting.
6.15 p.m.	Public Lecture.
7.30 p.m.	Members' Meeting.
5.30 a.m. (next day).	Depart by train.

Think of that when you are too tired to go to the Lodge or too lazy to help the Secretary address the envelopes!

### **Happy Birthday**

Each year, on 1st October we salute her memory; we speak in our Lodges of her wonderful life. Let us honour her always by remembering, year by year, the greatest birthday message she ever gave us. Here it is. She wrote it in 1931.

“On each day and all day long during the coming year, I will try patiently to tune my life into harmony with that of the Christ within me.”





